

“REDEEMING THE TIME”*or***“THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE!”**

Ephesians 5:15-16

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (NKJV)

“Look therefore carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (ASV)

We are captives of a four-letter word: “TIME”. We are born in TIME and we die in TIME. We are in a stream called TIME which flows out of the infinite future through the focal point of the present and out into the past. There is never a TIME when we are not slaves to TIME until we run out of TIME! A fish swims with its mouth open and the water flows into its mouth and out through its gills. It cannot store up the water but only filter and use it. So it is with mankind and TIME. The stream of time runs swiftly. “Time and tide wait for no man.”

There are 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours and 525,600 minutes in each year. We cannot hoard it up, buy, borrow or beg more of it. And the most solemn thing about TIME is that we must give account to God as to how we use it. You can have the TIME OF YOUR LIFE if you use it for God!

Our text challenges us to *“redeem the time, because the days are evil.”* “Redeem” means to buy up the opportunities – to utilize time for the cause of Christ - take advantage of every golden, awakened moment of our lives. Every minute counts. An anonymous poet wrote:

“I have only just a minute
Just sixty seconds in it;
Forced upon me – can’t refuse it,
Didn’t seek it, didn’t choose it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it;
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it.”

How important it is then that we live every minute as if it were our last – and one of them will be! Therefore we are exhorted to *“redeem the time.”* Paul’s concept of time was that it is a fragment of eternity, given to us by God as a solemn stewardship. What is a “steward”? The word has a very interesting etymology. It comes from an old English word “styward”. The “sty” was the place where the pigs were kept called the “pig sty”. The hired hand who cared for the pigs was called the “styward”. From that word our word “steward” has evolved.

A “steward” is defined by Webster as “one who is a supervisor, administrator, manager or keeper of a trust.” A Christian steward is “one to whom God has given a trust, which is to be managed for Him and for which we must ultimately give an account.” Time is one of those

trusts. We are to be good stewards of the gift of time. How, then, can we be good stewards of time? There are at least three ways that I suggest to you:

- We must correctly appraise time;
- We must conscientiously appropriate time;
- We must consistently apply time.

I. WE MUST CORRECTLY APPRAISE TIME.

How valuable is time to you? We have watches on our persons; clocks in our homes, cars and on our streets and in public squares; there are seminars on “Time Management”; employees punch the “time clock” when they start their work day and when they end it. We are time conscious but do we correctly appraise time? If we are to correctly appraise time, we must take into account:

A. The Sacredness Of Time.

Time is sacred because it is a gift from God, it is the coin of life. [“Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend.”](#) – Carl Sandburg

Illust. In II Kings 20:1-6 we read of King Hezekiah whose time ran out. God said, “Set your house in order for you shall die and not live.” Then Hezekiah pled with God to extend his life and God gave him 15 more years. Ask King Hezekiah whether time is sacred or not and he would answer emphatically in the affirmative!

British Queen Elizabeth I cried when near death, “All my possessions for a moment of time.” Let us not wait until our death bed to correctly appraise time, to realize the sacredness of time.

“Every day is a magic chest,
The gift of time is in it.
So guard it well and do not lose
One golden, sacred minute.”

If we are going to correctly appraise time we must not only realize the sacredness of time but we must also be aware of:

B. The Shortness Of Time.

The Apostle Paul declares, “But this I say, brethren, the time is short.” (I Cor. 7:29) James says, “You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.” (James 4:14)

Someone put it this way:

“When, as a child, I laughed and wept, time crept;
When, as a youth, I dreamed and talked, time walked;
When I became a full grown man, time ran;
And later, as I older grew, time flew;

Soon I shall find, while traveling on, time gone.”

The inescapable fact of life is this: “As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away.” (Psalm 90:10) And the Psalmist goes on to say, “So teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12)

Illust. Over my grandmother’s dresser in her bedroom was this saying:

“Only one life, ‘twill soon be past;
Only what’s done for Christ will last.”

She saw those words every morning as she combed her hair and I never saw her wasting time. She was a conscientious time consumer who was a hard worker at home and church. Her appreciation of the brevity of time and her usage of it impacted me greatly as a child.

We must appraise time in view of the sacredness of time and the shortness of time but we must also appraise time in view of the:

C. The Setting For Time.

We are exhorted to “*redeem the time.*” Why? “*Because the days are evil.*” Evil times are the setting in which we utilize time. And Paul writes to Timothy, “*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.*” (II Tim.3:1)

The fact that we live in evil days should make us more aware of how we manage our time. We live in a dark world and it is getting darker. Jesus said we are “the light of the world” and if we are ever going to penetrate the darkness, now is the time to “redeem” – to buy up that opportunity.

Illust. I have stood at the bedside of dying friends. On occasion I have heard the Doctor or Nurse say, “He/she doesn’t have much time left.” None of us have much time left! So, let us, like Jesus, “*be about our Father’s business!*” (Luke 2:49)

In view of the sacredness, the shortness and the setting for time we must correctly value it if we are to be wise consumers of it. Furthermore,

II. WE MUST CONSCIENTIOUSLY APPROPRIATE TIME.

Again, the word, “*redeem*” suggests that we appropriate conscientiously whatever time we have on earth. Let us ask 3 questions about conscientiously appropriating time:

A. Why Appropriate Time Conscientiously?

The wise person will appropriate time wisely because time is the stuff of which life consists! Look closely at your watch or clock. With every tick life is passing away. There it goes – gone forever – no recalling that last tick of time! That is sobering, isn’t it?

