

Time
March 10, 2024

Time Eph 5:15-17; Psalm 90:12

[Sermon Series Intro] Mike Ford, Pastor of Young Adults. Good to be with you. For the next 3 weeks we're doing a sermon series on Generosity and specifically what it looks like to be generous with our Time, Treasure, and Talents. In other words, what do we do with our time, our money/wealth, and our gifts/abilities.

[James] I was meeting with Andrew and James about this series and James mentioned that in Acts 20, Paul is speaking with the Elders of the Ephesians church before he departs. Paul finishes his encouragement to them with a quote from Jesus. And James says he thinks that besides Revelation, this is the only time in Scripture where Jesus is quoted as saying something that isn't already mentioned in the gospels. (Prove James wrong!)

Paul in Acts 20:35 says, **Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**" (Repeat)

I think deep down, we know this to be true.

[Illustration] My friend a few years ago dropped his son off at college. Not knowing exactly what to do, or how to express his love and how proud he was, he said he went to the ATM and just got a bunch of cash out. He said he didn't know how much and he definitely messed up their budget for the month and as they were at the dormitory, everything had been moved in. His son was about leave with some friends and he was going to drive back home. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a wad of cash. He slapped it into his son's hand and looked at him and said, 'I think you're the man.' And then he left.

Now, in this situation, who was more blessed? The son received a bunch of cash and positive affirmation from his dad - he was blessed BUT... he'll spend that money. The Father, he went away full. He gave away money and love and yet he was full when he left. More blessed.

According to the values of God's kingdom, joy and happiness come not in taking but in giving, not in consuming but in serving. That to 'find yourself' as our culture would invite us to do... Jesus says the way to do that is to lose yourself. That unless an acorn dies and buried, it cannot produce fruit.

Time

March 10, 2024

So the claim of Jesus and this sermon series is that it is more blessed to give than to receive and we're going to look at this claim through the lens of time, money, and gifts. This morning, we begin with time. How to be generous with our time.

[Introduction] Time is a mystery. **St Augustine**, early church father, bishop of Hippo in the 4th century wrote his famous book *Confessions*... Near the end of the book he brings up time. *"What then is time? As long as no one asks me, I know; but if someone asks me and I try to explain, I do not know!"* But then he spends like 30 pages trying to explain this mystery of time. He goes on, *"How do these two times exist, past and future, when the past no longer exists and the future does not yet exist? And the present - if that were always present and not passing in the past, it would no longer be time but eternity. If, then, in order to be a time, the present comes about by passing into the past, how can we say even that the present exists, seeing as its ground of existence is that it will not exist!"*

Time is a mystery. Don't have to be an early church father scholar to understand that. We feel like we know what time is but if I asked you to explain it.. it's difficult. people have good timing, some of us are bad at timing... some of us are early people but others no matter how hard we try we show up late! (usually you two are married :))

One author notes that in the area of mental health, time slows down when depressed and speeds up when one is manic, and seems to move ever more quickly as we age...

Probably the greatest mystery of time is how it never stops, like waves that continually crash upon the shore. FORTNITE? Time feels like it gets faster as you age...

[Interstellar]... Movie *Interstellar* depicts dystopian future for earth's inhabitants - blight and famine lead to the imminent demise of human beings as we know it and so a group of astronauts, led by Matthew McConaughey (who else?), leave planet earth, travel through a wormhole to another galaxy in order to find life on other planets.

And the film, given that it's in space but also because it's directed by Christopher Nolan, explores the concept of time. Gravity. And in one scene, they drop down into a planet - Miller's Planet - which is very close to a black hole and so because of relativity (thank you Albert Einstein) 1 hour on Miller's Planet is equivalent to 7 years on earth. Well. They spend 3 hours and 17 minutes on the planet which correlates to over 23 years on earth.

