

“The Bible says every now and then somebody has to stand in the gap, make up the hedge.

We have people willing to do just that.

And I have no reason to think God won't continue to keep that hedge round about this place.

Amen.

All right.

Scripts reading this morning is probably coming from a Bible you've never read.

It's a complete Jewish Bible. It's written in English, or I couldn't read it either.

But when the Lord gives me my scripts for reading, I check all these different versions, because I want to find the one who makes it clear and plain so we can all understand it.

And this one does that very thing. Scripture is Ephesians 5, 15, and 16.

Complete Jewish Bible says, Therefore, pay careful attention.

There's a comma at the therefore.

The word therefore is to get your attention.

It means to us to pay careful attention to how you conduct your life.

Man, is that good advice.

Oh, my.

Live wisely, not unwisely.

Use your time well.

And that's what I'm going to talk about today's time.

Use your time well.

“Now, if the Bible was written 2,000 plus years ago, the Old Testament is much older than that.

If the days were evil then, what does that say about the day and age we live in?

Oh, my.

Use your time well.

Now, time has been the theme of many songs, and I've given you this list prior to this time before, when I've been preaching about time.

Now, for you, I'm getting ready to tell you guys about some songs that have time in the title and in the lyrics.

For you younger people, write them down and Google them.

You will not know most of them without you listen to what they call classic music.

Not offering off that kind of classical music.

But, for example, the first one is from the Rolling Stones.

Do you young people know who those people are?

Yeah, they're still rolling.

Slower than they used to.

Much, much slower.

They had a song that said time is on my side.

Yes, it is.

I know right now, my age and down, you hear it, don't you?

Yeah, you hear it.

Cindy Lauper, I'm moving forward now.”

“Cindy Lauper had a song that said time after time.

Billy Joel had a song. That was the longest time.

Chicago didn't really like them that much, but I know the song.

Does anybody really know what time it is?

Cher had a song, If I Could Turn Back Time.

They're going to be stuck in your head the rest of the day.

I'm sorry, but they are.

And then over in the country genre, Clint Black had a song, Killing Time is Killing Me.

And last but not least, Jim Crossey had a song.

Jim Crossey wrote a lot of good music.

Time in a Bottle. If I Could Keep Time in a Bottle.

That was the whole gist of the song, about holding on to time.

Now, a year after that song came out, Jim Crossey was killed in a plane crash. And all the time, he wanted to save all the plans he had for the future.

Everything else was gone.

Time is what I want to talk about this morning.

Time is something that, well, you can't stop it, no matter how much we try.

You cannot stop time.”

“You can't speed it up. You can't slow it down.

But we all try, don't we?

I remember distinctly turning 15 years old.

And from that point on, when somebody asked me how old I was, 15, but almost 16.

Did you know what happened at 16?

Oh, yeah.

I thought it was going to be freedom.

I didn't realize how restricted my freedom was going to be at first.

But I thought it was going to be freedom.

So everybody that asked me, how old are you?

Well, I'm 15, but I'm almost 16.

I don't care if it was the day after my birthday.

That's what we said.

Now, when they asked me, well, how old are you?

Well, I usually tell them I'm this age most days.

Some days I'm twice as old as that, and there's a few days I'm 10 years younger than that. You know, but ladies and I don't mean this disrespectful, but some of y'all had been 39 for the 12th time. It's all right.

It's good.

But that's kind of what we do. And I found a story about a lady well up in years looking in a full-length mirror”

“That's her first mistake.

If you look in the mirror and her husband's laying there in bed while she's looking in the mirror, she says, just look at me.

Look at the wrinkles.

My arms are flabby. My hips are wide. My midsection is out of control.

And her husband, did he say a word?

Smart man.

Smart man.

But then, ladies, I don't know why you do this, but you do.

His wife turned to him and said, well, aren't you going to say anything?

Say something positive. Say something to encourage me.

A little positivity is what I need.

And then he blew it.

He said, well, at least your eyesight's still good.

The moral of that story is, fellas, stay quiet, stay quiet.

