"The TIME of your life"

(Making the most of your time in 96)

12/31/95

Introduction: Psalm 90:12

****** Allow the creator of time -- Jesus Christ -- to teach you how to make the most of your time in 1996!***

Lesson # 1 **Learn to put the <u>ETERNAL</u> before the <u>Temporal</u>**
(Matthew 6:33; compare II Cor.4:18; 5:7; Col.3:2)

Lesson # 2 **Learn to put the <u>BIBLE</u> ahead of your <u>daily food</u>**
(Matthew 4:4)

Lesson # 3 **Learn to put <u>EVANGELISM</u> ahead of <u>entertainment</u>**
(Matthew 4:19)

Lesson # 4 **Learn to put <u>PEOPLE</u> ahead of <u>things</u>**
(Matthew 19:14; compare 19:19)

Lesson # 5 **Learn to put <u>INNER SPIRITUALITY</u> ahead of <u>external appearance</u>**
(Matthew 23:25-28; compare I Peter 3:3-4)

Lesson # 6 **Learn to put <u>PRAYER</u> ahead of <u>sleep</u>**
(Matthew 26:40)

Lesson # 7 **Learn to put your <u>WALK</u> (Devotion) ahead of your <u>work</u>**
(Luke 10:41)

Lesson # 8 **Learn to put <u>GOD'S WILL</u> ahead of your <u>own will</u>**
(John 4:34)

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Introduction: Psalm 90:12

This psalm, written through <u>Moses</u> who lived to be 120 years old, unveils a theme that Moses saw vividly portrayed before his eyes, as 1.2 million of his people perished in a brief 40 years: namely, the brevity of life.

Psalm 90 is the <u>oldest</u> of all Psalms. Interestingly enough, the <u>age</u> of this psalm corresponds to the theme of it - namely, the shortness of life on earth.

Every day <u>130,000</u> people die somewhere in the world. Every hour <u>5,417</u> people go to meet their Maker.

That's <u>90</u> per minute. That's nearly <u>2</u> people every second.

The clock of time is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour..
Now is the only time you own;
So live, love, toil doing God's will,
Place no faith in tomorrow,
For the clock may then be still.

V. 12

"So" - in light of what was previously said (v. 1-11)
"Teach us" - only God can place within man an accurate value of each minute of time.
"To number" - to truly consider that life's days are few.

God likens the swiftness of our lives unto:

1) A weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6)
2) A breath of air (Job 7:6)
3) A runner (Job 9:25)
4) Swift ships (Job 9:26)
5) A flower (Job 14:1)
6) A shadow (Job 14:2)
7) As evaporating water (Job 14:11-12)
8) A shepherd's tent (Is. 38:12)
9) A vapor (Ja. 4:14)

The reason given for numbering our days is not so that we can miserably lament the brevity of life, but so that we will both learn and experience the art of skillful living.

"Wisdom" - is truth put into life. it is applied knowledge. Our heart (the core of our being) needs to know God's truth, then live it in order to make the most of our lives.

Sawyer's paraphrase: "So teach us to understand the shortness of life, so that we may live for what really matters."

Did God answer this request of Moses? I believe He did. "No, He did not commission an executive expert in the field of time management to pick up a heavenly overhead projector and invite men and women to come to a workshop. God did something better. God sent His Son. The Creator of time entered the sphere of time and used each moment impeccably. Our Lord's first thirty years were spent in obscurity. They were days of preparation. His last three years were spent in ministry. These were days of proclamation." (Dr. Chuck Phelps, The Trinity Trumpeter, Spring 1995)

****** ***Allow the creator of time -- Jesus Christ -- to teach you how to make the most of your time in 1996!***

Lesson # 1 **Learn to put the ETERNAL before the Temporal**
(Matthew 6:33; compare II Cor.4:18; 5:7; Col.3:2)

This is a conditional promise.

"Seek ye first" -

"Seek" -to zealously look after or earnestly live for (in contrast to what the Gentiles "seek" [v. 32], we are to seek something else).

"First" - a word showing priority. Ahead of seeking for what to eat, drink, or wear (v. 31), we are to prioritize God's kingdom. We are to view the eternal as more important than the temporal (v. 19-20), the priorities of God over the priorities of the Gentiles (i.e. the world).

"The kingdom of God" = seek to live for those things which will advance or benefit the cause of Christ

We advance God's kingdom by 3 ways:

1) Concern yourself with witnessing to the lost (I Cor. 15:3; Jn. 1:41)
2) Concern yourself with assembling with God's people (I Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 10:24-25)
3) Concern yourself with giving to God's work (Prov. 3:9)

When your own financial interests come ahead of God and the needs of His work, the result is frustration and loss (Haggai 1:2-9)

"And His righteousness" - Seek to live up to true, Biblical righteousness; seek to be right as God counts rightness, not as the world does.

