

Well, I'm so thankful to be with you guys this morning, and there's so many reasons.

So how about I just tell you instead of just say that.

First, I'm thankful to be here because I love Jeff and Maren.

I got to see them in Colorado just a few days ago, probably a week and a half ago now.

It feels like a few days ago.

But I've known Jeff and Maren for a while.

If you don't know who Jeff and Maren are, you're new here.

But Jeff's the pastor here.

Maren happens to be his wife.

And, uh, man, there's, there's just an affection that's grown in my wife and my heart.

My wife's name is Fran.

We've been married for 36 years.

I had to think about it.

Um, and we've known them probably for about 15 and a lot of time, a lot of life, a lot of prayers, a lot of things go into when you say you love somebody.

Um, that's not your family, right?

Um,

And so that's one of the reasons I'm super thankful to be here.

Here's the second reason I'm super thankful to be here.

I love the way you treat and love your pastors, all your pastors.

And that's not in a sense that you make them heroes.

I love that you don't make them heroes.

There's a lot of churches where we're like the pastor's here, the church is here, and Jesus is here.

That's terrible.

That's not the way God designed it to be.

And I think you guys love your, honor your pastors appropriately.

And I love that.

It is a sign of a growing, maturing church when you figure out how to love leaders well.

And it's the same thing about it with your kids.

I mean, your kids don't know how to love you as parents really well when they're little.

You say they do.

They're like, oh, my kids love me.

They really don't.

They're just thankful you feed them, right?

And that you don't put them outside with the dogs when it's 90 degrees.

But when they get older and they can start loving you without...

anything being required, all of a sudden you say, oh, you're growing up.

You're getting mature.

And that's what happens in a church when they love leaders, small group leaders, pastors, whatever it is.

And I see that in this body.

Here's the third thing I'd say.

Jeff and I talk a lot.

I mean, he's shared with me a lot about what's going on in the last months and weeks and years here at this church.

And what's beautiful is just to see you guys growing up as a family and

And representing the life of Christ as the family of God is one of the things that God's called us to do in this world.

Ephesians chapter 3, at the end, it says, glory to Jesus Christ.

And then it says, glory to our Father God.

And this is the two ways God's

greatness is going to be revealed in the world.

One is through Jesus, and then he says second through the church, which is crazy to think about this, that we get to somehow represent and display the greatness of God, that he is the greatest thing as the body of Christ.

One of the ways we do that is how we live in love, pour out grace as a family, how we give mercy and hope to those that are hurting, how we bring truth to those that need to hear the truth.

And so I love getting to be here and serve you guys.

And I'm going to get to be here this whole month.

If you didn't know that, I'm going to get to be here this whole month.

And so you may not be clapping a month from now, but right now it's okay.

I love it.

And we're going to be talking about specifically about this idea that God tells us in Psalm 90 of we need to, this is the prayer of the psalmist.

Matter of fact, I think this is Moses in Psalm 90 says this, teaches to number our days.

Now, you don't number your days when you're two.

You don't even know what days are.

You have to explain to them in TV shows, right?

Or like small, like this is four TV shows before we get to grandma's house, right?

That kind of thing.

And so days is like to a two-year-old, it's like, what, what?

Even as like a 15-year-old, like when the word says, teach us to number our days, we're like, well, what does that really mean?

You don't start numbering your days until you lose some, right?

And what do I mean by lose some?

You're driving down the road as a 17-year-old, this happened to me, and I was getting onto a highway and it was wet and my car started doing this.

Like on a...

what would be equivalent of 820 out here.

I was in Dallas, 635 was that loop that goes around Dallas.

And I hit, coming on, it had been raining and my car just started spinning.

And it wasn't like spinning like NASCAR fast.

It was just like slow.

I could like see people going by.

I was like, hey, what's going on?

As I was spinning around like this.

But I thought I was going to die.

So I'm getting onto a very busy road, 18 wheelers are going by me and I'm just thinking, okay, this is not the way I thought this was gonna happen.

But after you don't die in moments like that, you start numbering your days.

You start thinking, wow.

And maybe not for long, this happened to all of us in high school.

Somebody died in your high school, right?

Car crash and everybody got sad for about three days.

You numbered your days for about three days and you started writing songs and things in the yearbook to those guys that died in that senseless car crash.

And there's things that happen in our life that cause us to number our days.

But the Lord's telling us this, I want to teach you to number your days.

And it's a way of saying this, I want you to realize that everything in this life is a gift of mine, specifically the days you have.

And let's get even more practical, the minutes and the hours and the time that you have.

And there's a reason for that.

I want to read this passage to you where we're going to be for four weeks.

This is Ephesians chapter five.

So if you have your Bible, we're going to be in Ephesians chapter five, beginning in verse 15.

Jesus taught us in his word that the spirit is the one who alone guides us into all truth.

And so I want to pray for that right now, that God would guide us into truth as we read this word.

Um,

and that he would teach us, that he would feed us and nurture us.

