

Harris Creek Baptist Church

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Series: It's Complicated

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Make the Most of Your Time

Ephesians 5:15-21

**“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but 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 to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”**

Good morning, Harris Creek! How are we doing? My name is Dale, I'm on the college team here and I went to school in Waco. I went to Baylor and when I was in college I went to this bowl game, the Cotton Bowl. Anyone remember this? Any Wacoans? Baylor fans? Make some noise. Okay so I'm not the only one that was there. This was like one of the greatest weeks of my life. Bowl games are so fun. Everything around a bowl game is an absolute party. You get to go to this city and there's days of festivities and activities and like pep-rallies. It feels weird to say but it's so much fun. And so, the winter of my senior year, I'm at this bowl game but I'm also in a

minimester, which is like 15 weeks of school in like 15 days. And so each and every day its this tension of do I go to the pep-rally, or do I go to school? Each day I have this really challenging decision to make and needless to say, each and every day I chose the bowl game. Whatever it was I was like, "I'm going to go the pep-rally." It was around New Years; I went to the New Years Eve party. I went to the game itself and I would even, I just want to admit, I would even sometimes walk around the hotel just hoping to bump not a coach or a player. I'm like, "What's up dude? Good to see you!" You know, just like was there on accident. I was there on purpose. And so, I spent all of my time just looking and enjoying the bowl game and all the festivities that are a part of the bowl game, but I got an incomplete in the class, and it almost cost me graduating on time in May. And you're laughing, it wasn't funny. My mom didn't think it was funny, right. It was not funny, but in reality, the urgent crowded out the important. That is one of the clearest ways in my life where I look back and I'm like, 'What was I thinking?' I wasted so much time. The urgent crowded out the important.

And so today and this morning I start with that because I'm going to be talking about making the best use of time. We're going to be talking about making the best use of time. We're in an advent series called "It's Complicated". In the first week we learned how to be faithful with our complicated families, the next or last week we learned how to be faithful in the complications of loss and loneliness and this morning we're going to look at how it's a complicated time of the year with business. The rhythms are off. There's Christmas programs, and there's company Christmas parties, and there's shopping and the kids are out of school, yet you're supposed to be

working this week. How is that even possible? And then there's kids' sports practices, which doesn't make any sense, like do they really need to practice basketball on Christmas Eve? I don't know, you know, I just don't know! And then there's tournaments and travelling and then there's shopping online and—if you're shopping online, it's too late. I just want to warn you it's a scam, it's not gonna get here in time. That's what you need to know. And then there's decorating the house—again, if you haven't done it, it's too late. And then there's Christmas cards and for some of you you're like let's just call it a New Year's card. There's just so much going on and as I even think about all of that for me personally, I'm like “Man there's so much going on,” and then there's laundry, right? Like how do you get everything done, and you go to all the thing and then just look at this stack of laundry. I'm like that is killing, that's the death of me. That is it and even this morning I'm hoping, I'm getting ready for for this morning, and the twins wake up and so I start helping my wife with the twins. I clean some diapers and I'm supposed to shave my head and I didn't even get to shaving my head this morning, I was so busy. There's so much busyness.

And what's even more complicated as we look about the complications of busyness, this is my favorite part, it is maybe you're traveling to in-laws or family, and you don't even get a choice of the busyness. I can't be like, “You know what in-laws, I love you—which I do, they're watching—love y'all, I love you but I'm not gonna do what you want us to do. I'm not gonna be a part of the Christmas exchange this year, I'm gonna boycott it, cause its not the best use of my time.” Right? You think that would go over well with the in-laws? No! That's what's so complicated, if your kid doesn't show up to practice, they might get benched. If you don't show up to your

company Christmas party, people are going to think you're the grinch. Like those are the things. It's complicated. Some of it is mandatory. Some of it feels mandatory. The decorations, it's just to keep up with the Joneses. It's complicated.