You can seek His righteousness by:

1) Concerning yourself with knowing His standards of righteousness / Make Bible reading your priority (Job 23:12; Ps. 119:72, 97; Mt. 4:4)

"A Bible which is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't" (C. H. Spurgeon)

2) Concerning yourself with <u>obeying</u> His standards of righteousness / Internal purity (being clean on the inside) must come first in our lives (Mt. 23:26 - *"Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cub and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."*)

The <u>cause</u> of worry is seeking the things of this world. The <u>cure</u> for worry is to seek the things of God!

One who is pre-occupied with God's interests will have his physical needs met.

If you take care of God's business, He will take care of yours!

Live for that which you can take into heaven with you. John 6:27 - *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."*

"All these things (food, water, and clothing) will be added unto you" -

Note: This promise does <u>not</u> apply to everyone! If it did, no one would ever die of starvation. Rather, this promise is for God's children, for those who have God as their "<u>Father</u>: (v. 26) through faith in Christ.

God feeds His kids - Ps. 37:25 - *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seek the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."*

"Our Lord did not spend the precious moments of His life climbing the career ladder or building a nicer home. He put the eternal ahead of the temporal to teach us that we too should lay up our treasure in Heaven" (Matt.6:19)" (Phelps)

Lesson # 2 **Learn to put the <u>BIBLE</u> ahead of your <u>daily food</u>**
(Matthew 4:4)

Your spiritual maturity as a Christian will increase in direct proportion to the amount of time, interest, and diligence you invest in the Word (cp. Barbieri, p.

47).

Unfortunately, Bible reading for many is like an "occasional snack" that barely provides any substantial fullness to our spiritual stomachs.

Col. 3:16 says, however, that you should *"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"*

How strong is your appetite for God's Word? You answer is "an index of your Christian health" (Hiebert, p. 124).

Do you want to know why you feel "weak" spiritually? Why you have no power over your fleshly impulses? Why you struggle to do what is right? etc. The reason is because you have neglected your spiritual food!

There are a lot of spiritually malnourished, dehydrated, weak Christians struggling with their walk with the Lord. The reason: they are not consuming God's Word.

I Peter 2:1-3
***You need a desire for the Word!**
Three ways to stimulate your appetite for the Word:
I. Rid yourself of the sins that ruin your appetite for the Word (v. 1)
II. Realize the wholesome goodness and growth that comes from the Word (v. 2)
III. Experience the good grace of God and your appetite will be stimulated for the Word (v. 3)

"Sadly many have never invested the 70 hours and 40 minutes necessary to read the Bible through. It only requires 18 hours and 20 minutes to read the New Testament through. Yet, many Christians have never read it." (Phelps)

Lesson # 3 **Learn to put EVANGELISM ahead of entertainment** (Matthew 4:19)

"Follow Me" = lit. "come after Me!" come along behind Me, keep up in step with

Me and let Me lead you.

Before anyone can be a Godly fisher of men, they must be a follower of Jesus.

If fishing for men is the result of following Jesus, what does this say about Christians who are not fishing for men? ANSWER: They are not following Jesus.

"I will make you" - how did Jesus "make" them such fishers of men?

1. By His example (Jn. 4; Mt. 9:9-13)
2. By His command (2 by 2; Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
3. By His enablement (Jn. 15:7-8, 16)

"Fishers of men" -

1. Our "lake" is the world (Jn. 3:16; Mk. 16:15)
   (NYC is our part of the lake)

2. Our "net" is the Gospel (I Cor. 1:17-18, 2:1-5)
   (the simple gospel, not eloquent rhetoric)

3. Our "fish" are lost sinners (Rom. 3:23)

Note: Fishing for men is the only type of fishing where you catch them dead and bring them home alive! (Eph. 2:1ff) (whereas, fishing for fish you catch them alive and bring them home dead).

Why did Jesus refer to evangelism as "fishing"?

1) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires patience

2) Because evangelism like "fishing" demands work and discipline

   (NOTE: their type of fishing was not like sitting out on a lawn chair on a lake with a rod and a can of soda on a Saturday afternoon. It was rigorous work to pull in the nets, sort the fish, mend their nets, row their boat, battle the elements and stay up late at night [most fishing was done at night, since their nets were visible cotton, not

synthetic line]).

3) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires <u>perseverance</u>

(Going from place to place, many times covering the same area over and over again)

4) Because evangelism like "fishing" requires <u>dependance upon God</u>

(only those which God directs into your net, do you catch!)

The greatest long-term, remaining, enduring benefit that we can be to humanity is to fish for them and bring them to Jesus.

