

## IT'S ALWAYS GOD'S TIME



**Time is the only wealth that we are given.  
When we play it too safe, we take the biggest risk of our lives.**

*Scripture:*

**Matthew 1:18-24**

18. Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
19. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.
20. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.
21. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'
22. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:
23. 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.'
24. When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife.



### AHEAD AND BEHIND

Most of us think of time as linear. The past is "behind us" and the future "ahead of us." The Bible offers us another view that is less concerned with "linear years" than with the cycle of events occurring within a year and the quality that this adds to our lives.

Three weeks ago, we found "holy places." Some were far away; others were as close as our own home, churches, and our bodies – the temple of the spirit.

Two weeks ago, we found "holy people." While there are people who inspire us and people who have made great contributions and great sacrifices, we found that the sacred includes you as well.

And today, time. Time interacts with matter.

$E = MC^2$ . Matter, time and energy. They are interdependent, and if you discover two of them, you can discover the one that remains. (I'll cover

the theory of relativity for you some other time, don't let me forget.)

### TIME IS THE WEALTH GOD GIVES US. IT IS ALWAYS GOD'S TIME.

**Genesis 8:22**

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'

This is "God's time."

**Matthew 2:1**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem.

**Matthew 2:7**

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

Jesus brought God's time into human time.

The Greeks, who influenced the thinking of Jesus in the first century, referred to human time, as

father time, who set the parameters of human events.

**God's time, however, was not measured by quantity; it was a measure of quality. We should not be so concerned that we will "run out of time" as that we will run out of "quality" in the busy world we live in.**

### **JUST SAY "YES"**

I have heard great, important lectures on the importance of "just saying no." Say "no" when people ask you to do things.

But life is lived by just saying yes. I have been told that I say "yes" too often. And after I have said yes, I sometimes have to say, "Well, that might not work." I drive some people crazy; maybe you are one of them.

### **SAMPLING**

But what if my first response was "no." What if your first response was to say no to opportunity? Here, write this down about me, "John always bites off more than he can chew." I doubt that this will change in the near future.

I like to sample.

I do bad things to a box of chocolates. I like to test a piece of meat off a fresh pot roast. But I do it for biblical reasons. I'm looking for quality.

Wayne Gretzky the great hockey player is known for saying, "We miss every shot that we fail to take." So if you have the puck, take the shot.

Time is the puck, life is the arena, and you are skating on thin ice. Take the shot. When you are shopping in Costco, try the samples.

### **CHRONOS AND KAIROS**

Jesus' father helped build the Roman city of Sepphoris. When Jesus accompanied his father into

the city as an apprentice, he went to a place not only of political government, but a place of religion, art and philosophy. And during his childhood he learned that the Greeks had two different words for time. They are chronos, and kairos.

I have a very simple point today, and it is illustrated by the difference between these two words. They describe the difference between the temporal and the eternal.

### **CHRONOS**

Chronos was depicted in Greek and Roman mosaics as the man who turned the wheel of the Zodiac.

Later chronos was portrayed through an old, wise man with a long, gray beard, such as "Father Time." Some of the current English words whose etymological root is chronos include chronology, chronic, and chronicle.

Chronos is measured time, and Chronos of mythology was the man who measured it. He was also the one who determined when time had run out.

**We are not sure of sorrow,  
And joy was never sure;  
Today will die tomorrow;  
Time stoops to no man's lure.**  
*From "The Garden of Proserpine"  
by Algernon Swinburne*

### **PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

Time plants in the human mind the basic sequence of Past, Present and Future, without which there would neither be 'before' nor 'after,' nor anything depending on these, such as 'causes' and 'effects.' Without them, all things would be perceived at once, and the human mind would fall into confusion. The greatness of Time is such that nothing can be done about him, except to take him for granted just in the way he pleases to appear. For if he shortened the length of the day, no one would notice anything, since there is no way of checking Time by means of comparison. ...All causes and effects are dependent on Time's direction; without it death would come before birth, and old age would precede youth and childhood.

Time can only be perceived through events, some of which happen before, and some after. Past and future cannot be retrieved at will, except by memory.

## 75 YEARS

Here's an interesting man who thought about the chronos of his life: Desu Emit estimated that if he were to live 75 years,

- He would spend 1/3 of it in sleep. That's 25 years.
- Another 25 years eating (1.5 hours per day), working (160 hours per month), traveling (1 hour per day), and personal care (1 hour per day).
- That allowed him only one third of the 75 years for the enjoyment of life. That would be 25 years, barring premature death. And in that time would be activities which bring meaning and reflection to everything else.

And so that leads us to the second Greek word, kairos.

## KAIROS

Kairos (καιρός) is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or opportune moment. While chronos refers to sequential time, kairos signifies a time in between, a moment of undetermined period of time in which something special happens. While chronos is quantitative, kairos has a qualitative nature.

In the New Testament kairos means "the appointed time in the purpose of God," the time when God acts (e.g. Mark 1.15, the kairos is fulfilled). It differs from the more usual word for time which is chronos (kronos).

The birth of Jesus Christ is our way of saying that the qualitative nature of time which evaluates the moral, the deistical and the humane aspects of life, becomes a part of the chronos, the means by which one human life is measured.

## EXAMINE YOUR TIME

"Examined" and "intentional" time is your wealth. Be careful about what you give your time to.

The Bible is filled with proverbs about the proper use of kairos time:

### **Ephesians 4:26**

If you are angry, do not sin. Do not let the sun set while you are still angry.

**In other words, don't go to bed angry.**

## HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Quality time can interact with linear time. No where is it more obvious than in matters of health and happiness.

It has been said that 90% of all counseling situations about relationship difficulty involve the problem of anger. Some cope with the challenge of living or working with people who cannot control anger. We say, "It doesn't take much to set him off," or "You have to walk on egg shells around her."

A physician said "It isn't a question of whether an illness is physical or emotional, but how much of each."

Anger, resentment and similar negative emotions are sometimes contributors to poor health. These factors can cause chemical reactions in the body that over a period of time are detrimental to one's well-being.

**Many people suffer poor health  
not from what they eat,  
but from what's eating them.**

Anger, like all emotions, cannot be prevented from arising when it is stirred within us. And, like other emotions, it is neither good nor bad in itself. It is just there. It is neither sinful nor unhealthy to feel anger. The problems come when we allow anger to linger beyond its useful life - in most cases no more than 30 seconds. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.

## THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

So my Christmas wish for you is that you have “the time of your life” by bringing the word of the Lord into that time. That’s what I mean when I say it is always God’s time.

Cheryl is wise about using “*the good dishes.*”

She is out of town helping Jessica pack up her apartment for moving, so I know she won’t mind that I brought one of “*the good dishes*” to show you. These are “*the Christmas dishes.*” Do you have some? We aren’t saving them for some other time, and we aren’t saving them for our children. We are using them because they are our good dishes, and they remind us that the quality of our time is what we choose to make it.

## GOD WITH US

- I hope this season you are lucky enough to remember that the sacred includes you.
- I hope that there is no place more sacred than the intersection inside you where God’s spirit changes you as Jesus changed those whom he called to be his own.
- I hope that you will stop saving “*the good dishes*” for some other time. God’s time is right now, and every meal with the people you love brings something about this distant God into right now.

## IN GOD’S TIME

In God’s time, a child was born, through whom God revealed the hope of peace, and the joy of love.

And they called his name “Emmanuel” which is to say, “God with us.”

And in him people saw not only God, but also themselves. Because when he grew to be a man he told them that this is God’s time, and the sacred includes you.



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