

**“Get Up and About”**  
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**Scripture (MSG):**

**Romans 13:11-14**

<sup>11-14</sup> Make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed.

We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute.

Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

**Sermon:**

There are some days when I think to myself...if I get one more inspirational quote, one more motivational message to be cheery, to be grateful, to be active and empowered...I'm just gonna scream!

Because sometimes, I am not that way.  
I'm not empowered. I'm not motivated to act. I'm not feeling grateful or cheery or focused.

I want to bake cookies. I want to hide under the covers. I want to be sad, or depressed, or grumpy and sarcastic.

And at first listen, especially those last few words (dress yourselves in Christ, be up and about!)...I feel like Paul is a first-century cheerleader/motivational speaker and I want to scream all over again.

But wait! Paul wrote this letter from prison. This is hardly the setting for cheerleading, “Pollyanna” thinking, “motivational poster” talk.

The man is old, worn out with his travels, and currently in prison, and he is pretty aware that eventually, he may be executed by the state.

He will never have his freedom again.

He won't go to Spain, as he dreamed of doing.

He will instead, be executed by beheading, in Rome, at the order of crazy Emperor Nero.

So, let's cut him some slack. And instead, maybe, acknowledge that we can be just a little bit in awe of him.

Instead, maybe you and I can wonder at the hope and faith that dwells within him.

Respect the power of his joy in the Risen Christ, in whom he trusts, who inspires his sense of excitement and urgency; “don't waste a minute”, he writes, “don't squander your time, your life; it is precious and important”.

“Look around, wake up, pay attention to God's gracious activity”, he writes, even in the bleakest of circumstances.

I can't help but respect this imprisoned man. Who is so excited by the wonderful presence of God, the action of God in the world, that he can write, “don't be so caught up in the day-to-day, that you are oblivious to God and the new day that is about to dawn; the day of God that is about to dawn”!

Even in chains, he is sustained by the glory of God's presence through the risen Christ, changing everything that is dreadful and despairing, through love and life, and transforming the world into beauty and completeness.

Paul believed in the God of Life above all things. He did not fear death even as it drew close to him. He lived in love with the God who brings Life and Hope and Healing of the world.

In chapter 8:35-37, Paul will write: What can separate us from the love of God in Christ? Will it be hardship or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword? Nope, in all these things we conquer, through the One who loves us.

And he can continue (8:38): that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present or yet to come...not power or height or depth or anything else in all creation...will separate us from the love of God that is known in Christ Jesus.

Paul insists that we who follow the Christ, who listen to his message of the deep, transforming love of God, who seek to build, with God, the world that God desires ...we who follow, need not hide under the covers, need not drown our worries in dissipation, in greedy acquisition, in any sort of despairing narcissistic indulgence.

Look around, he writes!

Get out of bed, he shouts!

Dress yourself in the light of Christ, in the power of his Love, and get out and about!

Ok, so we are not all ready to spring out of bed at that shout, not every day, perhaps!

But this message of hope and joy and awareness of the powerful love of God, that cannot be shaken by circumstances, that is greater than any dreadful circumstance...

This,

Can encourage us too.

Can help us through dark days, and weary nights.

Can strengthen us in our day-to-day, so that we continue to love largely, to seek the good powerfully, to serve the suffering world passionately; to bring light and hope, laughter and joy to places of darkness and sorrow.

Paul begs us, "be up and awake to what God is doing!"

Look around, every morning, and take his worthy advice to heart!

The night, Paul assures us all, is about over; God's dawn is about to break upon creation.

There is no need of despair. There is no time left for despair.

Instead, clothe yourself in Christ, in hope, and get moving in faith and love.

Alleluia!