

A company called Bim Bam Banana manufactures a new gizmo called the Puzzle Alarm Clock. It is designed for especially heavy sleepers. If you have trouble dragging yourself out of bed in the morning, this is for you. On top of the clock are four interlocking jigsaw puzzle pieces. When the alarm goes off, the clock shoots the puzzle into the air, and the pieces scatter around your room. You have to get out of bed, locate the four puzzle pieces, and put them back together correctly on top of the clock; that will shut off the alarm. By that time, you will be awake. It sells for \$79, and the price does not include two AA batteries, which when you think about it kind of defeat the purpose. If you don't want to get out of bed, you could pluck out one of the AAs and go back to sleep.

The First Sunday of Advent is the Church's alarm clock. It is time to wake up and get ready for the day of the Lord. Christmas preparations already surround us. It is hard to escape the sights, sounds and smells of the season. Advent gets us ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but it has an additional goal. It prepares us for the *next* coming of Christ, at the end of our lives, at the end of time, when he comes as Lord of all and judge of the earth.

If Christ were to come today, if your life were to end today, would you be ready to meet the Lord? If not, then listen up. You think Christmas is coming? *Christ* is coming. The alarm is going off. Do something about it.

St. Paul compares it to getting out of bed when he tells the Romans they need to act in accordance with the gospel. They say they believe the gospel. Well now they need to act like it. He says, "You know what time it is. It is the hour for you to wake from sleep. Night is passing. Day is at hand." Then he compares the Christian life to throwing off your PJs and getting dressed for work. He says, "Let us throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." This is how he describes getting dressed for work as a Christian: putting on armor, the armor of light.

Paul distinguishes between the way we behave at night and the way we behave during the day. At night we are more tempted to misbehave. We are off duty, not at our best. Sometimes we drink too much. We get into fights. If someone commits a crime "in broad daylight," we are astonished because crimes typically happen at night. Paul says, "Let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," he says. Let Jesus be the very clothes we wear.

During the next several weeks we will be dressing for the season – dressing for the cold and dressing for the holidays. Let us dress also for Christ. Let us put on the armor of light. Everywhere we go, when people see us, let them see Christ. And if we are guilty of behaving like those who live in the dark, Advent is trying to sound an alarm. Don't hit the snooze button, throw off the old habits, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.