Time is the one thing we all possess the exact same amount of.

We all have exactly the same amount of time in each and every day.

We all do.

And time is a great blessing of life.

Did you realize that?

Because time, it's not something you can buy, beg, borrow, or steal, all right?

From other people.”

“You have your set amount. Now, time is so precious because time is a gift from God.

It truly is.

It truly is. We get to choose how we use this gift from God.

We can use it wisely, which is what our scripture reading told us to do, or we can use it foolishly.

We can waste it, all right?

We can be very efficient with our time, or, and I'm quoting a praise that I found, or we can run the clock and watch our time fade away.

Now, since last Thursday till now, I've lost a lot of football.

Some of you guys have lost a lot of football.

Ladies, you thought, is there anything else on television?

No, there hasn't been.

And invariably, toward the end of the game, time becomes a big factor.

One group wants to run the clock and run out of time.

And the other group desperately wants to extend that time.

Not really different.”

“We have two choices with our time. One, we can speak out God's will for our lives and use our time like that, live according to that, or we can live according to our own will in our life. We've been given that.

We've been given that, that choice.

I'm going back again.

Again, young people, you know who this guy is.

A guy named David Cassidy.

My age is up.

You remember the show, The Partridge Family?

Yeah.

Some of you girls around my age, you thought David Cassidy was the best thing since last year.

He was so pretty to look at.

So pretty.

He died a very young man.

He died about the age of 67.

Very young man.

These parts hear me from the side effects of the mention.

His last words heard by his daughter right before he died was, so much wasted time.

So much wasted time.

And his daughter was so profoundly moved by this, she made this source. She said, this will be a daily reminder for me to share my gratitude with those I love as to never waste another minute.”

“I hope and pray that over Thanksgiving, you were able to spend time with the people you love, with the people who matter in your life, whether they're family, friends, wherever they might be.

I hope you slow down enough to do that.

I definitely hope you slow down enough for the Christmas season to do that exact thing, because time matters.

Time matters, okay?

How sad would it be to get to the end of your life and say the words, so much wasted time?

Why do we waste time?

We put things off. We wait till later on so many things.

James 4, 13th and 17th. Let me read this to you.

I'm reading from the New Living Translation this time.

It says, Look here, you who say today or tomorrow, we're going to a certain town and we'll stay there a year, we will do business there and make a profit. How do you know? What will your life be like tomorrow?

Your life is like the morning fog. The King James Version says, your life is like a vapor.

The NLT says it's like the morning fog.

It's here a little while and then it's gone"

"What you ought to say is if the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.

Otherwise, you are boasting about your own plans and all such boasting is evil.

Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do.

As I said, I read scriptures for many, many verses, so I like the way they put these things. Okay?

Now, this scripture speaks to us because we all make plans, whether we plan to plan or not. You know, failing to plan is a bad thing.

You all have plans after service.

You're either going some place to eat, you're going home to eat, but you have a plan to eat. Now, when you fail to make a plan, you know you're going to go eat, and you get in the car, so let's say you got kids, and you say, where do y'all want to go eat? And they say, we don't care.

And you say, okay, let's go there.

Oh, I don't want to go there.

I thought you didn't care.

I don't.

Okay, let's go here.

Oh, I don't want to go there either."

“Where do you want to go?

I don't care.

You hear what I'm saying?

The failure to have a plan before y'all leave the house, tell your kids where you're going for lunch. Plan's done.

Failing to plan is planning to fail.

Okay? All right?

So we need to be good stewards of our time, because, I mean, you know?

And the thing I've noticed in life, as we have matured in life, you know, dinnertime, then I'm talking about supper, dinnertime, at supper time, and I speak to them earlier than I did years ago.

I mean, you don't want to wait till 8 o'clock to eat supper?

Good night. I'd be starved to death.

I think you're not going to bed about 8, you know, making plans.

Planning is a part of life, right? So this person that we're looking at here, these people that we're talking about, the 13th verse says they have a plan.”

“It talks about when they were going to travel to there tomorrow, where they were going to travel to a certain town, how long they would be there for a day a year, and why they were traveling, to do business and make a profit.