So Father, right now, you told us, you taught us that as your Holy Spirit's the only one that can open our eyes to see truth, that we can't do it on our own, we can't reason our way into the kingdom, we can't understand the things that you have for our souls, like teach us to number our days by ourself.

So Holy Spirit, come be our teacher, feed us, be our healer, our restorer, our guide, our life, our very breath, and we pray this in your name, Jesus, amen.

We're gonna be in verse 15 through verse 20 and then we're just gonna actually look at two verses this morning of this passage.

It says, look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is.

And do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery but be filled with the Spirit.

addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody of the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So a little background on this text in Ephesus.

It's really crazy.

I get a lot of emails as a

What's terrible is when someone sends you an email and in the middle of that email, there's like bold capital letters.

And you kind of know like they want you to read this, like they're shouting at you, so to speak, with bold capital letters.

And what your eyes do when you get an email like that is you go down immediately to the bold capital letters, don't you?

You don't read the first paragraph or the last paragraph, you just read the sentence in the middle.

And

That's terrible because you don't get the context of the whole email.

Even if the whole email is mean or happy, it's probably good you read the whole thing.

When you read a little passage like this in the middle of the letter, my encouragement to you is you kind of need to know.

That's why Jeff, pastors here, teach you through whole books at a time.

There's a reason you're learning how to read the Bible together.

You're learning that the Bible is accessible by all of us, not just pastors who stand up here.

And so a little background on Ephesians here just for you on two things.

One, this is the

the place, the church that Paul was writing to.

This past year, I got to go on a trip to Turkey.

Turkey's in the middle of modern-day Ephesus.

If you ever get a chance to go to Ephesus, go.

It's one of those weird places that is a...

It is a archaeological dig that has nothing modern around it.

The city died 2,000 years ago when a big plague happened and the city had to move out of where it was.

And so it eventually just became this covered up ground that universities have started digging up.

And now when you go there, it's just one big dig site.

And it's all these Roman ruins.

And if you're a nerd into stuff like that, it's really fun.

Even if you're not, it's pretty cool.

They do concerts there now.

Like Elton John did a concert in this Roman amphitheater.

Listen to this.

That holds over 30,000 people that was built in Ephesus back during Paul's day in Rome.

Because the Romans were just pretty amazing at stuff like that.

Other things that weren't so amazing yet.

But they could build buildings that were amazing that are still there.

And so this Ephesus has been there for years.

Ephesus was kind of what you think of like when you think of like New York City.

It was a port that was an access point for the empire of Rome, both directions into Asia, but also into back towards Rome.

It was a very culturally diverse place because a lot of cultures, a lot of ethnicities and a lot of cultures are coming into one place, landing in this one place.

It was a very commercially diverse place because the economy was
was coming through in and out of there.

And it was a very religiously diverse place, had a lot of temples to a lot of different gods.

One of the main gods was this god called Artemis, who was actually a woman.

And so there was a big worship of this god called Artemis there.

And so in this place, it was one of the crown jewels of the Roman Empire because of its beauty and its facility to helping Rome be who it was.

But to Paul, it was just a very dark place.

Because it represented a lot of things that were just hurting people in this world.

It was an epicenter of slavery.

It was an epicenter of people getting abused and used for cultural reasons.

It was an epicenter for people being sexually abused in those temples that I was talking about.

And so what on the outside looked really beautiful and really wonderful to the empire, to those that were following Christ, it wasn't just that it was immoral.

It was actually hurting people in all of that immorality in a lot of different ways.

And so Paul comes into this town and he spends three years, the more he spent than any other place, starting this church.

And several years later, probably 10 or 15 years later, now he's writing these letters back to this church while he's in jail in Rome.

So he's in jail.

He's in his house arrest.

It's not his last one before he dies, but he's in a house arrest writing these letters to this church, encouraging them to remain in the things of Christ.

So what's going on in these letters?

If you've ever read Ephesians, here's what's going on.

The first three chapters are all about who God is, what he's done, and who we are.

That's what he does in the first three.

He talks about the very character and nature of God and being Redeemer and Savior and Father and

And then he talks about the things that God's done.

Matter of fact, in the first chapter of Ephesians, he uses the phrase or some phrase like it, in Christ, something very similar to in Christ, 17 times.

Because what he's trying to describe to the people in Ephesians is that this is who you are because of who God is and what he's done.

In Christ, you are adopted.

In Christ, you've been chosen.

In Christ, you were redeemed.

In Christ, you've been forgiven.

In all of these things that we are, not things that we do, but things that we are,

One of my favorite things to do when I get on a plane and people want to talk.

And have you ever sat by that person that just sits down next to you on a plane?

And whether you have headphones on or not, they're like, hey, what's your name?

I want to talk.

I'm bored.

And they just like, like a little kid, right?

And they're just like, I sat down next to a lady like this the other day.

She sat down.

Man, she just wanted to talk.

So this is my favorite thing to do sitting on a plane.

Feel free to use this.

I'm not mean, but I'll turn and look at the lady.

I'll take my headphones out and I'll say, hey.

after she talks for a little while, when she breathes, I say, hey, tell me who you are without telling me what you do.

