

The Lord's Day Morning

December 31, 1944

“Redeeming the Time”
Scripture Lesson – Ephesians 5:1-18
Text – Ephesians 5:16

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Introduction

1. Mr. Coffee coming into my office and asking what is the only thing we all have the same amount of. I answered, “Well, I do not know.” He said it is not physical strength or personality or mentality or ability or money – and I said no. He answered, “The only thing we all have an equal amount of is time.” We all have 24 hours a day.
 - a. So the great difference between us so far as time is concerned is how we use it.
2. Text: Redeeming – buying up the time
3. Our time is short
 - a. Only a few years
 1. As we grow older, they seem much shorter because we have so many things we want to accomplish.
4. Have control over such a small portion of it.
 - a. Infancy
 - b. Youth
 - c. Old age
 - d. Sleep
 - e. Sickness
5. Many demands upon our time
 - a. Make engagements by the minute
 1. Roy McCall passing through Memphis and we went to ball game and I told him we would be back at hotel to get his wife at 5:45 and his friend thought he would be back there at 7:15. He kept leaving a leeway of 30 minutes; but I told him no, my schedule called for minutes – not 30 minutes.
 - b. Demands are heavy
 - c. Many are legitimate demands
 1. Business
 2. Health
 3. Civic life
 4. Friendships
6. We must demand that time is valuable
 - a. Benjamin Franklin going up on price of book (from “Over Fool Hill” by Anderson – page 123)

In the book store in the front of Benjamin Franklin's newspaper printing place, a straggler was looking at the books on sale and picking up a book, he said to the clerk:

"What is the price of this book?"

"One dollar," said the clerk.

"One dollar? Can't you take less than that?"

"One dollar is the price," was the same answer.

"Is Mr. Franklin in?"

"Yes, but he is very busy."

"Well, I want to see him," persisted the man. The proprietor was called, and the stranger asked him.

"What is the lowest, Mr. Franklin, that you can take for this book?"

"One dollar and a quarter," said Mr. Franklin.

"One dollar and a quarter! Why your clerk asked me only a dollar just a few minutes ago."

"Yes," said Mr. Franklin, "and I could better have afforded to take a dollar than to leave my work."

The man was startled by the answer, but was evidently desirous of purchasing the book. He said:

"Well, come now, tell me your lowest price for the book."

"One dollar and a half," said Mr. Franklin.

"One dollar and a half! Why, you just offered it for a dollar and a quarter."

"Yes," said Mr. Franklin coolly, "and I could have taken that price then better than a dollar and a half now."

The man silently laid the money on the counter. Taking the book, he left the store; for the proprietor had taught him a wholesome lesson on the value of time.

7. May I suggest to you some simple rules about dealing with your time.

I. Be sure you do not waste your time

1. Dr. Herbert Booth Smith, Immanuel Church, Los Angeles, telling of using his spare time on the train to Denver.

2. Poem – "I Am Today"

I came to you this morning.

I came fresh from the hand of God.

I am called Today.

I am clean and white.

If you touch me with soiled fingers, my beauty will be marred.

A noble thought will glorify me.

A kind word will halo me with brightest light.

A deed of love will connect me with eternity.

A cheerful smile will gild me with the colors of dawn.
Soon I will be Yesterday.
If you use me well and wisely, I shall become a beautiful green spot in your life,
where memory will fondly linger.
Misuse me and I become a hideous, deformed thing which men name Regret.
I am your Opportunity.
Your Master and mine says: "Son, go work today in my vineyard."
I am here – use me.
Eternity will be made richer or poorer because of you – and me.
I am Today!

-E.C. Baird, in "The Christian Standard"

3. If lost, is beyond recall: "Lost between Sunrise and Sunset, two golden hours set with sixty diamond studded minutes; no reward offered, for they are gone forever."

II. Be sure your time is spent in most worthwhile ways

1. I had helped janitor work on furnace at Grace Covenant Church, and had spotted up an almost new pair of shoes; I was kidding one of the Elders, saying that the church owed me for a pair of shoes and told him why. He answered that I owed them because they were paying me so much to do work they could employ another man to do for a dollar and a half a day. This taught me a lesson I have never forgotten.
2. Life should not be measured by how much money we have earned.
 - a. Chest Frist refusing church which would pay him \$1,000,000 more a year than he was being paid. Talking to me in my office in Memphis. Stayed because would be of most service.

