

## REDEEMING THE TIME

### INTRODUCTION:

1. God Warns Us in the pages of the Old Testament that life is short and uncertain and that we ought to make the very most of every opportunity.
  - A. Prov. 27:1: “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.”
  - B. Prov. 20:13: “Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread.”
  - C. Ecccl. 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”
  - D. Job 14:1-2, 5: “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue. ... Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; you have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.”
  - E. Psalms 39:4-5: “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.”
  - F. Psalms 90:9-12: “For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; we finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”
  - G. Job 9:25-26: “Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no good. They pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey.”
2. OUR SONGS EXPRESS OUR SENTIMENTS OVER WASTED OPPORTUNITIES AND LOST TIME.
  - A. “Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified.”

- B. “O the years in sinning wasted, could I but recall them now, I would give them to my Savior, to His will I’d gladly bow.”
  - C. “Your empty wasted years He will restore ...”
  - D. “Tomorrow’s sun may never rise ... this is the time Oh then be wise.”
3. Our Lord Said: “Work while it is yet day for the night cometh when no man can work.”

4. James warned us about counting on tomorrow:

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit;’ whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” (James 4:13-14).

5. Shakespeare in Macbeth has written:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
 To the last syllable of recorded time;  
 And all of our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death.

6. William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, wrote:

“There is nothing of which we are apt to be so lavish as of Time, and about which we ought to be more solicitous; since without it we can do nothing in this world. Time is what we want most, but what, alas! We use worst; and for which God will certainly most strictly reckon with us, when Time shall be no more.”

Harvard Classics, Vol. I, p. 333

**I. THE GREAT APOSTLE PAUL ADMONISHES THE YOUNG CHURCH AT EPHESUS:**

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Eph. 5:15-16).

- A. The literal translation is: “Be constantly taking heed how accurately you are conducting yourselves, not as unwise ones but as wise ones, buying up for yourselves the opportune time, because the days are pernicious.”

Ἐξαγοραζόμενοι “to buy up” (redeeming) is in the middle voice as it is used here and it means “to buy up for one’s self or one’s advantage.” Metaphorically, it means, “to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good,” so that zeal and well-doing are as if they were the purchase-money by which we make the time our own.” (Thayer).

Time is not κρόνος, “time as such” but καίρος “time as regarded in its strategic, epoch-making, seasonable, opportune seasons.” The idea is not to make best use of time as such, which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.

- B. The Apostle Paul had established the great church at Ephesus and had spent three years of his life preaching there. And now from the loneliness of his prison room in the great City of Rome, he can write to them with a detachment of time and place - but with a fond remembrance and tell them to “Redeem the time” - that is, to “buy up” to take advantage of every opportunity which came their way. “Opportunity doesn’t knock twice” is a very true statement in too many cases.

Simply Stated He is Saying: “Don’t waste your lives as fools do but rather take advantage of every opportunity to change your world and to serve your God.”

## II. ONE OF THE GREATEST TRAGEDIES OF OUR LIVES IS LOST OPPORTUNITIES.

### A. In Our Personal Lives:

1. Opportunities to Make Our Bodies Strong, Our Minds Alert, and Our Spirit in Tune With God.

Stopford Brooks preached in Bedford Chapel on a Sunday night in 1883 and said:

Our work begins to decay the moment we begin to neglect it. With its decay begins an intellectual and moral corruption, and ere long, unless we are quick to repent, that which was our best good is turned to our evil. The garden that brought forth roses brings forth now the plants of poison. And it is the same with character as it is with work. The intellect unused, loses its powers, or carelessly used, loses its quickness, and then comes the shame of worthlessness, and the worse evil of knowing that we have deserved it. The soul, unexercised in moral

effort, allowed to drift down the river instead of being driven up the river, loses its health, gains softness and sentimentalism, and mistakes these for goodness, and through its very moralities reaches their opposite. And the Spirit when we permit it to get weary of aspiration, to think perfection too lofty an ideal, to turn aside from questions that seem insoluble, to repress the thirst for God and the passion for immortality - soon, sooner than any other part of us, falls asleep, and we go through life with a third of our Being dead; till the storm comes, as come it will in this world of change, and we are wakened with the trump of God. Who does not know that activity is needed to gain the use of time, outward and inward.”  
Sermons, 1883

2. To take advantage of a Formal Education, the opportunity to learn a trade, to read good books.
3. To take and make opportunities to teach our children by **example** and **experience** what is most important in life.
4. To help our parents, our children, and our grandchildren with their problems.

B. In the Life of the Congregation:

1. To purchase good building sites.
2. To build adequate buildings.
3. To establish adequate Bible Classes.
4. To help the poor and the needy of the world.
5. To reach the lost of our community.
6. To establish other congregations throughout the state.

C. We need to redeem the rest of the time which God has given us to:

1. Enjoy our families.
2. To grow into a mature person in Christ.
3. To point our faces toward Heaven and take Everyone along with us.