And usually this is what happens.

Well, I'm a mom.

Okay.

It's kind of what you do, but I'll give you that.

But I'll just ask you this.

What happens if all your kids grow up someday and leave?

Well, I'll always be a mom.

And I'm like, yeah, it's going to be different though.

Momming at 58 with grown kids out of the house is way different than momming at 28 when you have three in the house or six or 17 like Austin does.

Kidding, Austin.

It's six, right?

Austin, you're in here?

Maybe downstairs.

But it's really hard for people to describe who they are without telling you what they do.

You think about it, like how would you describe yourself to someone without telling them what you do?

How would you describe like who you are in here?

The first three chapters of Ephesians is just God telling you who you are.

Listen to this, in Christ.

That's all it is.

It's not telling you what to do.

It's just telling you who you are.

Chapter four, he starts telling us then how we live that out.

He starts talking about this unity we have in Christ and this is how we live out unity and why it's so vital, why we have to fight for it, what it looks like to live in unity.

Chapter five, he starts talking about this desire he has for us not to live in darkness anymore.

Remember what Ephesus was, this really dark place.

A lot of the people that had come to know Christ had been living in the middle of very, very dark things

And he's telling them, hey, the things that go on that's been done in those places, you shouldn't even think about those things anymore.

You should not talk about those things.

But matter of fact, you should be loving the Lord in such a way that your life is like a light compared to the darkness that you used to be a part of.

Because he says this, the kingdom of light is here.

Jesus said it this way.

This is the very first sermon of Jesus.

This is from Mark chapter one, verse 14.

This will be on the screen.

It says, now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God.

This is Jesus' first sermon.

Most of his first sermons, this was on repeat out of Jesus' mouth.

The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel.

The kingdom of God being God has come to this earth.

Jesus was saying, I'm the king, I'm God.

I've come to this earth and I'm establishing God's kingdom.

The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel.

In Matthew chapter six, this is Jesus, one of the ways Jesus taught us to pray.

Listen to what he says about the kingdom.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What he was saying is this, is that while the kingdom is here, it's still coming.

It's not full yet.

So when is the kingdom fully gonna get here?

This is what Jesus said in Matthew 24.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed through the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.

There's a reason we are passionate about proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to every square inch of this earth, to every tribe and tongue that has no access to the gospel.

Jesus said that when the kingdom will fully come is when the gospel has been proclaimed to every tribe, tongue, and nation.

And when that happens, Jesus will return and he will fully establish his kingdom.

Now watch, this is where you and I live right now.

We live in a kingdom that's come that's not fully yet been fulfilled.

that's really hard for us to get our hands around because we either live in one of those two extremes, like the kingdom is here and it's, why isn't it fulfilled yet?

And we're frustrated that the kingdom of God and others were frustrated that darkness still lives among us.

We're frustrated when cancer happens.

We're frustrated when people die.

We're frustrated when it seems like the enemy wins battles going on in this earth because the kingdom is not fully at hand.

And yet, listen, if the kingdom of God wasn't here, people would not be getting saved.

The enemy would not be being pushed back.

We would not see new churches being started.

There would not be new people groups every day being crossed off that list that are hearing about the gospel and churches are being started in places that have no access to the gospel right now.

And so the kingdom of God is here.

Jesus said, I'm setting this up.

I'm establishing it, but it's not fully yet.

It's in process.

And so in Ephesians chapter five, Paul through the Holy Spirit makes this plea.

Listen, you have to live like the kingdom is here, but it's not yet fully at hand.

And because of that, time matters.

What you do with your time, how you live, listen to what he says.

I'm going to go back to this, to this.

Well, before I get there, just let me sum up all that in this thought.

The kingdom of God has come according to Jesus.

It is now, but it's not yet completed.

And there's two things that will happen when it's completed.

There will be full justice and full beauty.

So if you've ever thought that's not fair, there will be a day you're not able to say that anymore.

Let me say that again.

If you've ever thought, man, that's just not fair.

There will be a day when everything is fair.

Just.

Everything that's ever been done, hear this, that is wrong according to God's will, one or two things is going to happen.

This is what justice is at the end.

It's either going to fall upon Jesus.

So everything that you've done, let's get personal for a minute.

Everything that I've done that is against God,

is either gonna fall upon the suffering that Jesus took in my place, and it will be so justly punished that I won't be able to ever think or have a thought of shame or guilt again because I'm gonna see all of my sin completely and justly paid for in the life, death of Jesus.

There won't be a thought of like, Lord, how, and everything that's ever been done to me, hear this, everything that's ever been done to you,

will be fairly and justly consumed in God's justice, either poured out on Jesus or poured out on the person who did it if they reject the mercy of Jesus.

Does that make sense?

So if someone's ever done something and you're like, man, that's not fair.

They just need, you just want some vengeance.

This is why the Lord says this, vengeance is mine.

Because he's either poured it out on Jesus or

For this believer in Jesus Christ and everything they've ever done to you is forgiven by Jesus.

Doesn't mean there's not things we need to work out.

Reconciliation.

