

Colossians 4:5, Essentials, “The Value of Time”

How are you feeling this morning? Tired? Losing that hour of sleep is no fun...but, tonight about 20 till 8 when the sun is just then setting along the horizon, we'll be thankful that the days are growing longer and warmer. Yes, we say, we lost an hour last night...but we didn't, actually, right...we just moved it...because we all know that everyone has the same amount of time...24 hours in a day.

Whether you are a rich man or a poor man? Whether you are a king or queen, or a ditch digger...we all get the same amount of time...24 hours. No more and no less. Just think about that. A rich man can't buy one more second time. He can buy yachts and cars...even islands...but he can't buy any more time. Even a dictator or tyrant, can't demand more time...all we get is 24 hours a day.

It's been said: “God has bounded our lives with eternity and He prescribed before we were ever born the amount of time that we're to live, and we will not live one second more, nor one second less than the exact amount of time He has marked for our lives.” That being true...AND IT IS...how can we maximize that time and live it to its potential? The title of today's message is “The Value of Time.”

We return to our study of chapter 4 of the book of Colossians, and we find the Apostle Paul asking the church to pray for him. (We saw this last week as Pastor Dale shared.) Remember, he's under “house arrest” in Rome, tethered to a Roman soldier by a six-foot chain. He's asking the people to pray for his release so that he can do more to spread the Gospel...and it's after this plea that he offers another plea about how we're to spend our time. Let's look at it together.

Colossians 4:2-5

² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

Did you catch the word right before the last word in verse 5? See the word “time,” what comes before it? It's the definite article, “the,” correct? THE. ...make the best use of THE time.” In the Greek this means there is a definite, prescribed amount of time for each of our lives. It's not random.

Job 14:5

Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass.

Psalms 139:16

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

You see, church family, all of our days have been numbered...we've all been given a prescribed amount of time by God. So, the question is: How will we use the time that's been given to us? And really the **ultimate question** is this: Can we really see our lives and our time on this earth as ours or God's? Remember, as Christians, we are not our own...as followers of Jesus Christ, my life isn't mine, it's His. And that puts things in a much different perspective. That's how Paul saw his life...

Acts 20:24

²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul saw his life as a course to be run, as in a race. He saw his life as a ministry he received from the Lord. And he lived his life to the full and finished that course... He told Timothy while he was in prison for the second and the last time in Rome (before he was executed)...

2 Timothy 4:6-7

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Paul is in heaven today and I can only imagine what an inexpressible joy it had to be for him to wake up in heaven right after he had been executed in Roman. Paul was beheaded you know. And yet, Paul lived the EXACT AMOUNT OF TIME HE WAS SUPPOSED TO LIVE.

Go back to Colossians 4, verse 5 and see our text again...note that **first phrase**...this tells us how we're to live and use our time...

Colossians 4:5

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

Outsiders. Who are they? This is a term that's used in the NT to speak of those who are outside of the kingdom of God. In other words, they aren't Christians. **Now remember**, Paul has been praying for **open doors** to share the Gospel and that's how he saw his life...he saw his life as being about the work of sharing the Gospel. What motivated his life and should motivate ours is living first and foremost for Jesus and his Kingdom.

No, Paul wasn't living his life for comfort or retirement or the weekend...he saw his life as something to be lived for the kingdom of Christ and he encouraged the Colossian believers to see their lives that we to...and (we should too)! We are to live our lives and spend our time walking in wisdom toward unbelievers. You say, "What does that mean: to WALK IN WISDOM?" Well, let's think about it... It's been said: **Wisdom is a synonym for simply walking with God**. In other words, if you're walking with God then you're walking in wisdom, so... if you're walking in wisdom then you're walking with God.

The great Bible commentator William Hendrikson said this:

"In the long run, the reputation of the Gospel depends on the conduct of its devotees. Behave wisely toward outsiders, always bearing in mind that though few men read the sacred scrolls, all men read you. Watch how you spend your time. Watch how you live."

