

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:15-17

Sermon Title: Faithfully Stewarding Our Time For the Glory of God

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Speaker: Chip Cherenfant

Ephesians 5:15-17

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time,[a] because the days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

If time is a limited resource, as God's people, we must steward it faithfully for the glory of God.

Lord, make me aware of my end and the number of my days so that I will know how short-lived I am. 5 In fact, you have made my days just inches long, and my life span is as nothing to you. Yes, every human being stands as only a vapor. *Selah* (Psalm 39:4-5)

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. (James 4:14)

Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time,[a] because the days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:15)

Pay Careful Attention to Your Walk

Why is the way we live our lives important as God's people?

Because a holy church highlights the power of the gospel while a defiled church obscures the power of the gospel.

If we want to live wisely in this world we have to pay careful attention to the way we live our life. And the way we can do this is by practicing self-examination.

We look at the conduct of our lives and behavior and ask ourselves,

- “Am I spiritually healthy?”

Christians who pay careful attention to their walk regularly lay their lives before God. And this can be done in your daily time with God. You can Grab a notebook and journal your thoughts before the Lord and examine various aspects of your life:

- your spiritual practices,
- your family life,
- your work responsibilities,
- your physical health, and so on.

You can Ask yourself,

- “Am I walking wisely in each of these areas?
- Am I drifting in anyway way?
- Does the characteristics of holiness mark my life?
- Where do I need to make adjustments next week?
- What sins am I unwittingly committing?”

Self-examination is good because it's essential to our growth as a believer. But Self-examination can also be an area where the enemy will try to attack.

Discipleship is simply helping one another walk in wisdom.

Because the loving ministry of discipleship, which includes warning, admonishment, and correction, is a gift from the Lord for our spiritual good

- When we see another member in spiritual danger, do we lovingly alert them and notify them?
- When we see a fellow brother or sister walking foolishly, do you urge them to walk in wisdom?
- Are we being watchful over one another, even as we strive to be vigilant over our own walk?

Are we receiving this ministry to one another?

- Do we have the humility to heed the warning?
- Are we teachable?
- Do we receive correction as a gift from God?
- Or, in our pride, do we ignore the words of those who love us?

If we hope to walk wisely in holiness for the glory of God, we must “pay careful attention. And There is both a private and communal call to this.

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— **16 making the most of the time,[a] because the days are evil.** 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. **(Ephesians 5:16)**

Questions to consider:

- Are we viewing each day as an opportunity to do spiritual good?
- Do we treat each day as an investment into the kingdom of God, or are we waisting the days, weeks, and months on vain pursuits?

“Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.” *William Penn*

A door turns on its hinges, and a slacker, on his bed. The slacker buries his hand in the bowl; he is too weary to bring it to his mouth!. (Proverbs 26:14–15)

Sometimes obedience to God means doing less, not more.

Many of us find our schedules overflowing, particularly those of us with busy careers and children in the home. If that's you, you need to have ongoing discussions with your spouse about your calendar.

- Ask, “What should I start doing that I'm not doing?”
- What should I stop doing that I am doing?
- How can we prioritize our family's calendar and the rhythms of our week for our spiritual health and flourishing and for those around us?
- How can we plan daily to maximize our gospel impact in our family, church, workplace, and community?”

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:33)

Prioritize the Lord each day.

- If you're too busy to spend time with God each day, you are simply too busy.

Prioritize the care of your family.

- If you're too busy for family devotions, you are simply too busy.

Prioritize your involvement in the community of the church.

- If you are too busy to encourage and disciple others in the church, you are simply too busy. We must devote ourselves to these spiritual priorities.

Understand the Will of the Lord

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time,^[a] because the days are evil. **17 *So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.*** (Ephesians 5:17)

The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm.. Proverbs 13:20 (Please remove this one. I won't be using it.)

We understand God's will for our lives by reading the Word of God.

- The Bible tells us that we all have sinned in rebellion against God.
- Because of our sin, we deserve the just wrath of God as our consequence. But in God's eternal plan of redemption, he has determined to save us, redeeming sinners like us through the blood of his Son.
- And so Jesus, being truly God and truly man, lays down his life for us as a substitute, bearing our sin and shame upon the cross.
- And not only did he pay the penalty for our sin, but he rose again on the third day bringing victory over death!
- And so it is the will of God to save sinners as we turn from our sin and trust in the perfect savior, Jesus.
- *If we hope to understand God's will for our lives, we must repent of our sins and put our faith in Jesus.* Only when we are found in him can we understand the purpose that God has prepared for us.

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8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10

We should live for God's glory and his glory alone.

- It means that growing in holiness and godliness is one of our primary responsibilities as a Christian.
- It means that the Great Commission, telling others about Jesus, should be one of the ultimate aims of our life—whether its at our job or with our hobbies.
- It means helping others in our family, church, and those around us follow Jesus with their lives.
- It means we “withdraw from the attractions of this world” and reject “everything that would hinder our spiritual growth.”

- It means we long to commune with the God of glory and help others do the same!

We should not discern God's will by our impulses but by reasoned, and careful meditation on Scripture after prayerfully seeking wise counsel.

C.S Lewis wrote:

"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next."

Questions to reflect on throughout the week:

- How will you walk this week?
- How will you redeem the time in your life, family, and work?
- How will you advance the kingdom at the grocery store? On the basketball court? At the hospital? At the school? At the office?
- How will you redeem the time during your dinner with your family? In your hobbies and leisure? With your friends and neighbors?
- How will you walk in wisdom with the unique life and gifts the Lord has given you?

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