The Stewardship of TIME

(Ephesians 5:15, Psalm 90 & other Scriptures)

8-4-2021

INTRODUCTION:

EPHESIANS 5:15

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE TIME (REDEEM YOUR TIME (V. 16)

Cp. Col. 4:5 - "Walk in wisdom toward then that are without, redeeming the time."

a. KNOW ITS WORTH.

1. Time is valuable (precious)
2. Time is irreplaceable.

b. KNOW ITS UNCERTAINTY

"Days are evil" (wicked)

See: Psalm 90

Three truths to remember about time from Psalm 90 -

1. God is not bound by time (v. 1-6)

2. Man's life is short, and sin makes it sorrowful (v. 7-11)

3. We need God to give us wisdom to make the most of our lives (v. 12-17)

How to make the most of your life:

a) Live in light of the Lord's return (v. 13)
b) Experience the Lord's merciful salvation (v. 14)
c) Let God bring joy and fulfillment into your life, rather than spending your life trying to find it
d) Trust God to work in and through your life (v. 16-17)

Words of Wisdom regarding our time:

1. Wake up out of your spiritual lethargy (Rom. 13:11-14)

2. Prioritize your life
   a. Our # 1 love (Matthew 22:37-40)
   b. Our # 1 goal (Mt. 6:33)
   c. Our # 1 job (I Tim. 2:1)

3. Make your plans by seeking God's will (Ja. 4:13-15)

4. Seek to make every moment count for God (Eph. 5:16)
   a. Ask God to fill (control) you with His Holy Spirit every day.
   b. Invest your life in the eternal, not the temporal
   c. Take advantage of every opportunity to be a blessing
   d. Schedule your time and discipline your life
   e. Live each day as if it were your last



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INTRODUCTION:

We only have one life in this present world. Most people live in the past, worry about the future, and forget about the present.

Ben Franklin - "Do you love life? Then don't waste time, because that is the stuff life is made of."

If you live 70 years, God would have given you 840 months, 3,640 weeks, 25,200 days, 604,800 hours, 36,288,000 minutes, 2,213,568,000 seconds.

You spend 5,256,000 minutes every ten years.

What are you doing with your life?

When asked what they are doing, many people answer: "Oh, I'm just killing time" --What did time ever do to us that we should murder it??!

EPHESIANS 5:15

Paul having revealed to believers the riches that they have "in Christ" (ch. 1-3), then revealed that the believers' response should be that of a Godly walk.

1) "Walk worthy of vocation" (4:1); 2) "Walk not as other Gentiles" (4:18); 3) "Walk in love" (5:2); 4) "Walk as children of light" (5:8).

"Walk circumspectly" = live your life carefully

Wisdom: To the Greeks - facts, theoretical knowledge, knowledge for knowledge sake, human rationalization apart from God.

To God - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). Insight/knowledge that relates to life. Understanding put into Godly action. Skill at living life God's way.

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU USE TIME (REDEEM YOUR TIME (V. 16)

Cp. Col. 4:5 - "Walk in wisdom toward then that are without, redeeming the time."

A. KNOW ITS WORTH.

1. Time is valuable (precious)

"Redeem" = buy out; used of a market place; making the most of (ILLUS: taking advantage of an unbelievable sale at the store)

Don't lose it--use it.
Don't waste it--invest it
Don't neglect it--make the most of it!

2. Time is irreplaceable.

"Time" - 3 Greek words:

1. aeon - life span, long time, eternity
2. kronos - a period of time

*** 3. Kairos - a point of time, a specific moment of time, an opportunity

(Cp. Gal. 6:10 - "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith.")

Can never go back (EX: once you hit your 20's, can never be a teenager again)

Time cannot be saved (it's either spent wisely or wasted)

Three things never return: 1) the spoken word; 2) the past life; 3) the neglected opportunity.

a. Redeeming the time, in context, involves: "Walking in love, walking in light."

b. Redeeming the time involves: Waking up! (Rom. 13:11-12)

c. Redeeming the time involves: Having a loose hold on perishable material (I Cor. 7:29-31)

d. Redeeming the time involves: constant moments of prayer (Eph. 6:18 - "Always" = lit. all the time)

*Sinful human nature is to procrastinate (think in terms of future) EX: "When I grow up . . ." "Someday I will . . ." "I have plenty of time."

*We tend to think in terms of huge chunks of time. Be concerned about the moments of time you have now! "Seconds make up minutes; and minutes, hours; and hours, days . . ."

B. KNOW ITS UNCERTAINTY

"Days are evil" (wicked)

NOTE: Paul could have said "short," but instead chose to say "evil."

Same word is used in Lord's prayer - "Deliver us from evil"

See Eph. 6:13 - "Evil day"

A few years later, the very city (Rome) where Paul penned these words was burned! Christians are blamed and made scapegoats by Nero. Blood ran deep (human torches). Not long after, Paul died a martyr's death there.

These are times of 1) struggle (Eph. 6:12 - "We wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ."); 2) Suffering (Phil. 1:29 - "For unto you it is given on behalf of Christ . . .")

