

# First Sunday of Advent, Epistle, Year A

GOOD MORNING!

Romans 13:11-14

First Sunday of Advent

Analysis by Marcus Felde

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 12the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

DIAGNOSIS: Farewell, Night

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Under Cover of Darkness

Reveling, drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling, jealousy—things we do that we would rather not have anyone see. There is a much longer list than this, and it does not only include “immoral” deeds. It includes our failures to help those in need; our impatience with a friend; our shabby motivations; the amount of our offering. Whatever. We hypocrites depend on sleight of hand and fooling the eye to cover our failure to live as God’s children in peace and harmony. We sweep the truth about ourselves under the rug while we put our best foot forward. We abhor the light, like cockroaches.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Wanting to Be

## Judged on Appearances

Why would we do things in the dark except that we are counting on a judgment based on what we let other people—and God—see? We spin our lives to fool God, but that means we think God can be fooled; ergo, God is not God to us.

### Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): You Can Run, But You Can't Hide

But the light is coming and will expose not only countable deeds but also the deceitfulness of our hearts and our lack of love for God. Daylight will destroy our fictions, and destroy us with them.

### PROGNOSIS: Good Morning!

### Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): My Lord, What a Morning!

In Christ, the crucified-and-risen, the world shines with a new light. We no longer expect and fear that this light will expose us (although most certainly the cross does shine light on the darkness of sin). Instead, in light of the resurrection we don't need to run for cover from God's judgment. Christ's light is one in which we can live—a light that is not our enemy but our armor! The light that has had the power to expose the truth about us finally, by God's mercy in Jesus, illuminates us—sets us free. My Lord, what a morning!

### Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): The Morning Star

Paul urges us to “put on” said armor, and “live honorably,” which means literally to live according to a good scheme” (I think). Not as people who have an honor that is our own; not as people who “have nothing to hide,” because we do. But because in Christ all is forgiven and we have no more guilt or shame. The “good scheme” is (shall we say) the “scheme of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” which sets us free from the law of sin

and death.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Let Us Walk in the Light

How do we live into this good “scheme”? By ever and always putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. By investing in our neighbor’s well-being. By enfleshing the prayer our Lord has taught us, seeking by thought, word, and deed that the Father’s name be hallowed, his kingdom come, his will be done; and that all be fed, forgiven, and freed from fear. As Paul says in Galatians 5:23: “There is no law against such things.” Put away the broom with which you used to sweep things under the rug, shake the rugs, go in peace, serve the Lord.