A wonderful plan.

There's nothing wrong with any of that, other than to never ask God, what do you think of the plan?

There's an old saying, if you want to make God laugh, tell him the plan.

We need to learn to consult him, to make him a part of our plan, to listen to his leadership, to listen to his guidance. This person made their plan.

That's what we're going to do.

Okay?

He was confident in it.

It's so easy to make plans, but when we leave God out of our plans, we don't know where he fits in. Do you remember the story? I think it's in Luke's gospel, the story of the farmer who had just a wonderful harvest, a wonderful crop.

And he said, what am I going to do now?

What do I do? He said, I don't know what I'll do."

"I'll pull down my barns, I'll pull down my grain bins, and I'll build a digger once.

And I'll store all my grain up, I'll store everything up, and I will be set for years to come.

No, it's a wonderful plan.

And then, God said to him, You fool, this very night, your life is demanded of you, and the things you have prepared.

This is kind of cruel, isn't it?

This is terrible.

If the farmer didn't ask God, what should I do?

How should I do?

What do you want me to do with it?

He already had his mind made up.

This is how it's going to be.

We do the same thing with our plans. We do the same thing with our time. We need to plan better with our time, you know?

And I'm not talking about anybody in particular, but I may be talking to everybody.

You decide we're leaving for church at 8.30.

It's 6.30 in the morning.

Whoo!

We got two hours.

We're golden.

We're good!

Add another cup of coffee, you know?"

"I know I got to get ready. I know I got to get cleaned up and everything else, you know?

And that extra cup, because it was good, it turns into another cup, you know?

And it's 7.30 now, okay?

You had 6.30. It's 7.30.

We're leaving.



It's 8.30.

We're out of here.

Okay, we'll make it. We'll make it.

And then, you know, something comes up on the television.

It could be the sports or the football game, whatever, you know? You got tired and went to bed and didn't even see the end of it.

You're angry. You want to know how they turn out?

So you get to...

And all of a sudden, it's 8.15, and you ain't turned a tap.

Oh, man, where did the time go?

You wasted it drinking coffee and watching the news.

You understand what I'm saying?

We do that. We have plans, but we've got to get on God's timetable and quit trying to put Him on our timetable.

That's the way it works, okay?"

"He knew where He was going, what He was doing, and everything else. The farmer did all of this. Now, the 14th verse says, You do not know what tomorrow will bring.

Amen.

Amen.

We do not know what tomorrow will bring.

In fact, there was a line in that song this morning, this thing, says, I can't do tomorrow.

It's too far ahead.

That is true.

That is true.

We need to learn to live for today and live in the moment. We've missed so many moments by not living in today's moment. We need to learn to do that.

He says, You don't know what tomorrow brings.

What will your life be?

For you're like a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes. This is to remind us to seek the right things in life. We do not have any time to waste.

Jesus tells us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and God will take care of all the other things we need in our lives.

Are we putting Jesus first in our lives? Is He first in our lives? Is He part of the consideration of how we use our time?”

“We do not know.

We do not know what tomorrow is going to bring, you know?

We hope it's sunshine and warm weather, but we don't know.

We just don't, okay?

Part of the issue in us trying to figure out the best use of our time is we don't know what tomorrow brings us.

We don't know what it's going to do. We don't know how it will affect us.

Now, the question we need to ask ourselves to manage our time is where does God fit in?

In my time.

Where does God fit in to my life?

All right?

Where does God fit in with your plans? Where does God fit in with your family? Where does God fit in in your time?

Those are the things that matter.

Our scripture reading, our scripture reading says use your time well.

King James Version tells us to redeem the time.

When you redeem something, it means you're casting it in.

You're trading it for something of value in return.

That's why you redeem things.

You give them something to get something valuable in return.

That's the same way with time.”

“The time we invest in God, it will render us a wonderful return.

The time we don't invest in God, it won't render us a very good return. Now, I don't know who puts together these studies, but I absolutely love these studies. I love to read about them.

I love how they think about things.

