

I'll never forget the frog sermon.

I was at a black church on the North side of Denver, Colorado. The year was 1973. The preacher told of Pharoah and the frogs. The Lord sent a plague of frogs upon the land of Egypt because Pharoah would not free God's people. Frogs were everywhere: in the river, in the palace, in Pharoah's bedchamber, in Pharoah's bed, in the houses of the officials, and of the people, in the ovens and the kneading bowls. Frogs, everywhere Frogs.

Pharoah called Moses and Aaron, Pray to the Lord your God to take away the frogs and I will let the people go. "When should I pray?" asked Moses. And Pharoah said, "Tommorrow."

And that preacher said, "There are lots of frogs in your lives, and you pray, God take away these frogs from me ---- tommorrow. Let me keep my frogs for one more night.

I knew exactly what the preacher was talking about.

Though Paul had never met the Romans, when he wrote his letter to them this is what he said:

"Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment to wake from sleep."

Now the moment.

The sermon from the black preacher, Paul's word to the Romans fit today for me and for you just as well as when the sermon was first spoken, the word first written. Now is the moment to wake from sleep.

Today the day to get rid of the frogs.

Good intentions. The old line says that the Road to hell is paved with good intentions. I think I have done something when I decide that next time I will take time for my family. Next time I will not lose my temper. Next time I will listen better, next time I will share with the victims of the hurricanes. Next time I will not spend more than I can afford for Christmas, next time I will get to church regularly, next time I

will hold my tongue when the family gathers and not speak the <sup>words</sup> words that hurt. All good intentions for tomorrow.

But Paul says, "Now is the moment for you to wake from sleep. Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

What happens to the good intentions? So often they just get lost as life just keeps on keeping on.

Jesus said it in our gospel, "In the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away." Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage - just living day to day until there was not a single moment left - how easy it is for me to let that happen. Suddenly another week is gone, another year, another decade and all the things I want to do - all those things that I would hold most dear and most vital in my mind and my heart are lost in my busyness.

The coming of the Son of Man will be as sudden and unexpected as that flood.

One moment saying, I'll find time next year to speak to my neighbors about God. The next <sup>moment</sup> moment the screech of brakes, a crash, no chance to speak anymore.

One moment saying - When I retire I will have time work in a soup kitchen, volunteer at the hospital, get to know my own children. Then a pain in the chest signals that the flood has come.

One moment saying, "I'll help others after I have earned enough for myself until there was all the money in the world, but no time left.

If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming he would not have let his house be broken into. Stay ready, you will be meeting Jesus at an unexpected hour.

I think of how many times in my life Jesus suddenly appears to me in you. A parent dying, a job lost, a child disobedient. I think of how many times I have been too preoccupied with me to be there for you. How many times I realize only later how I did not listen, did not ask you to tell me more, did not share.

When Jesus got all done warning how he would come at an unexpected hour, he told the parable of the sheep and the goats. When you fed the sick, clothed the naked, visited those sick or in prison you did it to me, he said.

Tomorrow is not the day to begin. Now is the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.