So, how are you living? Are you walking in wisdom? **Turn in your Bibles to the companion passage found in Ephesians 5**. Remember, Paul wrote to the Colossian church and the Ephesian church while he was under house arrest in Rome. He also wrote to Philippian church and to a man named Philemon (we talked about him Wed. night).

Ephesians 5:15-16

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Folks...would you agree **the days are evil**? I would...because they are! And the days were evil in Paul's day. Big time evil! After all, this was the Roman Empire, and church family, life in the Roman empire was very, very difficult for Christians... They were "marked people." The Emperor Nero was beginning to use Christians as scapegoats for his political blunders and he arrested Christians and

had them thrown to lions in the Roman Coliseum for SPORT. Can you imagine living like that? Can you imagine the pressure and fear? Yet, the job of every Christian of every age is to live as wise, not us unwise among unbelievers...making **THE BEST USE OF THE TIME NO MATTER WHAT!**

Let me stop here for a moment...and say this...as we seek to live for Jesus, let me tell you HOW the world is going to see us...how **OUTSIDERS** are going to view us... They are going to see us as fools... Listen, as we try to live for Jesus and follow His teachings...His ways...His principles...the world will call us “fools, morons, pitiful, unintellectual people.”

The world believes that we need to abandon our foolish way of thinking and be **brought up to** their way of thinking. Yet church, it's the opposite that's true.

Romans 1:21-22

²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools.

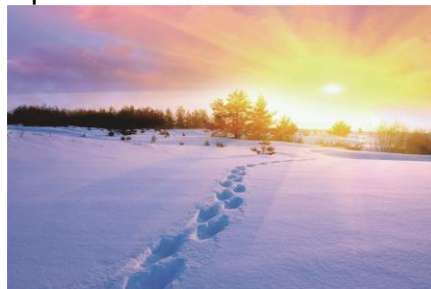
You see, it's the world and the world-system of Satan that must come to terms with Jesus' way of thinking or they are the ones who will be doomed. Listen, if you're a believer and follower of Jesus, you're the wise one. The Bible says as much...

1 Corinthians 1:18-19

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Listen, the greatest fool in the world is the one who says **THERE IS NO GOD**...and this is not just the atheist...this is any person who doesn't think God has any right or claim to his/her life. No! They're the fool! You see, this is the person who doesn't think he or she has to submit to God or accept what Jesus did for them on the cross...all of that is foolishness to them!

Church family, we must never forget that to truly follow Jesus means we are the wise ones and we will walk in wisdom. Remember our picture?



We are to walk intentionally placing our steps in the steps of Jesus! How did Jesus walk? Perfectly. And He's given us His Word to know how we are to walk... The Bible is a lamp to our feet and light to our path. When we read the Bible, we'll know how to follow Jesus...we'll know how to walk in wisdom before all people.

So, are you reading it? I'm telling you it's the key to know how to follow Jesus. It's the map...it's the guide. Do you have a daily reading plan? Where are you reading right now?

There will never be consistency in our walk...there will never been an exactness with our walk...we will NOT walk carefully if we aren't shining the light of the Word of God on our path. It's a dark

world...we need the light of the Word. Make up your mind to get into some sort of pattern or plan for reading the Bible and start tomorrow. Don't delay...or you will continue to struggle in your walk.

I want to show you a word... Look at the word "best" in verse 5...this is crucial...

Colossians 4:5

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

The word "best" in the Greek is a word that means *to redeem or buy up*...like something you would do if you see a product on sale...you want to buy as many of them as you can because it's such a good deal. Christians should see time that way. We are to look at each day of our lives as an opportunity to make the best use of that day...of that time.

Listen, we said it at the beginning of the message...there is just 24 hours in a day...we are limited by that. We all have the same opportunity to use those 24 hours wisely or foolishly. You know Donald Trump has the same amount of time as the guy sitting in prison or the guy flipping burgers. And the same is true of us. We're all pressed for time, right? How many times have we all said: "If I only had a few more hours to do this or that..." But we don't. So, what are we going to do with our TIME? What are we going to pick to do? What are we going to choose?

Moses said in Psalm 90...