This is a study of a person 72 years of age. And they have broken down how many years of their 72 years they spent doing certain items.

Overall, overall, okay?

At 72, and these are averages.

This is not written in stone.

These are just averages. At 72 years of age, you have spent 21 years of your life sleeping.

Some of you are more than that, some of you are less than that.

But that's overall, okay?

You spent 14 years working.

Man, it felt like a lot longer than that when I was working.

But 14 years working.

And this one, I think, is very light.

You spent 7 years getting ready to go somewhere.

I think that was like earlier.

Six years eating.

I have well exceeded that.

Six years in the car.”

“Six years of your life you've spent in the car.

And this is just wrong.

I don't believe it.

Three months searching for lost items.

I've spent way more than that.

And the older I get, the more time I spend searching for lost items.

I don't know why they keep moving, but they do.

Six months of your life you've spent stopped at stoplights.

That week, I think I did that just this week.

You know, a stoplight is not very long unless you're in a hurry.

And when you're in a hurry, you never hit a green light.

You hit every light red, and they let both lanes, ever all other three lanes, go twice before you get to go once. That's how it feels, isn't it?

But they say it's just six months.

You spent eight months, and I do believe this, going through junk mail, or in this case, junk emails.

Oh, and they even include Facebook in this survey.

In this survey, it's a couple, three years old, so I believe it's gone up from that.

You know what's kind?

It's been on Facebook 11 years.

Facebook hasn't been out that long, has it?

11 years.

"And the average is 19 years watching television. Now, if you add all those years up, it comes up to more than 72.

Do you know why?

Because we have learned the most by now.

We can eat while we're driving.

You shouldn't.

Some of y'all check Facebook while you're driving.

And post while you're driving.

You know?

We multi-pass.

So, and again, these are averages.

Now, the one that really struck home.

And yet, couples spend less than four minutes per day.

Meaningful communication.

Not just the normal everyday stuff, but I mean the stuff that is serious stuff, the stuff that matters.

Four minutes.

The question that has to be asked is not in the survey.

How much time per day do we spend with God?

How much of our time of the 24 hours in every day God has given us, do we spend with Him?

Do we spend talking with Him, listening as He talks to us, sharing our prayer requests, things like that?"

"Well, I've already given you this answer, but why is time so valuable? There's a variety of reasons. They're not making any more of it.

You've probably said it, I've heard it more times than I can count.

Man, I just need some more time.

If I had another hour a day, man, it'd work.

No, you wouldn't. You'd fill that hour up, too.

We all have the exact same amount of time. And I know those people who are organized, and, man, just get on your nerves.

I know.

Because we all want to be those people, but we're not.

We just say, well, I'm just not geared that way.

Well, they weren't really born that way.

They just learned to manage time. Time management is a valuable thing, and we need to learn to manage our time.

So why is it so valuable?

Because there's not make, and they're not going to make any more of it.

It's like I told you, time is a good thing.

Well, and because God has no respect for persons, He gave everybody the exact same amount.

We all must learn to value our time.

Christmas is coming, you're gonna get."

"Some that you got last year, you know exactly where they're at. Some that you got last year, you ain't got a clue what you do with them.

Not to say one important, but you value certain gifts more than others.

Time is one of those gifts that we should value more than others, okay?

Now, at this point in life, we tend to count time in years, okay?

Well, I just told you, 2017 was when we moved in to this building.

We've been here, what, almost eight and a half years now.

It doesn't seem like nearly that long. I told you about turning 16.

Man, that doesn't seem like it's been nearly that long.

It's been forever and a day ago, all right?

We value time in years.

You know what God says about value in time?

Count the days.

We count the years.

And some people have the ability to do a week's work of living in a year, and it takes some people a year to do just a week's work of living.

So, I'm saying, good time and time."

"Now, why is time so important? Why did God give us this gift of time?

Why did our scripts of reading tell us to use your time well, to live wisely?

Because once time is gone, you can't get it back.

You can't get it back.

You look in the mirror right now, you wonder, where did all this gray come from on my head?