McConaughey gets back to the shuttle and sits down to watch video transmissions of his son and daughter that he had left back home. His daughter, Murph, was 10 years old when he leaves. And he watches video after video of her growing up - each new video she's older and he missed it all. He's just weeping, full of longing and regret - for most regret is time based -

Time

March 10, 2024

because he just saw his 10 year old daughter grow up before his eyes into a beautiful and brave woman, and he can't get those moments back. And he wonders, was this the best use of my time? Should I have lived differently?

Do you resonate with that? We try to commodify or control time but we feel impoverished in regards to time. It just flies by and as we try to reach out our hands to grasp it... it vanishes. Time in some ways, as James discussed in Ecclesiastes, feels like *Hevel*.

How do we spend our time wisely? As **Psalm 90:12** says "***Oh Lord teach us to number our days that we might get a heart of wisdom!***" Jesus says, that a wise use of our time involves giving it away. Generously.

[BB] 1- Brief History of time 2- Brief Theology of Time 3 - Live wisely within time 4 - Live in God time

[MP 1] BRIEF HISTORY of (western) TIME

Comes from John Mark Comer's book, ***The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry***, John Swinton's book, ***Becoming Friends of Time***, and Oliver Burkeman's Book, ***Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals***.

[Sundial] 200 BC ppl complaining what this "new technology" would do to society... you know what it was? AI :) No, A sundial... **Playright Plautus** said, "*the gods confound the man who first found out to how to distinguish hours! Confound him, too, who in this place set up a sun-dial to cut and hack my days so wretchedly into small portions.*"

[monks] St Benedict, desert monk from 6th c on came up with the day to be organized around 7 times of prayer, often with a bell. By the 12th century the monks invented the mechanical clock to rally monks to prayer. In fact the Middle English word for clock is derived from the middle Dutch and German words for bell.

[1370] first public clock tower was erected in Cologne, Germany. For the whole town to see. This introduced the category of **clock time**. Time is linear and measurable and controllable. It's perceived as fragmented, scheduled, and something we can use to make our lives better. We feel like we can **see** time.

Before this time was mostly dominated by the agrarian system. Summers were long, winters were short. Sun up you're up, sun down you're down.

In fact if you were a Medieval Farmer you wouldn't have this concept of 'wasting' time or needing to 'save time' - it's just not a concept they had. Every season required the work of planting and harvest, building and tearing down. Birthing and burying. Historians called this "task orientation". The rhythms of life emerge organically from the tasks themselves.

e.g. probably biggest example of this today is having a newborn baby. You are dragged out of normal clock time into deep time. Task orientation. What matters is not what time it is but

Time

March 10, 2024

the tasks, is my baby hungry, sleepy, needs a bath, etc. Your life with a newborn is oriented not around the clock but around tasks of care.

[Clock] made time artificial... We stopped listening to our bodies and working with the rhythms of nature and instead listened to a mechanical artificial, arbitrary alarm. More efficient? Sure. Industrial Revolution loved the clock. Less human...? Perhaps...

[Technology] Since then we've had a plethora of labor-saving devices. Coffee pots, grocery stores, AC units and water heaters, laundry machines, ovens, microwaves, smartphones. ALL THINGS invented in the last 60-70ish years...that have saved HUNDREDS of hours of labor for us every year. And yet...we feel like with MORE technology, we feel that we have LESS time?

[Burkeman] Oliver Burkeman in his book on time management of mortals says this, "*Each new [technological] advance seems to bring closer to the point of transcending our limits; it seems to promise that this time, finally, we might be able to ... feel completely in control of our unfolding time...We tend to feel as though it's our right to have things move at the speed we desire, [but] the result is that we make ourselves miserable.*" (162)

[Summary] We live in a time where advancements in technology make us believe that we can conquer time. We can manage it. But it leaves us feeling more anxious, joyless, stressed and time impoverished. We are chained to the tyranny of the urgent.

[Marilyn Robinson] In the words of essayist and novelist Marilyn Robinson, "The spirit of the age is one of joyless urgency."

Very brief history of (western) time. Dominated by clock time. And if you feel like you never have enough time to get things done... then how can you be generous with it?