And so before we look to the scriptures on how we can make the best use of our time—I love listening to leadership things, I love you know, thinking through how I can make the best use of my time—you know, and I just want you to know, from a worldly perspective, making the best use of time is about efficiency and outputs. And I just want to pause. That might be a part of the application today. But when it comes to following Jesus, when it comes to having a relationship with Jesus, it's not always about efficiency. It's not always about outputs. First of all, it takes time to be in a relationship with Jesus. It takes time to learn the scriptures. It takes time to minister to family. It takes time to care for our coworkers. It takes time. So, it's not just about efficiency as we look to making the best use of our time. If you brought your Bibles, we're going to be in Ephesians 5. Again, it's not a worldly message on managing busyness, it's a Biblical perspective on the complications of busyness and we're going to learn how to make the best use of time. We're gonna see to choose your time wisely, use your time wisely, and don't waste your time being filled in the wrong spirit.

Ephesians 5 verse 15. Paul is speaking to the church in Ephesus, and he spends the first half of the book just emphasizing and bragging about the wealth of Jesus Christ. This is the good news

of the Gospel, this is what Jesus has done for us. By grace we have been saved through faith. This is not a result of our works; it is a gift that we've been given from God. So, that none of us can boast. This is Ephesians. It's this wealth that we have in Christ and then the second half of Ephesians is about our walk with Christ. How does the Gospel impact our story? Once we understand what God has done for us that changes the way that we live or the way that we walk and in fact the word walk is used five times following Ephesians 2, us being God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus so that we may walk in the good works that God has for us. And then there's five walks. Let's look at them real quick. They're on the screen. 1) Walk in a manner worthy of the calling... 2) Walk no longer as gentiles... 3) Walk in love... 4) Walk in the light... and the final walk where we're going to jump into Ephesians 5 verse 15, **“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but 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 is psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, [just as we're doing], giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”** You see Paul is teaching the church in Ephesus how to walk. Like, what does it look like to walk with Christ? He's teaching them how to make the best use of time. Let's look at verse 15 again. **“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise...”** And so, Paul is just inviting the Ephesians, look at your life. Look carefully at your life. Vigilantly. The word carefully is like diligently. I don't think we often diligently look at our lives, diligently assess our calendars. Does it give glory to God? Does it look like wisdom? What is wisdom? For

me wisdom is grey hair, I'm not there yet, I'm bald but I'm not grey. And so, wisdom isn't just being old, wisdom is skillfully living out God's design. And so, Paul is saying to the church in Ephesus, look carefully are you skillfully living out God's design for God's glory? Does your time reflect that? Which brings me to my first point this morning:

*1. Make the best use of time: Choose your time wisely*

I think Paul is inviting the Ephesians, hey look at the way your life is, look at you schedule, look at your time. And in fact, the Bible literally says here to redeem your time. Like it's something that we don't have unless we do something to get it back. It's going to cost us something. It's going to take something in order for us to actually use it. And so, the Bible is inviting us, and Paul is inviting us to redeem the time. And the best way to think about this is if I gave you a dollar for every one of your minutes, I just want you to think about today, I'm gonna give you a dollar for every minute. So that's fourteen hundred and forty minutes that you get each and every day, which means fourteen hundred and forty dollars every day that you have. But here's the twist to the game, if you don't choose to use the dollars, then you will lose it. So, each and every day you you get these fourteen hundred and forty dollars but if you don't use it in the day, you've wasted it. And think about this, if this was real and each and every day you got that amount of money you would kick yourself if you didn't choose to use it and at the end of the day it was just taken away from you. Think about how much of our time we waste like that. We don't realize

every minute is this gift. Because of that we don't choose to use it. We don't choose our time wisely. That's the first way that we can make the most of our time and the best use of our time.

But I think so often we get tossed with the wind of both invitation and kinda the expectations of the world. Well, everyone else is sending Christmas cards, everyone else is playing the sports, everyone else... We must be driven faithfully by intention and not invitations. And in fact, if you don't choose your time wisely, the world will choose it for you. If you don't choose your time wisely, the world is going to take, the world is going to choose it for you. And so, the first application this morning is be intentional with our yeses and our nos. Cause I think that our lives are not the best use of our time because we're not thinking about it, we're not choosing it, we're not looking at our weeks and saying, man what's the best use of my time?