Listen to what some great writers have had to say about time as it relates to life:

- Emerson said, “Whoever loses a day loses life”
- Lord Bacon said, “To use time is to use life”
- Dr. Otis Young said, “Time wasted is mere existence; used properly is life.”
- Benjamin Franklin said, “Time is what life is made of.”

We often hear it said, “I don’t have time.” That statement advertises that the speaker is a poor time manager! That flies in the face of what we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes:

“A time to give birth and a time to die;
 A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.
 A time to kill and a time to heal;
 A time to tear down and a time to build up.
 A time to weep and a time to laugh;
 A time to mourn and a time to dance.
 A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;
 A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.
 A time to search and a time to give up as lost;
 A time to keep and a time to throw away.
 A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;
 A time to be silent and a time to speak.
 A time to love and a time to hate;
 A time for war and a time for peace.” (Eccles.3:2-8 nasu)

Notice that this compendium on time does not say, “a time to waste”! “You cannot kill Time without injuring eternity”. To waste time is to waste life. It is not wasted if used wisely, that is why we must conscientiously appropriate time.

B. When To Appropriate Time Conscientiously?

II Cor. 6:2 - “*Now is the accepted time.*” The context is: “Now is the time for salvation.” However, the principle holds for all of life and that is, “Now is all the time we have, right now! This very moment.

Have you noticed that the people who get the most accomplished are the ones who use their time wisely? On the other hand, people who waste a lot of time never have enough time to accomplish very much! We either use time wisely or lose time foolishly and when it is gone it is gone forever. Teddy Roosevelt said, “Nine tenths of wisdom consists of being wise in the use of time.” We cannot use time in any better way than to give it to God’s cause and for His glory!

Time is not yesterday, time is not tomorrow, time is this second, this breath! Living in the present with eternity’s values in view is when we are conscientiously appropriating time.

A third question is: how do we appropriate time conscientiously? The answer to that question leads me to my last thought:

III. WE MUST CONSISTENTLY APPLY TIME.

Back to our text in Eph. 2:15-16 *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* The main emphasis of this statement is this: We are responsible to God to be good stewards of the time God gives us by consistently utilizing it.

We see that principle in the word “walk.” We are to walk circumspectly, wisely – not erratically, not in spurts and jerks as foolish people. This word is used throughout the New Testament to describe the believer’s consistent way of life:

- Acts 21:24 “Walk orderly”
- II Cor. 5:7 “Walk by faith”
- Gal. 5:16 “Walk by the Spirit”
- Eph. 2:10 “Walk in good works”
- Eph. 5:2 “Walk in love”
- Eph. 5:8 “Walk as children of light”
- Col. 1:10 “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”, etc.

All of these statements suggest and require consistency. To be more specific about how to apply ourselves to the time we have let us look at the context in Ephesians chapter two which shows us how to apply time. We do so:

A. By Guided Living. Eph 5:17

“So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Eph.5:17)

God has a wonderful purpose and plan for the lives of His children. What a tragedy that so many senselessly and aimlessly wander around, wasting day after day, instead of understanding what God’s will is for them. And yet, many of these same persons will quote Psalm 23, *“The Lord is my Shepherd”* and refuse to be guided by Him. Dear friends, live a God guided life and there will be no detours, no defeats, no disasters! To apply time consistently, live a God Guided life. Find God’s will, follow God’s will and finish in God’s will for your life!

B. By Governed Living.

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph.5:18) God wants to Guide us but He also wants to Govern us. The Governed life is the Spirit-filled life. A man critically said of D.L. Moody, “Does Moody have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?” Another answered, “No, but the Holy Spirit seems to have a monopoly on Mr. Moody.” If we are to be good stewards of the time God gives us we must apply that time consistently and the only way we can do that is to be governed by the Holy Spirit.

C. By Gladdened Living.

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of

Christ.” (Eph.5:19-20)

The Christians who are aware that they are stewards of the time God has granted them are the Christians who are the happiest. They have:

- Music in their soul - “*singing and making melody*”;
- Gratitude in their hearts – “*giving thanks*”;
- Humility in their relationships - “*subject to one another.*”

The guided and governed person is the glad person. Why? Because that person is the person who: correctly appraises time; conscientiously appropriates time and consistently applies time.

CONCLUSION

What are you doing with the time that God is now giving you? Selfishly pursuing mere earthly goals or living with eternity’s values in view? The time is coming when the Lord will say to us as He did to the man in Luke 16:2, “*Give account of your stewardship.*”

Illust. In Kensington Gardens, one of London, England’s most beautiful spots, is an elevated clock with four sides – a clock on each side. One faces north, one south, one east and one west. Underneath each clock face is carved in large letters, “TIME FLIES”.

Each tick of time brings us closer to the day when we shall stand before our Lord and give an account of our usage of the time He gave us. What are you doing with the time God is parceling out to you? Let us “*redeem the time for the days are evil*” and in doing so you will have the time of your life!

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