[MP 2] BRIEF THEOLOGY of TIME

Augustine in *Confessions* brings up another question many of us has asked, "*what was God doing before he created heaven and earth?*" Sensible question. I've wondered that. But Augustine thinks it a dumb question (which hurts my feelings) bc there was no time before God created the universe.

[Swinton] "*In temporal terms, God was not doing anything with God's time before God created the world, because there was no time for God to do anything with.*" (58)

Genesis begins with "In the beginning..." and therefore the creation of heaven and earth was also the creation of time.

"God created the world not *in* time but *with* time." Book 11, ch 6 of *Confessions*.

[Subpt A] Time is a CREATED THING. Its a creature. And therefore God cannot be bound by something he has made. God is outside of time. He is eternal. He has no beginning. We can't

Time

March 10, 2024

help but reference events in time because we are time bound creatures. So it's better to not say God is time/less but time**FULL**. Bc time is a created thing that flows out from God.

This is why psalm 90 says, "**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**" Or v. 4 "**For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**"

Or **2Peter 3:8** **But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and 'a thousand years as one day.'** Notice... Peter isn't saying a thousand years *feels* like a day to God but it IS like a day. Why? God can see all moments as the same time while also by the Holy Spirit be present in each moment - like right now. Augustine would say for God the past is the present, the present the present, the future is the present. BUT This makes the incarnation of Jesus all the more remarkable because God was not only limited by a human body but God chose to limit himself by the realities and boundaries of something he created - time. But he had to do that in order to redeem us IN time.

[Subpt B] Time is a GIFT And if Time is a created thing then God called it good in Genesis 1. Time is a gift - good, but like all good gifts it has been corrupted by sin (we have unhealthy relationship to it, maybe we're tempted to worship it), but God loves to redeem broken things. The work of Jesus on the cross includes the redemption of time. The word here in Ephesians 5 "Make the best use of" is used only 4 times in the NT and one is Colossians 4 - which was our NT reading. The other times? Galatians 3:13 'Christ REDEEMED us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.' Word - Redeem. The best use of Christ's time was in the business of redeeming... And so as we live in Christ and follow him then we too can redeem time. ***Instead of trying to master time what if we received it as a gift to be given away?***

You see if God is love, and creation is an overflow of that love. And time is a part of creation, then it follows that time is a gift of God's love for the world. As John Swinton says, "***The purpose of time, then, is to facilitate and sustain love.***"

[Summary] You see a theology of time includes the fact that it is a created thing, a gift for humans from God in order that we might have the ability to express redeeming love.

[Trans] So now we have done a brief history and theology of time. How do we...

[MP 3] LIVE WISELY within TIME

What does it mean to live wisely within time? To inhabit time so as to love?

Time
March 10, 2024

[Subpt A] Live INTENTIONALLY

READ v. 15 - look carefully... thoughtfully, not accidentally. Live Intentionally.

NT there are 2 different words for Time.

One word is **Chronos**. It refers to chronological time. Clock time. Minutes and hours.

Kairos. Deep or sacred Time. Time that refers to seasons or opportunities.

For example: Both these words for *time* show up in Luke 4 when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness.

Luke 4:5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of **time (Chronos)**

Luke 4:13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune **time (Kairos)**.

The word for *time* in our passage? KAIROS. Another way to translate v. 16 would be:

"Make the best use of this season... this sacred moment... this opportunity God has given you..." What matters when you think of time in this way is not how long will this thing take but rather what is the nature of opportunity or task in front of you. You relate to and inhabit the moment differently and that's where wisdom comes from. It's what allows you to be generous because rather than feeling time poverty you feel fully in the moment.

E.g. snow days... Remember as a kid when you had a snow day. We just had Snowmageddon and some parents probably thought we had too many snow days... Remember? You wake up and NO SCHOOL! You could just go play in the snow. Snowball fights and sledding and building snowmen. Cold feet, numb hands, and full souls. Why? Because it was a kairos moment breaking into chronos time. It was an opportunity where chronos time went away. You could just be. The task was playing in the snow.

Chronos shows up 54x but Kairos shows up 86x... perhaps its emphasized more because it's more of how God wants his people to inhabit his world and relate to time...