We're not looking at our months, we're not looking at our next year in this way with intention. And and I think I can raise my hand; I am a total yes man. Like that is one of my ditches that I can easily fall into. Somebody invites me to something, I'm like, "Absolutely, that sounds great, sounds like fun, sounds like that would bring us life!" Like—everything will bring us life. My wife and I, it will bring us life. And I've had to learn the hard way to slow down. And I've had to learn it's probably a no unless we prayerfully consider it and then decide that it's a yes together for my wife and I, because I'm so quick to say yes and it has created damage and wasted time cause we're not choosing it, we're just saying yes to every invitation and doing what everyone expects us to do. So, we end up being stacked with sports and supper clubs, whatever that is,

organizations and business groups and all these things, and we haven't sought the Lord and just asked the Lord is this the best use of our time? Is this the best use of my fourteen hundred and forty minutes?

Both personally and for our families those are the questions we need to ask the lord. We need to choose our time wisely. Because I think the last part is we don't realize that every time we say yes to a Christmas party that's just a social Christmas party, maybe so much fun and bring you life, sounds great, but it's just another day where you're out late one night with friends, you're away from you kids and you aren't spending time preparing for the birth of Jesus and you stay up late so you don't wake up early to spend time with the Lord in prayer, in God's word, and we don't realize that that yes actually had a consequence. And that yes to something that was good, wasn't actually God's best. We too often say yes to things that are good and it takes away from God's best in some of our lives. And I think Jesus's example helps us not allow the urgent to crowd out the important. Luke 4, He's doing ministry and and everyone's seeking Him out and then it says He woke up the next morning. Luke 4:42 **“And when it was day, He departed and went into a desolate place and the people sought Him and came to Him and would've kept Him from leaving, but He said to them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom to other towns as well, for I was sent for this purpose.”** Jesus had to say no, but He said it nicely, He didn't say the word “No,” He just said, “Hey I'm going over here. I won't be there.” They wanted Him over here and he said I'm going over there. And thank goodness Jesus lived perfectly cause I know that I have fallen short of God's glory in the way that I've used my time and I'm thankful for Jesus's perfect life that paid for my sin and our sin. So, if you're here this



morning and you're like, "Man I haven't used my time wisely, and not just that, I've used it poorly, I've done bad things, I've sinned I've done all these things." There's so much grace because Jesus lived it perfectly for us. So, the first point make the best use of time: choose your time wisely. Verse fifteen, **"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,"** verse sixteen, **"making the best use of the time because the days are evil."** The second point, it comes from from this text, the second half of this text, make the best use of time by using your time wisely.

## 2. *Make the best use of time: Use your time wisely*

Using it. So, it's choosing it, deciding what you're going to do with your time and then once you are there, actually using it. Like really taking advantage of the time. And I love that the ESV says *the* time. The NIV may say make the best of every opportunity and that's because uh in the Bible there's a bunch of different words for time. And there there's the word *chronos* which is where we get the word chronological its like minute after minute you know chronological watches all those things like you've seen *chronos* before like this is the word *chiros*. He's saying make the best use of *the* time, which is a weird phrase you know, *the* time. This *chiros* has this meaning of 'make the most of every opportunity.' Use every moment, use every opportunity is what Paul is inviting the church in Ephesus. It's like these moments that we have in our lives to use them. And and the best way I can think about it is I went hunting over Thanksgiving, and I got in a deer blind, and I was like killing all the wasps. And I was gettin in this deer blind and killing all these wasps and then I'm sitting there, and I mean I'm just like within a minute a buck walks up. I'm

like what? This feels like Christmas early, right? And I'm sitting there and I'm not ready. And and that buck, it walks up into my view and kind of keeps walking away from me. That buck isn't thinking, "You know what, I know there's a hunter there, so I'm gonna give him a great moment right here so he can take out my life so that he can feed his family." Right? That deer is not thinking that on my behalf. That deer is not trying to give me a good moment of time and good opportunity of time. And in fact, it happened so quickly that he went ahead and went away. And I missed him, I didn't get him. And all the people that are mad that I went hunting, I didn't get him. I didn't get him so my family can't eat the natural meat. Now I have to buy it from HEB, anyways... I missed the moment. And I think Paul is saying like—hey there is going to be moments, make the best use of *the* time, *the* moment, *the* opportunities. That's what we're made to do. Make the most of the opportunities, they're going to be brief. And I think too often we think like I thought with the deer. I'm like, "I'll see him again." And then we miss it. I never saw him again, which is sad for me at least. And so the second application is to use our time wisely.