I'm just saying that justice for what they've done, if they're a follower of Christ, has been poured out on Jesus.

If they're not a follower of Christ, one day justice will be poured out on them.

Way better than you ever can.

Way better than any can of justice you can ever open.

Justice will happen.

And you will never say again, this isn't fair.

There's a second thing that you will never say again.

That is so...

Where's the beauty of God?

You will stand amazed and stunned in the beauty of God and you will worship, you and I will worship Jesus and live in the beauty of that.

And never again will we be missing beauty in this world.

That will be the completion of the kingdom.

That's what's coming.

It's in the process.

That's why we can go to places like Colorado and we see mountains and we're like, man, that's beautiful.

It gives us, watch, a taste of the beauty of God, but it's not the fullness of what it is.

Matter of fact, he says who he is and what he's going to be in heaven is even better.

Better than whatever makes your eyes go, man, that's the most beautiful thing.

So what does this mean for you and I?

Ephesians 5, Paul warns us and encourages through the Spirit to live as though the kingdom has come, to walk as though the kingdom has come.

Listen to his plea again.

This is verse 15.

Look carefully then how you walk.

Let's just look at that phrase real quick.

Look carefully.

When was the last time you thought of, and the word walk means not just how you walk, but how you live day to day, hour to hour, minute by minute, breath by breath.

Look carefully how you live your days, your hours.

When was the last time you thought about, prayed about, examined how you're spending your days and your hours?

The phrase look carefully means with some urgency and some wisdom.

Look carefully means with some wisdom and some urgency.

It means to examine, to study, to be intentional with how you're walking, living day to day in the things of Christ, but just in the things of all of your life.

How are you declaring God's kingdom?

How are you declaring God's kingdom with your words?

How are you declaring God's kingdom with your life?

Are you representing the beauty of God or the darkness of this world and how you live day to day?

It's the first thing he's telling us.

Look carefully how you walk, not as wise but as unwise.

And then he says this phrase, making the best use of your time because the days are evil.

We're going to spend some time on this little phrase right here because it's kind of where we're going to be the next four weeks.

This phrase, making the best use of time, I want to unpack a little bit of it for you.

And it means just definition-wise, just so we can get our hands around this.

There's a giant Greek word there that I'm not going to pronounce because it makes no sense for me to try to pronounce that.

But that word means this, to redeem or to buy back at a price.

When a slave was being sold, there was a price on that slave's life.

body to own them if you were going to free that slave if you were going to somehow do something to free that slave there was a price to free that slave and the word for the price to free that slave is this is the word we have all through the scripture redeem

So when the scripture says that you've been redeemed, what it's saying is this, is that you were a slave to sin.

You were a slave to the darkness of sin.

There was nothing you could do about the power of sin in your life, and there's nothing you could do about the fact of stop sinning in your life.

That you were a slave being held captive to that.

And here's the last thing that that word means, is that you were a slave to the consequences of your sin.

That there was a just God who was judging your life.

So all of those things you were enslavement to, to be set free from that sin and the power of that sin means you were redeemed.

And the price that was paid, the price that was paid for you to be redeemed was Christ.

And so the freedom price for you to be set free from slavery is what this word means.

In their culture, that was a big deal because if you were going to be set free from slavery, somebody was going to have to pay your price.

Right?

It didn't mean they were buying you to bring you back into slavery.

It meant this.

They were buying you to set you free from the slavery.

This phrase here is this idea.

It's telling us to redeem the time.

When it says making the best use of the time, it's saying redeem the time.

Watch what he goes on to say.

Because the days are evil.

Why?

A couple of reasons.

Urgency and ownership.

Why?

Let's talk about these two thoughts for a second, why we need to redeem the time.

Urgency, the idea of urgency is here because the kingdom is coming soon.

He's wanting us to redeem time because the kingdom's coming soon.

The deeper truth in this is that your time is the Lord's.

And so I just wanna pause here for a second, recapture your attention.

If I've lost it for a second, I just want you to hear this.

When was the last time you believed as a follower of Jesus who's been redeemed by the blood of Jesus that everything that you have, everything that you are is his?

So here's what I'm saying to you this morning.

Will you look carefully with me how you view everything about your life?

Who owns it?

Because if there's any part of me this morning, there's any part of you that believes that somehow I own aspects of my life and I tithe aspects of my life to the Lord, I just want to be super honest with you and super loving with you and super

maybe open with you about my own heart.

Like that is a unbiblical, ungodly, un-gospel way to look at your life that's been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

And I struggle with that.

There are times when I say, okay, Lord, this is yours, and this is yours, and this is yours, and this is yours, and this is yours, but this is mine.

And I don't say that out loud to people or even to the Lord.

I just live that way.

And you know how I know I'm living that way?

When this thing gets asked to be used in a way I don't want it to be used.

Whether it's my money or my time or my marriage or my gifts or my experience or just anything.

When I feel like I know best how to use this and the Lord somehow is making it clear that he wants to use this differently, man, there is a fight in my heart with him about this.

Anybody else?

And so I just need you to hear this this morning.