If you want to live wisely and make the best use of your time... look carefully for *kairos* moments. Be intentional. Attentive. Discern your season...

I think this is why Paul mentions alcohol in verse 18 next. ***"Dont be drunk on wine, but be filled with the Spirit."*** This isn't a condemnation on alcohol per se, but its the example *par excellence* of someone who - if intoxicated - is someone not living wisely, not redeeming the time. If you're drunk then you're full on something else rather than sober, alert, and fully present in the moment.

Inhabit time well is to notice God at work and notice kairos moments... drunkenness is easiest way we numb our ability to live intentionally, thoughtfully. Attentively.

Time
March 10, 2024

But it's not just alcohol right? It's anything in this world that we become intoxicated with more than the love of God. Paul is saying... if you get intoxicated with something more than God, drunk on greed or lust or power, then, well, you won't be sober enough to notice *kairos* moment right in front of you.

[Trans] Which leads to the last point which is... to live wisely within time is not to just live intentionally, but to live slowly.

[Subpt B] Live SLOWLY

You see if time is to facilitate and sustain love, and God is love, then what is the speed of love? How do we enjoy a pace to life that is wise and intentional and generous?

The main claim of the book *Ruthless Elimination* - when you're in a hurry you cannot love... think of what you're like when you're in a hurry? Live slowly is to live a life of love.

[Irish] Let Irish poet John O'Donohue... once said that most of us live life on the surface like a jetski on water, when *Kairos* time invites us to sink beneath the frenetic pace of the waves and underneath we can see things clearly.

Some of us are so busy on the fast pace of the surface of *chronos* time that we are passing by *Kairos* opportunities to love but we cannot slow down enough to be generous with your time. To live in God's time... is to slow down and discern. God is love and loved us and so we are invited to love...and well...**love takes time. Takes time.**

"God doesn't organize our kingdom life to exhaust us. He does it to increase your capacity to love and if your schedule is making you less loving you're not inhabiting time the way God wants you to." - Pastor Jon Tyson

[Jesus] Who know who did this really well? Who lived life slowly? Who lived a life of love?

[Kosuke Koyama] *Japanese theologian who wrote "Three Mile an Hour God" because that is the average pace of someone who walks, and Jesus ministry was walking from place to place... and so he provocatively calls God speed as 3mph. He says this: "God walks 'slowly' because he is love. If he is not love he would have gone much faster. Love has its speed. It is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It is 'slow' yet it is lord over all other speeds since it is the speed of love."*

Jesus lived wisely, making the best use of his time... redeeming us, by living with intentionally slowness.

Time

March 10, 2024

[RH] Whether stopping to take time with children, or telling a greedy tax collector he wants to have dinner with him, or stopping to engage with a woman suffering for 12 years, or wandering to desolate places to be with God, or leisurely enjoying meals with sinners, or slowly breathing out those last minutes on the cross by offering forgiveness for the very people murdering him! Jesus used his time wisely, making the best use of it, be generously giving it away to people like you and me.

****APP****

e.g. mothers waking up to feed a hungry child... singles who visit a friend for a weekend bc they're really struggling with life and you show up and slow down to be with them empty nesters who spend their sunday AMS watching kids in nursery bc they have the time high schoolers ... its giving your younger sibling a ride to school even though you'd rather sleep in

****APP** What season are you in?** Middle or high school. College. Single. Married without kids, married without kids but a dog, married with kids. Empty nesters. Etc.

Don't compare... ask God to help you live wisely with discernment and intentionality with the kairos time he's given you. This is redeeming the time looks like... embrace your limits and ask *"what does it look like FOR ME to live intentionally with my time in this season?"* generous people with time... discern the kairos moments God has for you in the season your find yourself in...

[Conclusion]

Probably the best author I read as I was preparing for this was John Swinton's - Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He wrote a book "Becoming Friends of Time: Disability, Timefulness, and Gentle Discipleship."

And he mentions the story of John Hull, who was a British practical theologian in his 50s who lost his eyesight because of a degenerative disease.