How do we do that? By being intentional when we are at the Christmas parties. By being intentional when we are with the in-laws. By being intentional when we say yes to those sports, when we are parents in those stands, we're just missionaries, we're just looking for ways to do ministry, people to care for, people to love. I even say that today as you go to lunch, you have a moment, you have an opportunity. How do you even say it, like your waiter or waitress will probably only come up to you like six times. Like you have six opportunities, that's it. You have one hour where you have an opportunity to engage with the person that's going to be serving you. And do not listen to the lies that you might come back to that restaurant and see them again

or you might distract them from their job. That doesn't matter if they don't know Jesus. It doesn't matter if the soda is late to some other table if they don't know Jesus. You're gonna have a moment and it's gonna be brief and don't overthink it, use it. And I'll just give you a glimpse into one way that I think about this. It's kinda funny but there's a timer at the back of the room that says I have nine minutes left, which is ungodly. I think I should have fifteen to twenty minutes left but I only have nine. Somehow, I only have nine minutes, that's what's at the back of the room, just counting down. Honestly, I'm going long, and this isn't good, I'm gonna have to go faster. And so, I just know that all of you are going to leave here in about twenty minutes and I only have nine more of your minutes. I have a moment; I have an opportunity; and that's a lot of our lives. God has orchestrated in advance Ephesians 2, we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus in advance for us to walk in those works. He is going to give you opportunities, use them, use them.

Be intentional with them. And another way that we can use our time wisely comes from verse 17, **“Therefore, don't be foolish,”** be wise. Use your time wisely, **“but understand what the will of the Lord is.”** The other way we make the best use of our time is we understand God's will and we wisely live it out. Don't be foolish, wisely understand God's will and wisely live it out. And how do we understand God's will? We understand God's will by spending time with Him and in His word. And in the chaos of this season, how are we supposed to make time for God's word? Not even in our own home, you know, if you even go outside of your room during Christmas season you just get distracted by your family, you know, you get put on cooking duty or something like that immediately. You gotta fight for time, you gotta set an alarm, wake up

early and fight for time with God's word. That's how we understand God's will so that we can best use our time this Christmas. And lastly, let's keep reading in verse 18 and we don't have time, **"And do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery,"** and let's just pause, this is so meaningful in this season to read this text. Do not get drunk with wine, it is debauchery, it's easy right now to go back and just have one beer with the boys which too often becomes one beer too many. So, this is Paul saying hey, don't get drunk with wine, just stay away. Just say no. Instead be sober so you can be filled with the Spirit. Verse 19 **"Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."** Third point, make the best use of time: don't waste your time in the wrong spirit.

*3. Make the best use of time: Don't waste your time in the wrong spirit*

Don't waste your time in the wrong spirit. And there's a play on words there with the word wasted. When you're drunk, you're wasted. I wonder where that word came from. When you're under the influence it's a waste. We miss opportunities, and hey, let me just pause and say there is grace. There is grace. That's what Jesus died for and has forgiven us from so that we can be free from it. And the alternative is to be filled with the Spirit. Not the wrong spirit, don't waste your time in the wrong spirit but be filled with the Spirit which is confusing. To be filled with the Spirit, because as you become a Christian, the Spirit indwells in you completely, like the whole fullness of God is in you. So the filling of the Spirit is it means more about being fully under the

control of the Spirit. It's not more spirit, it's you allowing the Spirit to be more in control. And in this context, I think it's about us being focused. Us being focused on the Spirit as we're at the Christmas party, Spirit of God, is there anything you want me to do? Is there any person you want me to engage with? Is there anyone that I can care for? Is there anyone I can tell about Jesus. We're focused as we are using our time, we're filled and led and focused on the Spirit.