Where did all that hair that used to be on my head go to? And why is my mustache and beard white?

I used to tell people, well, the Pittsburgh's white has been this from finally coming out.

They didn't believe it, you don't either, but it makes me feel better to say.

Okay?

And all of you who have white engraved, you feel free.

But it happened so quickly.

Now, Jesus, himself, spent about thirty-three and a half years on this earth, with the exact same twenty-four hours in his state that you and I have.

No more, no less.

The exact same amount of time we have to date, he has been, and he had them for thirty-three years. What did he do with his time?"

"He tried to promote the gospel.

He tried to further the gospel.

He tried to reach people for, to let you know there's a better way, there's a better plan.

You say, well, yeah, but he refused it. Yes.

But aren't we supposed to be like Christ?

Aren't we supposed to be the hands and feet of Christ? Aren't we supposed to be the light in the midst of the darkness?

The bright spot of somebody?

Aren't we supposed to be those things? Aren't we supposed to bear one another's burdens?

Aren't we supposed to pray one for another?

And that all these things and so many more I've not mentioned all take time.

We're too busy to do them.

We want to, we intend to, but they don't get done. And we say, well, if we just had more time.

You know, if we manage our time better.

If we put God first, if we, let me be blunt, if we quit wasting time.

I'll be the first to admit, I waste a lot of time.

You can admit it too now if you want to.

For yourself.

We do."

"He spent, Jesus spent his entire time on earth bringing glory to God, spreading the gospel, reaching out to people.

We should be doing the same thing.

We should be what Jesus expects us to be.

Ministers of the gospel, examples of a changed life.

People who are willing to say, yes, we, we thrive, but we have a certain amount of time, and we do. If the Lord, we all have a certain number of days. And once you get to the end of those days, you can't go back.

You don't get to the end of life and get a do-over.

You don't get to the end and say, well, if I just had a little more time, I'd do this, this, and this.

You've had all this time, and we've not got it accomplished.

I talk to a lot of people, and there are so many people who have every intention of getting saved, every intention of making heaven their home, but not today.

Not now.

I'm going to.

I mean to.

I plan to. I have never talked to one person ever that said, I have every intention of making my home in hell."

"Not a one.

They're all planning on going.

They want to pick the time.

They want to pick the time.

Now, I can't speak for you, but I can for me.

That Sunday morning at Mount Meridians Baptist Church, I didn't pick that time.

God did.

And I forcibly listened.

And I have never regretted it and never been sorry.

I didn't get to pick it.

God did.

We need to choose how we're going to spend our time.

And we need to realize that if we've not made our lives right with God, it's time.

It's actually past time that we did that.

We need to put forth that effort.

We need to use our time wisely.

Use your time well for these are evil days.

We live in a world full of ungodliness.

And what used to be said in the shadows is said out in the open.

What used to stay in the shadows is mainstream news now."



"Folks, church, that's the age we're living in. You need to be close to God now than you've ever been in your life because if you don't, all the bright, shiny stuff from the world, all the temptations of the world, all the stuff the world is trying to make normal today will drag you in because you haven't spent time in the presence of God. Have you ever truly felt in your prayer time that God hears you?

Has God ever truly showed up while you were praying? If He hasn't, why not?

Well, I just keep waiting on Him.

No, no.

Give Him the time.

Devote the time to Him. Give Him the ability to come in because that's all He's waiting on, is you to make, well, I have an appointment with God at certain times.

You have an appointment with God that you don't even know about, and it could be today.

It could be right now. This could be your day.

This could be your time.

This is going to make the choice.

Now, are you familiar with the phrase, well, quality time?

What makes time quality?

Are you familiar with the phrase family time?"

"What makes family time?

Spouse time.

What makes family?

Church time.

You know what makes church time?

We have a certain time every Sunday, every Wednesday.

Church time. God time.

These things don't just happen.

We have a set time that we meet every Sunday.

And if you miss that time, you miss the service.

And if you miss today, well, I'll try to come tonight.

We're not having church tonight, so you just miss. I'm not talking to y'all. I'm talking to people at home.