John wrote that "Many forms of disability mean that many things in life have to be done more slowly."

He goes on to say how his disability changed his perception of time. He seems to transcend clock time to live in eternal Kairos time. He says this:

"[My colleague] Michael tells me he thinks my perception of time has undergone a change since I lost my sight. He thinks that of all the people in the faculty I am the only one who always seems to have plenty of time. Everyone else is rushing around, chasing their tails, trying to cram every minute with necessary tasks, and to squeeze the last drop out of time. I alone seem to have all the time in the world. Michael remarked that in my work I don't cut corners; I just go

Time

March 10, 2024

on, doing what has to be done, until it's finished. It does not matter how much time it takes. In his own work he has to cut corners all day long."

John Hull tells us that his encourager with blindness changed his perception of time. He could no longer see time and so he learned to live wisely by receiving each moment of the day. In fact, he not only finished all his work BUT he also seemed to have all the time in the world for those around him. His ability to live in kairos time, to live slowly, enabled him to be generous.

The slowness of his disability is seen to m much closers to the slowness of God and thus he was to able to live and love generously.

I pray that we might learn from our friends with disabilities in how to relate to time in the way God does and thus live wisely, making the best use of our time, generously giving it away to those around us.

Let us pray.

****DO A BENEDICTION WITH TIME!?!?!****

Time
March 10, 2024

I heard a story once of a 16 year old who really wanted a car. This was maybe 20-30 years ago so cars were much cheaper. But his family was poor and they only had one family car so he began to work. And began to save. And finally after a year, he had gathered up enough money - I can't remember now if it was \$500 or \$1000 - but it was enough to get this beat up old car he had found. He couldn't wait. So the next day his dad told him he'd drive him there to pick the car up and as they met the owners and its time to pay, the boy takes out an envelop with his money in it and his dad puts his arm out and pushes the envelop away and says, "No son. I'm going to pay for this. You keep that money for college." And then takes out his own envelop of cash and pays for the car. The son didn't realize that his dad had saved a little money each time from his paycheck and sacrificed new clothes and things he wanted so that he could bless his son.

Jesus time - God speed 3mph

90%of Gods life spend whas in total obscurity... met up at 18? 21? 24? Confident, in divine timing... prayed and unstressed and secure and interrupted on how was to having been interruption. Free from obligation and expectation - relational not outcome orientation...

E.g. meeting jesus, getting married, having a child, going to college, drivers license, etc. it happened in chronos sure, but those were kairos moments

P 15- Christianity is fundamentally a "happening"

chronos time... and how we spend our time reveals what we care about ... what we love...

The more you fight for 'me' time the more you become less of who you want to be BUT the more generous you are with your time in how you relate to others the more you become the kind of person yo uwant to be. Bc it's more blessed to give than to receive.

Time
March 10, 2024

[Senate subcommittee] 1967 predicted with all the advancements in technology, that in 1986 (my birth year), average American would only work 22 hours/wk and 27 wks/yr... BUT the opposite has happened. Today we actually work an average of 4 more WEEKS per year than people in 1979.

Oliver Brukenman - page 162
Andy Crouch? - superpower

[1879] Another invention that affected our experience of time was the light bulb. Thank you Thomas Edison.

[SLEEP] Now, some studies show that before the light bulb the average person averaged 11 hours of sleep a night.. 100 years ago, ppl averaged 9.5 hours of sleep... TODAY 7. Yep. 7 hours of sleep... so now maybe you realize why you're so exhausted all the time!

If only we knew what God would be like if he walked this earth... oh wait! How's Jesus inhabit time? What is God's speed? Slow.

in regards to Jesus time... Time slows down your world becomes smaller, your vision more focused, your responsibilities more clear... PAGE 81 - e.g. of Jesus slowing... children, Zaccheus, etc. Just think how often Jesus was interrupted. He's on his way to heal a centurion's daughter then a woman bleeding for 12 years interrupts him and he stops. God's speed is slow. Because living generously with our time by loving those around us... love takes Time.