It reminds me of the deer stand. The Spirit is the one that gives us the focus at the right time at the right moment to just take the shot. It takes focus to use the time. The drunkard is aimless and wasted, the Spirit is our aim and focus. And I know that you and I, we cannot be focused on the Spirit giving us opportunities with our families or our neighbors or the waitresses if we're on our phone. It is very hard to be focused on the Spirit if we're on our phones. It's just hard. And so don't waste your time being in the wrong spirit. And the good news is what that produces is this heart of worship and singing songs and making melody to the Lord and giving thanks which is so applicable in this Christmas season cause its so easy to get caught up in the things of this world and even on Christmas morning you're opening up gifts and then you realize it doesn't come with batteries? It costs a hundred bucks and it can't come with batteries? Our thankfulness and and our generosity and our joy is missing in this season, which is crazy because it's all about Jesus. It's all about the birth of our savior and we're getting caught up in having to return things.

And for me, I feel like that's personal. I hate returning things when they don't work. And that that's the way it gets filled with the wrong spirit. We waste our time in the wrong spirit. And so, in summary, make the best use of the time by choosing your time wisely, using your time wisely

and don't waste your time in the wrong spirit. And each week in this series It's complicated, we close with this part of the Christmas story. And I think it's easy to just think, what was the busy part? What was the complicated part? What was the off-rhythm part of the Christmas story? And we could just quickly jump to the inn was full. It was too busy for Jesus for the Savior of the world, there was no room. And I think there was other things as well but I wanna just talk today and end with just the story from Luke that come before Jesus. You see Jesus's mother Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth, and Elizabeth also had a miracle birth in her old age she bore a son and this son was said to be filled with the Spirit of God with the power of God and would even be seen by man as a prophet. Even the Pharisees recognized this son as a prophet, there was something significant about this son. And this son was named John the Baptist. See God in His sovereignty knew that there was going to need to be someone who was going to come in and prepare a way for Jesus. That even though two thousand years ago they didn't have social media or internet or tv or bowl games, but they were still going to be so busy that there would need to be a person named John the Baptist to just prepare the way. There was going to need to be someone to say, "Hey, the Savior is coming. I'm not even worthy to untie his shoes." This is so significant. God in His sovereignty knew in the busyness that He needed to make it clear by preparing the way by giving another miracle birth, which just makes this Christmas season all the sweeter, so that people would know and not miss that Jesus has come.

And so, for us in the busyness I just ask what are the ways that we can prepare the way this week? How can we get our family and our hearts ready for Jesus's birth? That He's coming, that God is becoming flesh. How can we not just wake up in six days and say wow it's Christmas or

Christmas Eve? Christmas is crazy, it just got cold today. How can we, how can we intentionally prepare the way as we see our neighbors and invite them to Christmas Eve? Or maybe think though who are the people that may be lonely and need someone to come and spend Christmas morning with. How can we prepare the way and not miss the Savior's birth this Christmas season? How can we make the best use of our time? Let me pray that we would.

God would you just help us by your grace and by your Spirit would you help us to choose our time wisely, use our time wisely and not waste time in the wrong spirit. Lord, would you help us to prepare for your coming by using our time wisely even this week and even in the days and years to come. May our lives be marked by just giving you glory and by wisely using our time. Not for ourselves but for you Lord. So, Lord would you help us. And I even pray would you bring the the moments and the opportunities today and this week and would we use those wisely and with courage and with winsomeness. Would you bring in the right waiters and waitresses today at lunch. Would you bring interactions with our neighbors that we hardly see so that we can invite them and our coworkers this week, would you soften their hearts to just receive an invitation, hey come Christmas Eve. Lord, would you work and in through us as we submit to your Spirit and focus on how you might lead us. And God I pray that we would enjoy it as we walk and use our time to the best of our ability for your most glory. I pray we would enjoy it. We love you. We pray all this in your Son Jesus's name, Amen. Before we stand and sing, I just want you to take a moment, even though I went long, just take a moment and just pause, like Lord how can we best use our time this week? And would you just pray, God would you reveal to me to our family how can we best use our time?