When God says look carefully at how you're walking with him, how you're using your time because the days are evil, he's saying you need to redeem that which I've redeemed in you.

The time that you have, the days that have been given to you needs to be redeemed because you're living in the middle of a time when what's going on all around you doesn't look like the kingdom of God.

And so what does that practically mean?

What does that look like?

There's gotta be some urgency in us, but there's a second thing.

We've also gotta understand ownership.

And I just wanna help you with some questions.

Here's some thoughts.

The time you have each day, each month, each year, do you live with it with some kingdom urgency?

Do you live hopeful and expecting that Jesus would return soon?

When was the last time you thought, man, Jesus could return soon?

And I don't mean that like because you got to do something awful tomorrow and you just went out of this world.

That's usually when a lot of us are like, please, Jesus, come back.

Because something terrible is going on and we're like, well, I guess Jesus coming back would be better than me having to face this.

I'm not talking about because you're in a fix or a bind or something terrible is happening, but I'm just, things are good.

And somehow inside of you, you're like, Lord, I don't know that I'm ready not to see this or experience this or this isn't going to happen.

My bucket list hasn't been completed, but I'm ready for you to return.

Because listen, if your bucket list excites you more than Jesus coming back, ownership is messed up.

You're owning some things.

Grandparents, if you're praying that God will let you live to the day that you could see your grandkids married, ownership is messed up.

I have two new grandchildren in my life, two little girls.

I've had no girls in my life, except my wife.

I've raised two boys.

My house smelled very differently than those of you that grew up with girls in your house.

My basement still smells like there's boys down there.

And we've done all sorts of things to make that thing smell better.

We have two little girls now in our house and not in our house, but in our lives.

And our lives are just completely different.

There's a lot more pink.

There's a lot more smiles.

There's a lot more crying.

There's a lot, I mean, there's a lot more of everything, right?

But it's just very different.

And that's a good thing.

That is a gracious gift from the Lord.

It's not a bad thing.

But if I'm really looking at God saying, God, if you take me before I see my granddaughters married, I'm going to be mad.

Listen, I do not understand who owns who.

There's all sorts of good gifts God's given us in this world.

I'm not saying that you can't enjoy those things or even thank the Lord for those things and appreciate who he is in those things and other people.

But they are gifts and we are stewards.

The moment you stop becoming a steward, the moment you stop becoming an owner, then we start negotiating with the Lord about stuff.

That's not our place.

Teach us to number our days.

Teach us to number our days.

The time you have each day, each month, each year, whose time is it?

Do you live as if it's your time or God's time?

And I know some of you in this room are like, man, I would love to have some more time.

One of the things we're going to talk about over the next couple of weeks is, okay, you're not going to get more time than you have just during the day.

You're not going to get more than 24 hours.

So no matter how you, no matter what you do, you have a certain amount of time during the day.

Does that make sense?

And so if you need more time, we're going to talk about how do you redeem the time the Lord's given you?

Because you can complain the rest of your life, Lord, give me more time.

You know what the Lord knows?

If I give you 26 hours in a day, you would still be, some of you would still be busy and still complaining.

And some of you are like, man, I got all sorts of time on my hands.

I'll just say this to those of you that are like, I got all sorts of time on my hand.

Then you're probably not living for the kingdom.

I'm not saying this might be a season where you've had some time given back to you.

But you're living on one or two extremes.

You're like, man, I do whatever I want.

It's like I'm on an island with a corona in my hand all the time.

Like that's how you're living.

And then other people over here are living like, man, I am so busy.

I have every moment of my day scheduled.

And I just want you to hear, like, I don't know about either one of these.

What I do know is this.

God wants you to redeem your time for him.

Whether right now this is a slower season or a busier season, it's not the point.

Whose time is it and how are you living for it?

Who feels like owns it?

Have you carefully looked at how you're spending your time ever?

But would you do that with me over the next month?

Because this is what's gonna happen.

Some of you are gonna learn how to say no to some things that are really good that people have been asking you to do that you don't need to be doing.

And that's gonna redeem some time for you.

Because for the first time in your life, you're gonna look at somebody and go, no, can't do that.

But I'll help you find somebody that can.

You know what I do now when people ask me to move them?

I'm 62.

I know I look 27, but I'm 62.

And when people ask me to move them, I'm like, I know a lot of college students that can do this for you.

And I do.

I live in a church with a lot of college students.

I'll even pay for them to come move you, and I'll buy the pizza.

I'll even show up and cheerlead.

But I'm not going to move you because my back and body doesn't.

No, not going to happen.

So I'm not saying you can't help people.

I'm just saying there's times you need to say no.

And some of us, the reason we're so busy is because we're saying yes to a lot of good things, not the best things.

We're going to talk more specifically about that in a minute, but the time you have each day, whose is it?

How can we redeem the time the Lord has given us?

I'm going to get real practical with this.

I'm going to give you some ideas, and then we're going to spend the next four weeks kind of unpacking these.

So there's going to be a whole list up here, and I'm really going to focus in on two of them.

How can we redeem the time the Lord has given us?