III. Be sure you do best you can at your task

1. "Another Good Tent Maker" – Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances?
(v.11)

"Out of Africa on the Livingstone trail one night, the famous Scotch missionary, Dr. Robert Laws, pitched his tent in a lonely spot, and settled down to sleep. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a lion trying to tear the tent and get at him. Fortunately, the tent had been stoutly made, and its resistance gave him a few minutes in which to defend himself. The thorough stitching of that tent, he says, saved his life. Had it been carelessly sewed his chance of escape would have been small. On returning to Scotland he sought out the makers and found that the tent had been sewed by a working girl in her daily work." Not only does conscientious work please our Master but it affects those in contact with it.

- Taken from "The Carpenter of Nazareth," by F.C. Hoggarth

2. Faithful performance of common duties

A story is told of Phillip Henry, who, calling one day upon a tanner, found him so busy tanning a hide that he was not aware of his approach until he tapped him on the back. Starting in confusion, the man exclaimed, "Sir, I am ashamed you

should me thus.” Phillip Henry replied with solemn emphasis, “May the Lord Jesus, when he comes, find me discharging with the same faithfulness and zeal the duties of my calling.”

IV. Take care of your health

1. But take time to rest from less essential things.
2. Mr. Mason telling me I had 5 or 20 years to live and I must decide

V. Time for family

1. The Gateses’ “At Home” – from “Young People’s Weekly”

“We’re trying an experiment at our house,” said a bright-faced girl, whose vivacious manner, together with her sweetness of spirit, made her much in demand. “It’s an ‘At Home’ evening. No – not for company, for ourselves.”

The listener’s face betokened perplexity. The girl sat down and made a business of explaining.

“You know how different things are now from when grandmother was a girl,” she said. “Grandmother lived on a farm. The evenings, especially the winter evenings, were sacred to the family. Brothers sisters got acquainted. They did things together and enjoyed it. Grandmother’s brothers had a little orchestra among themselves, and the whole family spent lots of evenings singing. Then they played game, and most of all they read aloud. How they reveled in Dickens – the Dickens our generation hasn’t time for.”

“But your ‘At Home’ evening,” objected the friend.

“I’m coming to that. In our home things have been getting worse and worse. As soon as dinner was over there was an exodus. All of us belong to different organizations, all very nice of course, but putting us in different directions. Each of us has his or her own circle of friends. It got so that we never saw one another except at meals, and not always then. And finally mother rebelled. She wrote out formal invitations to each one of us and mailed them. They said: ‘Mr. and Mrs. James Percival Gates. At Home, Thursday, the twenty-third, from seven-thirty to ten.’” The girl stopped and laughed reminiscently.

“I hope there were no regrets,” the friend suggested with sympathy.

“There were none, though three of us had to change another engagement or refuse an invitation. We all were there, and mother made a fine hostess. We had music and talked a heap, and at quarter of ten mother served refreshments. We decided to make the thing permanent. One evening a week is none too much to be together. If outsiders drop in we’ll be glad to see them, but we don’t intend to make it a company affair, unless you count Alicia’s John, who’s going to be one of the family someday. So please don’t ask me ever for Thursday evening. That’s preempted.”

“And a good thing, too,” said the friend. “I’ve half a mind to start an ‘At Home’ evening in our family.”

VI. Give time to God

1. God does not put in just do not
 - a. But it will cost you
2. So easy to let other things take His time
 - a. Man only had Sunday to go fishing
 - b. Young people so busy playing tennis did not have time Sunday afternoon did not have time to prepare talks for league so read them
 - c. So busy at party did not have time to come and help decorate Christmas tree
3. Should take time to pray
 - a. John D. Rockefeller took time even on train out of business conference
 - b. Men too busy not to pray
4. Take time to worship
 - a. God deserves this
 - b. Not that we ought, but because we are His children

Conclusion

1. Time is divided unto three parts
 - a. Past
 1. It is gone and we can do nothing about it
 - b. Future
 1. Are not guaranteed we shall have it
 - c. Present
 1. All we have
 2. Accept Christ now.
2. Poem – “The Die is Cast”

When that day comes, and surely it will,
When that voice whispers,
“Live,” or “be killed,”
When I will know in my heart, and will hear
If I will return, or must die here;
Please give me courage,
Whatever the decision,
And make me strong.
So clear my vision,
That I’ll know “You’re” beside me the whole long way,
And give me courage to meet bravely that Day.

-Richard A. Bolling, Jr.