We must seize opportunities!

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow . . ."

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;
Live, love, toil with a will (doing God's will)
Place no faith in tomorrow,
For the clock may then be still.

See: Psalm 90

This psalm, written through Moses 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 oldest of all Psalms. Interestingly enough, the age of this psalm corresponds to the theme of it - namely, the shortness of life on earth.

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

That's 90 per minute. That's nearly 2 people every second.
***Three truths to remember about time from Psalm 90 -**

I. God is not bound by time (v. 1-6)

V. 1

"Dwelling place" - God is pictured as a house that has never gotten old, decrepit or ruined. As Paul said to the philosophers at Mars Hill, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

V. 2

"Were brought forth" - the picture is of the mountains being "born."
Mountains are always viewed as that part of creation which is majestic, strong (powerful), and old.
"From everlasting (in the past) to everlasting (in the future), God remains the same. He is immutable. He never changes.

V. 3

"Thou turnest man to destruction - It is God who takes life, who decides when we breathe our last (Heb. 9:27).

"Return, ye children of men" - meaning, to return to the dust from which we came (Gen. 3:19).

V. 4

II Pet. 3:8 - "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

When a thousand years have expired, they are like "yesterday" to God. His perfect remembrance of them makes them such.

As far as God is concerned, it was only two days ago that Christ died.

God describes time (1,000 years) using four analogies:

1)	A "watch" -	the brief hours of the night when a guard would stand duty over a city to protect it
2)	A "flood" -	as the flood waters quickly carry along debris, etc. (as it moves past), so this is the perspective God has for history. he sees the successive ages (and the details of them) just quickly passing by down the currents of time.
3)	A "sleep" -	as quickly as it seems for many to fall asleep and wake up, so is time to God
4)	The "grass" -	in the morning, it is vibrant, moist, and growing, and by evening (after the desert winds have passed by), it is dry, scorched, and withered (James 1:10-11 - "But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

II. Man's life is short, and sin makes it sorrowful (v. 7-11)

V. 7-9

Moses, who saw the unbelieving Israelites (from 20 years old and upward) die in the wilderness, was reminded of the price ("wages") of sin.

V. 9

Our life is like a "tale that is told"

From introduction through the chapters, and to the conclusion, man's life is short.

SEE: "Painting of a Man at the Three Stages of Life" - Georgi Vins - Prisoner Bulletin, p. 31

V. 10
The average life span is 70 years, which is only 840 months, 3,640 weeks, or 25,200 days.

It's not much when viewed against the backdrop of eternity.

Life is short, but it is not always sweet. "Labor and sorrow" - the results of sin and the curse.

"It is soon cut off, and we fly away" - SEE: Eccles. 12:1-7

V. 11
Not many people consider God's wrath against sin. And that sin is the reason for misery and judgment.

III. We need God to give us wisdom to make the most of our lives (v. 12-17)

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 <u>not</u> so that we can miserably lament the brevity of life, but so that we will both learn and experience the art of <u>skillful living</u>.

"Wisdom" - is truth put into life. it is applied knowledge. Our heart (the core of our being) needs to <u>know</u> God's truth, then <u>live</u> 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."

How to make the most of your life:

1) Live in light of the Lord's <u>return</u> (v. 13)
   "Return" (cp. Ps. 6:4, 80:14) - has the idea of "come to my rescue and deliver my life from futility and misery." The Messiah's return is implied.

2) Experience the Lord's <u>merciful salvation</u> (v. 14)

3) Let God bring <u>joy and fulfillment</u> into your life, rather than spending your life trying to find it (v.15)

4) Trust God to work in and through your life (v. 16-17)
   Life is vain without God doing it through you (Jn. 15:5)

CONCLUSION: Words of Wisdom regarding our time:

1. <u>Wake up</u> out of your spiritual lethargy (Rom. Romans 13:11-14)

"*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. [12] The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. [13] Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. [14] But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

2. <u>Prioritize</u> your life

a. Our # 1 love (Matthew 22:37-40)

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. [38] This is the first and great commandment. [39] And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [40] On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

b. Our # 1 goal (Mt. 6:33)

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

c. Our # 1 job (I Tim. 2:1)

1 Tim. 2:1

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

3. Make your plans by <u>seeking God's will</u> (Ja. 4:13-15)

James 4:13-15

Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: [14] Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. [15] For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

4. Seek to make <u>every moment count</u> for God (Eph. 5:16)

a. Ask God to fill (control) you with His <u>Holy Spirit</u> every day.

b. <u>Invest</u> your life in the eternal, not the temporal

Whatever you spend your time on, you are actually dying for (i.e. part of your life is given in exchange). If it isn't worth dying for, it isn't worth living for)

c. Take advantage of every <u>opportunity</u> to be a blessing

d. <u>Schedule</u> your time and <u>discipline</u> your life

If we are God's servants and He is our Master, when we waste time, we are stealing and abusing our Master's (boss's) time.

You don't need more time; make better use of the time you have!

1) Make a time budget (schedule)
2) Make a priority list (what you are living for)

e. Live each day as if it were your <u>last</u>

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.