Here's the first one.

Pray for the Spirit's wisdom, desire, and power.

So here's mostly what I want to camp out on today.

I want to bring this list back to you every week.

But this first one up there is would you, I will challenge you this week that you would pray for the Lord's wisdom, desire, and power to walk in his wisdom.

And so what I mean by those three things is

Let me give you an example.

I've realized recently that the Lord's asked me to do some things that I really don't want to do.

Have you ever been there?

The Lord's like, hey, I want you to love this neighbor.

And you're like, oh.

Y'all don't live in my neighborhood, so I can say that.

I'm thinking of somebody in specific.

And I don't have to pray about it because all through the word, what does the Lord say?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and what?

And your neighbor as yourself.

So do I have to pray about loving my neighbor?

No, I'm either gonna be rebellious or obedient.

Now, I have to pray about how, but you know what I've realized is I don't really wanna love that neighbor.

And so do you know what I find myself doing a lot?

I asked for wisdom in hell and I asked for power to do what I've not asked for a whole lot in my life to the last couple of years is Lord, would you change my desires to want to love her?

Because a lot of, please hear this.

I'm speaking to me and to you.

A lot of us ask for the power to do stuff we absolutely don't want to do.

That is the Lord's will, by the way.

Does that make sense?

And you know how long that lasts in you when you ask the Lord, Holy Spirit, I need you to empower me to love my neighbor.

And then you love her for about three hours while you take her grandma's cookies.

And then three hours later, you're like, man, I hate my neighbor.

Like, you may not say that out loud, but you're grumbling about her in your house.

The time it took, it was 100 degrees outside.

I went to grandma's cookies to buy those cookies.

I took them to, by the way, this is all true, took those cookies to her.

And she was like, well, I'm gluten-free.

I'm like, ugh.

I'll find you some gluten-free cookies.

And I just left and she just, all she does is complain.

And you know what the Lord told me one day?

He's like, how about you pray that you would have a desire to love her?

Because that's my desire is to love her.

And I would love for that to be your desire to love her.

You've never asked me for that.

You've asked me for wisdom, Al.

You've asked me for power, too.

What you've never asked for is desire for, which is my heart.

I want my heart in you.

I don't want you just doing stuff.

I want you to have my heart.

And this is one of the biggest things that will change how you use your time.

When you start asking the Lord for his wisdom about your time, this.

Desires.

Because most of us use the time we use because it's our desires, not the Lord's.

And then we ask for power.

That's the first and the biggest thing I can tell you.

If you want to see time redeemed, start praying to the Lord.

Lord, I want wisdom for how I use this.

I want desires that are yours.

Change my desires.

And then last, I want your power.

I'm just going to fly through these other ones because I want to get back to some scripture at the end about how we can walk in this and these desires.

We're going to talk about inventorying your time.

When was the last time you sat down?

This is what it means to look carefully.

When was the last time you looked at your time and said, what am I doing with all my time?

I'm going to help you do that in some ways.

Some things you can't do anything about.

Some of you have to get up at seven o'clock and go to work and you come home at five o'clock.

You can spend your time at work differently for sure, but that block of time is set for you.

You know what I've realized though?

24 hours is a lot of time during the day.

If you spend 10 of it working, which I don't think all of you do, but if you spend 10 of it driving, going to work, coming home, you still have, do the math with me, 14 other hours during your day.

If you sleep eight of those, and I don't think all of you do that, but say you slept eight of them, that still gives you six other hours.

And some of you are thinking right now, I don't feel like I have six other hours in my day.

What are you doing with those six hours?

That's all I'm asking you.

Would you look at what you're doing with your time?

Because God's saying this, look carefully, redeem the time.

Kingdom of God is at hand.

What's important?

What's at stake here?

What's at stake here?

It's not just, are you being a good steward of God's time?

What's at stake here is everyone else around you that's encountering you and walking away with some kind of impression of watch these two things, the kingdom of God, but also the king.

What are they walking away with about the beauty of the kingdom and the beauty of our king as they encounter you?

Are they walking away with just like, you know what?

You're an interruption in my busy schedule.

Is that how they interact with the kingdom of God?

Is like, he's just too busy for them because you're too busy for them.

I mean, think about these things.

What's at stake is way more than just being a good steward of God's time.

There's so many things at stake.

See that everything is for his glory.

Man, realize this, that changing diapers can be a glorious thing that you need to do for God's kingdom.

Like, some of you are like, well, really?

I'm like, yeah.

I mean, really, I want to like go to Nepal and tell people about Jesus.

That's awesome.

But if you're married in Nepal, you're going to change diapers.

You're going to.

There's so many things that we don't see as glory giving to God and the time that we use.

Making meals, going to work, mowing grass, sharing meals, intentional conversations can all be things that God wants you to do with your time.

Stop the rat race of comparing.

That says rate race.

I misspelled it for you.

Sorry, but it's rat race.

Comparison is death.

Your race is not her race, and his race is not your race.

Hebrews 12 says it this way, run the race set before you.

And I just want to tell you, man, if you're comparing your schedule to somebody else's schedule, stop.