Psalm 90:10

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span^[c] is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Psalm 90:12

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

It is wisdom that helps us to buy up and grab the best opportunities...it's wisdom that helps us NOT to get sucked into the vortex of the world's system.

How do you use your time? In a given day...how do you use your time? How much time do you waste? How much time do you spend on things that have no eternal value? How much time do you spend entertaining yourself? Amusing yourself? Isn't it easy to get lost on trivial things that don't matter? Just flipping through stuff on our phones or TV? Just wasting time? How do you use the opportunities that's been given you?

You say, "Well, I have to work, or I have to go to school...and I have to sleep..." Yes...I get all of that...and so do I...but, what about the **disposable time** you have? What about the time that's not taken up with the "must do's?" What about that time?

Am I saying that you've got to spend all of that time in prayer or Bible Study or out witnessing to people at WalMart? No I'm not... But, how about some of it? I'll ask it again...

What is the BEST USE OF THE TIME? What is the wisest use of the time?

Galatians 6:7-10

⁷Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due

season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Are you doing good? How about to your wife, your husband, your children? Do they get some of your opportunities? Let me ask this: Do you give some of your opportunities to the church? What do you do here? Anything? When is the last time you volunteered some of your time at your church for the Lord? What have you given lately? Are you giving...or just taking? Are you contributing?

I want you to think with me about something. Put on your thinking cap and concentrate with me... This is a bit deep. Ready? See the screens...

“Opportunity is in respect to time what time is in respect to eternity.”

Opportunity = Time

Time = Eternity

Opportunity = Eternity

Each opportunity we have in life is an opportunity to literally effect eternity. What you and I choose to do with our time has the potential to effect eternity. Right? Listen, the only piece of eternity you and I will ever hold in our hand is the opportunity of this moment, that's it. How many decisions have we made in our lives THAT at the moment, we had no idea that decision would affect the rest of our lives? Many...

I think of David... When he took the cheese and bread to his brothers at the battlefield where Goliath was ranting and raving...he had no idea that within minutes he'd be fighting him and risking his life. **Napoleon once said:** “There is in the midst of every great battle a ten-to-fifteen-minute period of time that is the crucial point. Take that period of time and you will win the battle. Lose it and you will be defeated.”

I like how James, the half-brother of Jesus discussed time. (In fact we just studied this passage a few Wed. night's ago in our James series)...

James 4:13-15

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— ¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

If the Lord wills... Oh...that reminds me of the Ephesian 5 passage...we read earlier verses 15 and 16, now see it again and let's add verse 17...

Ephesians 5:15-17

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Do you know what the Lord's will is for your life? Can you honestly say that you're living in the will of God...that you're using your time...your opportunities...fulfilling God's will for your life? Most Christians have no idea if they are living in the will of God. Let me tell you how you can...

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.^[b] ² Do not be conformed to

this world,^[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.^[d]

Do you want to know the will of God... #1 You offer up your life to God...no strings attached...you are a living sacrifice...you die to yourself...you don't have right to your life, because Jesus owns you. #2 You don't act like the world. You are not conformed to the world's system. #3 You allow your mind to be renewed, transformed... How? By the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in concert to help us know where to put our next step... Then you can be certain you are walking in the will of God.

I close with this... Years ago, when I was a sophomore in High School, on the Ides of March...that's March 15th, that's one week from today... (that date marks the assassination of Julius Caesar...Et tu Brute)...on that day, a young man died at WWHS. The young man was a football star who had signed a D-1 scholarship to play for UNC. He was leaving school and he crossed the center line and was hit head on. I heard the crash and I ran up the hill at West and what I saw...I can't tell you...it's too graphic...

That scene has played over and over throughout my life. It changed me...it gave me a sense of my mortality...it gave me a sense of urgency...because I knew that young man was dead and he would never live another second. I want to live my life as if I won't live tomorrow...because I might not, nor may you.

Are you ready? Are you ready to meet Jesus and if He allows you to live...will you use today and make the BEST USE OF THE TIME? Let's not waste our lives on trivial things...but, seek first the Kingdom of God and make the best use of the time, while we still have it!