Lesson # 4 **Learn to put <u>PEOPLE</u> ahead of <u>things</u>**
(Matthew 19:14; compare 19:19)

"Jesus did not spend his life building tall tower, great armies or larger fortunes. Instead, He built men...the best investment of our lives is to invest in others" (II Tim.2:1-2) (Phelps)

It is people, who are made in the "image and likeness of God"
It is people, who have an immortal soul which will exist forever (not your dog or cat)
It is people, who will go to Heaven (you can't bring your home, car or wardrobe there)

People must matter much to God, He left Heaven and humbly came to earth, put up with misunderstanding and mistreatment and then died for the salvation of the world.

Invest in your spouse, kids, relatives/family, neighbors, Church family.

Life is not about things, possessions, fun, money etc. Life is about relationships.

Lesson # 5 **Learn to put <u>INNER SPIRITUALITY</u> ahead of <u>external appearance</u>**

(Matthew 23:25-28; compare I Peter 3:3-4)

V. 25

For practical purposes, what matters more - the cleanliness of the <u>outside</u> of the cup or dish, or the <u>inside</u>?

"Extortion" - greed and robbery (stealing)

"Excess" - no self-control; self-indulgence; no power to control one's appetites and desires

When we allow God to clean our insides (our filthy hearts), the outside will take care of itself.

--People are transformed from the inside out.

--Our preaching at FBC is not a legalistic blasting of external failures and faulty dress and hair standards, but by God's grace we deal with the heart of the problem.

V. 26

D.L. Moody: "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself" (cited by Wiersbe, p. 85).

V. 27

"Whited sepulchres" - Graves or burial tombs that have been white-washed.

Many focus on sanitizing the extremities of our lives (that which people can see), but fail to deal with the rotten bones and impurities hidden deep in our lives.

We need to clean out the inner caverns of our lives; we need to do some house-cleaning (not dusting off the surface, but ridding ourselves of the garbage and clutter).

V. 28

Things are not always what they "seem" to be.

Don't major on appearance.

Spend more time being what you should be than hiding what you are!

Lesson # 6 **Learn to put <u>PRAYER</u> ahead of <u>sleep</u>**
(Matthew 26:40)

V. 40

"Asleep" - Due to the intense pressures of the hour, the disciples gave in to the suggestion of the devil to <u>sleep</u> their problems away rather than pray their problems away.

V. 41

"Watch and pray" - stay awake and alert so as to pray.

"That ye enter not into temptation" - daily prayer is the only secret to overcoming the strong solicitations to evil that will come our way.

"Deliver us from evil" needs to be our daily prayer (Mt. 6:13).

Note: Proud self-confidence will always result in prayerlessness.

There is a time for sleep and there is a time for prayer. This was no time for sleep. The biggest trial Peter would ever face was minutes away!

"The spirit" - a believer's inner regenerated spirit, which is the aspect of man (which separates him from the animal realm) which alone is eager (***"willing"***) to commune with God.

"The flesh is weak" - Our bodies and old nature succumb and seek to gratify the impulses of the carnal body.

This war of "spirit versus flesh" is a real one (Gal. 5:17) which can only be won by the spirit if you daily feed the spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to control you.

Whenever the Spirit prods you to do something, do it. This is the secret to the Spirit-filled life.

Prayerless lives are powerless lives. The Christian who simply fails to pray will simply fail.

The true success of this past year can be measured by the quantity and quality time you spent before the throne of God. [seeking His wisdom, power, direction, protection, blessing on others]

Lesson # 7 **Learn to put your <u>WALK</u> (Devotion) ahead of your <u>work</u>** (Luke 10:41)

"*And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41,42)*

What matters more to you,

A close communion with Christ, or close friendship with your employer
Getting to know Him better, or getting to know your field or career better.
Spending time with him, or spending your life in busy activity (which will not matter in eternity

Do you specialize in maintaining your heart & attitude, or do you put more thought & interest in the stock market or what happening at Wall street?

Lesson # 8 **Learn to put <u>GOD'S WILL</u> ahead of your <u>own will</u>**
(John 4:34)

See: John 4:31 - 34

Conclusion:

Investors invest their money into stocks, bonds, money market accounts to receive maximum profit, dividends, & interest. How are you investing your life?

The wisest man who ever lived said he had sought after knowledge, pleasure, laughter, wine, houses, servants, silver & gold, treasure, all the women he wanted, yet he was not happy. Yet he had more than you ever will. ["A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesses"]

Solomon said: "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." (Eccl.2:11)

I have only just a minute
Just 60 seconds in it
Forced upon me--can't refuse it
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it
I must suffer if I lose it
Give account if I abuse it
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it.

Hymns: "Seek ye first" "Not my will" "Take my life" "Speak Lord"