Because your schedule is going to change all during your life.

Just stop the comparison thing.

We'll talk about that more.

Believe not all time needs to be productive.

How many of this room struggle with, like, if I'm going to use my time, man, I need to be productive.

And if I'm not productive, man, something's wrong with me.

So rest for you is terrible, isn't it?

You feel guilty when you're laying on the couch and your wife's like, stay there.

Or your kids are like, dad, we want to do things where you're like, I got to be doing something.

Can I just say this to you?

Like one of the most productive things you'll ever do physically for your body is sleep.

And the reason a lot of us have health problems is because we don't sleep enough.

And that's a very productive thing that God said, I'm going to make you do this because it's going to remind you that you're human and you're not God.

You need to sleep.

Yeah, right.

And some of us have learned, we've got a master's in sleeping.

I get that.

So I'm not talking to you, but some of you need to learn how to sleep in this room.

It's way past sleep.

Some of us need to learn how to rest with the Lord.

The Sabbath was such a big thing to God that he had people stoned for not keeping it.

Thankfully, this side of the cross, that's gone.

But I think the principle still applies.

The whole resting with the Lord has to be more than just showing up at church for two hours a week.

He wants us to learn how to stop our days and not work.

To trust him that even though I'm not working, his work in Jesus is enough.

Does that make sense?

That was the whole point of the Sabbath.

Will you stop doing something to trust that I've got this?

That my work, my hands are better than yours.

And so like productivity, like prayer is one of the most productive things you can do.

And if you don't see it as that, you will never pray.

Resting in the Lord and his word, praying, taking a walk with him with your wife or your kids can be one of the most productive things you'll ever do to get connect with people and to converse and to pray with people.

But man, we have to see what truly, what does productive mean?

Don't see everything needs to have end with things being organized or things being mowed or things being put up, if that makes sense.

The Sabbath practice, last thing, wisdom when to say no to good things.

We're gonna come back to all these things next week when we're gonna specifically hone in on a couple.

But right now, what do you know the Spirit has given you and called you to steward wisely?

What do you know right now?

Some of you are parents, God's called you to steward your kids.

And that's a thing.

Some of you have a job, God's called you to steward.

Some of you have some friends, some neighbors, God's called you to steward.

Some of you are involved in a ministry that's outside of family and neighborhood that God's called you to steward.

What do you know that the Spirit has given you and called you to steward wisely?

Are you stewarding it wisely?

Are you giving it the time it needs?

Because I feel like this, can I just be honest with you as a person, not a pastor for a second, I feel like we just kind of bump into things that we just take on.

And I have a, I'm going to walk down here for two seconds and grab my backpack.

I feel like this, like this is how we live our life.

We just walk around and we're like, oh, you want me to do that?

Okay.

Yeah, I'll do that.

Oh, you want me to do that?

Okay, I'll do that.

Oh, you want me to do this?

Okay.

I don't even know what this is, but I'll do this.

Oh, you want me to do this?

And I just start picking up all this stuff.

And these things represent things in my life that now I've got all these things that I do.

And when people ask me like, what are you doing?

I'm like, well, I don't know.

I'm really busy though.

Man, I got all these things going on.

And I go to work each day, and I'm carrying all these things with me to work, and man, they're heavy.

And while I'm working, I'm thinking about all these things, and some of them, I don't even know what they are.

They're just in my backpack, right?

And then this happens.

I come home, and I eat, and then I'm like, man, I just want to watch that one show.

And you know what happens when I watch that one show?

I get to take my backpack off for an hour.

And if I'm really, like really tired, I may watch it twice.

But you know what happens after you watch that show for two hours?

This thing's still waiting on you.

And you pick it back up.

And every once in a while we do this.

We're like, I wonder what's in here.

Because somebody calls and says, hey, remember you said you would do this for me?

And you're like, oh yeah, forgot I said yes to that.

That's this week?

Yeah, that's this week.

Okay.

Okay.

Lord, help me.

And then we pray for what?

Lord, give me the power to do what you've asked me to do.

We never prayed for should I be doing this.

We never prayed for the desire.

We just said yes.

And we just have so many things we've said yes to in our life as Christians that I think half of them, we don't even know what we're doing or what they are or why they're there.

Can I just encourage you, like during these next four weeks, like open your backpack up and metaphorically what you're doing in your life and take a look at the stuff that's in there.

I need to give some of this stuff back because it's not mine.

But like, like,

You need to take this stuff out and go, what is this?

Why am I spending three hours a week doing this?

When did I say yes to this?

Does it even matter that I do this?

And if it does, am I doing it the way the Lord wants me to?

You know, my dad's 95 years old.

You probably don't know that.

My dad's 95 years old.

He lives in a place called Cedarhurst, right across from Lindenwood University.

My dad has a lot of time in his life right now, but

When my dad wakes up and gets dressed and goes and eats a meal, man, he is tired after that hour and a half at 95.

Now, some of us can't understand that because we're not 95.

Some of you get up, get dressed, eat in about three minutes, and you're just like ready to go.

