

The Night Is Far Gone

Romans 13:11b—12

Introduction

To re-cap this last week in Lent: We began the week shouting, “Hosannah” as Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. On Maundy Thursday, our focus was on the blood of Christ as it seals the New Covenant, and how we are given forgiveness of sins and life as we eat His body and drink His blood. On Good Friday, the focus was the cross, as we, with our sister churches in Circuit 1 heard the seven last life-giving words of Jesus from the cross. That evening, we saw the cross as His throne. Though there were signs of life and glimmers of hope, this week has been dark. It culminated in the death of our Lord, leading into a long night of despair, remembering how the disciples lived through it that first time.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

But tonight, everything began going in a new direction. The Paschal Vigil began with a Service of Light, processing into the sanctuary behind a freshly lit Paschal candle, signifying the presence of the risen Christ with us. The long night of despair is over. Once again, we can shout, “Alleluia!” as we rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Perspective of Salvation

The Service of the Word brought everything into perspective, as we read, sang, and prayed about the story of salvation. That part of the service outlined the mighty acts of God from Creation through the Flood, Abraham, Israel, Job, Jonah, and Ezekiel, to name a few. This ties the resurrection of Christ, God’s greatest miracle with all His others.

A Time to Celebrate

In a few minutes, we will remember our Baptism and welcome new members into the church. This ties us into the Story of Salvation and the resurrection of Christ. As Paul says: *We were baptized into His death. ... [And] if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His (Romans 6:3, 5)*. So, we celebrate the life we have in Christ.

A Time to Live

As we think of the life we have in Christ, we are reminded of Paul’s words to us tonight in **Romans 13**: *The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12)*. We live in the

daytime. We live in the light of the Son. The light is His righteousness. Let us be clothed in His righteousness and live for Him.

Starting Anew

This brings us to the Communion part of our service this evening. In Communion, as we receive the body and blood of Christ, we are given forgiveness of sins and life. We are reminded that, because of our fallen nature, every day is a new beginning. We start every day serving Christ anew, living for Him anew. **THE NIGHT IS FAR GONE**. Let us take advantage of this opportunity to reclaim the life we have in Christ and walk anew in Him.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