Everything in our lives is based on time. When I worked, I had a starting time, I had a quitting time.

There was a whole lot more fun than one of those, than I was fond of one of those, than I was of the other.

Quitting time was my favorite time of day.

And I knew, if I never started, I couldn't quit.

That's why I started.

I wanted to quit too.

I spent all that to say this.

It is time we've got to share with God.

If you are lost, you need to be saved."

"If you are saved, you need to be committed. You need to be committed to God.

You need to be committed to spending time with God and spending time with God's people.

You need to be the hands and feet of Christ.

We need to do that.

I've had the honor of doing me too.

It's a part of life, a funeral ish.

It's the last thing.

And at funerals, there's a certain level of drink which is natural, which is to be expected, because I tell people, our human minds can't wrap around the concept of death.

Because from the moment you are born, you are struggling to live.

And the concept of somebody being . If your dog has always been there in your life, it just blows your mind.

So the comfort in that is knowing where they are going.

But, along with grief, some people choose regret.

And that is the hardest thing for me to comfort people with, because those that are left behind regret not having said they've got love for them, but they really want some.

Take time to tell the people you love what you love.

They don't get tired of hearing them"

"They say, well, I've got friends that they know I do.

Tell them again.

Tell them again.

Your parents, you don't get tired of hearing your kids tell you that they love you, no matter what age they are.

Your grandparents, oh my gosh.

Didn't anybody just come up and say, Papa, I love you?

I just want money.

I don't care. Whatever they want.

It works, people.

Your grandparents, you know what I'm talking about.

Crystal came to me just the other day.

She said, here, I'll look at these two things on my phone.

Which one do we want to get?

I said, both of them.

No, we can't get both of them.

Yes, we can.

It's programming.

The value of the time.

2 Corinthians 6 and 2 tells us this.

Behold, now is the accepted time.

Behold, now is the day of salvation.

I wasn't planning on that.

Well, welcome to my world.

Forty-some odd years ago, I wasn't planning on it either, but there it was.

And it was my time.

And I know it was my time."

"And that is something I didn't think I would ever do.

I walked down an aisle, right down the center aisle, and I met a man named Jesus, and I was forever changed. I'm telling you, when I slow down and take the time to just talk to my Jesus, to my Savior, it can be going to... I have had to pull off the road, going down the road, because Jesus showed up in the car, and I couldn't see no more with the tears.

It's okay.

I have been standing in a tree in their season.

Yes, in their season.

You can have church, people, but it's only because I took the time to get in the presence of God. Are you willing to take the time?

Or are we waste? Or are we waste?

I can tell you this.

I can say it very un-focusing here.

I've spent enough time on this.

I can tell you this.

You can talk, I'm talking to you younger people.

You can talk to anybody in this building who has a little gray on the side, a little gray in the beard.

These are the peonies.”

“My first grandchild. He's 18.

He graduated in high school.

He's thinking about moving away to college.

It does a bit better than Seymour.

Just to help me get a Christmas tree out by the way.

He said, Oh, he just took the thing off.

Seems like it.

Time is a factor in one of our lives.

In one of our lives.

If you don't know Jesus, it's your time.

Not now and the day, it's your time.

If you are not committed, if you have salvation without a relationship, you're missing the greatest part about knowing Jesus. You need a relationship with Him.

Every relationship in your life is committed to time.

Other than lives, you quit.

You quit in the work, you quit in the time.

Your relationship will fall apart. People get divorced because they quit talking. Marriage is sale because they quit talking.

They quit spending time.

Quality time together.

Not just, you know, talking about, oh, how was your day?

You ask them how the day was, and you don't even listen.

Well, I just ask what's supposed to ask.

Be present.

Be in the moment.

Put forth the time.”

“Give. You're looking for something to give somebody for Christmas.

Give them time.

Your time.

To truly be present.

To be there.

There's a world full of people who just would love for somebody to give them the gift of time.

Jesus gave us the greatest gift.

Maybe it's time.

What are we doing? Are we using it for the Lord?

Are we making the best use of it?”