After that moment for my dad at 95, he's like, I need a rest.

But you know what my dad does with the rest of his day?

You know what he does?

He prays, Lord, what do you want me to do today?

Dad's not always been this way.

He prays, what do you want me to do today?

He takes a walk around Cedarhurst and he talks to people that have nobody to talk to.

He prays with some of those people.

This is what his life consists of now.

Praying with people, praying with the Lord, talking to people that don't have anybody to talk to.

Shows up at my small group that's going to be at my house tonight at four o'clock with a bunch of 20 year olds.

And they come up and talk to him and he'll pray with them.

Now, I just want to say this to you.

My dad aside, will you pray with me about what you're doing with your time?

The kingdom of God is at hand.

Desires in us is where I think it begins and ends.

And I want to end with this.

Verse 15 again, look carefully then how you walk.

Look carefully then how you walk.

I just want to pray in these last few minutes that God would give us wisdom.

God, would you give us wisdom so that we're not walking as unwise but wise?

We're going to talk more about that next week, but I want you to see a couple of verses with me as we talk about the Spirit giving us wisdom into this week and next week and the next.

This is Galatians 5, verse 16.

But I say walk, which means live day to day, minute by minute, by the Spirit.

when we're asking for wisdom, watch what verse 16 of Galatians 5 says, but I say walk, live day to day, minute by minute by the Spirit, and you will not gratify, say this with me, the desires of the flesh.

Watch this, for the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these things are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things that you want.

Hear this, you have desires in the flesh being your old nature, right?

Pre-Christ, but it still lives in you.

So pre-Christ, all it was was your flesh, this old will.

It had desires.

The desires of the flesh are not good.

They're all against the desires of the Spirit.

But those things still live inside you.

So when I go like this, Lord, help me love my neighbor.

My flesh on the inside of me is still saying, don't love her.

She's not lovely.

And you know what?

Instead of just asking for the Lord to overcome the power of that, you know what I'm learning to ask?

Lord, change my desires and give me the power to walk in that.

Watch what Lord says about those desires here.

This is verse 24, chapter five of Galatians.

And those who belong to Christ, Jesus, have crucified the flesh with his passions and desires.

Put them to death.

If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step.

Same idea of live day to day with the Spirit.

This is what he says here, this passions and desires here.

Why don't you just end with these couple of thoughts.

Passion and desires can be transformed.

Your desires of your heart can be changed because the Holy Spirit of God lives in you now.

The Spirit's desires, different than your flesh desires.

You're going to live with a battle in that forever.

But right now, I'm just asking you, whose desires are stronger?

Because whoever's desires are stronger is what you're going to do with your time.

If you want to know why you're spending your time the way you're spending it, just ask yourself this question.

Which desires are greater in my life?

The desires of my flesh or the desires of the Spirit?

I'm not saying, is there a battle?

I'm just saying, like, who wins most of the time?

And if who wins most of the time is your flesh, old nature, old desires, the only way you're going to change how you spend your time, steward your time for the kingdom of God is if you start asking God to change desires.

Two things have happened.

One, I want you to notice this.

He says, you have crucified.

If you're in Christ, there's a past tense action that's happened in you.

You no longer are under the slavery of the desires of your old nature.

It doesn't mean there's not a battle.

It just means this.

You now have the ability to ask God to help you change those desires.

You now have the ability to walk in different desires.

You now have the ability to put to death old desires so that new desires can come to life in Christ.

Will you do that with me over the next four weeks?

Will you pray for those things?

Because I believe this, that if they are being put to death, they're not being put to death, his wisdom usually tastes way less than

desirable than our wisdom and if your if your desires are not being put to death and when god asks you to do something in his wisdom you're going to be like i don't i don't really want to do that lord and you're not going to like the way it tastes and you're going to eventually go back to spending your time the way you want to spend it

And one day something's gonna happen and you're gonna have to count the days again, number the days again, and you're gonna open that backpack up and you're gonna be like, what is all this stuff in here?

So right now let's pray.

Let's just begin right here asking the Lord.

Father, would you help us look carefully at how we are using your time, your life that you've given us

You've given us new life in Christ.

You've given us a new heart.

And you're very spirit living in us.

You've graciously given us so many good things to steward and friends and jobs and family and people.

But God, would you help us look carefully?

And we're just asking this morning for two things.

Would you give us new desires?

Would you help us even now pray for the desire to look at these things, Lord?

Because what's at stake, Lord, is just not us being a good steward of your time, but the kingdom of God being displayed in this world.

The kingdom of God being talked about and displayed in its beauty and justice is what's at stake in our very homes, but also in the people around us you've asked us to pour it into.

So God, we're asking this morning, would you give us your desires?

May we, just this week, begin to look at and pray, Lord, give us your wisdom, give us your desire, give us your power in how we use our time.

That's the one prayer I want you to just ask the Lord this week.

Lord, would you give me your wisdom with the time?

Would you begin changing my desires, Lord?

Would you give me the power to walk in obedience to what you're asking me to begin to think about and do?

I pray this in your name, Jesus.

Amen.