

Sunday Sermon February 11, 2018

Stewardship Sunday 2

Sermon Text: Galatians 6:7-10

Sermon Theme: Are You Using Your Time Wisely?

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

How much time do you have in the day? Before you answer 24 hours, think about how much time you actually have to use in your day. First, Subtract all the time that you spend in pursuits that are productive and give you some sort of positive results like working, cooking, cleaning. Second, subtract the time spent building relationships with your children or your spouse. How much time do you have to make use of?

This really isn't meant to be an exercise in math, rather to get us to personally look at the time we have and how we use that time. An easier question might be, how much of our time do we waste in empty pursuits don't benefit us, simple laziness or inactivity? How much of the blessing of time do we waste?

Many times when it comes to time, we either forget all about it and are chronically late for everything, or we find ourselves chained to the clock like the Mad Hatter from Alice Wonderland trying to make it from one appointment to another.

What is it about time that makes it seem so short and at other times so long? Part of our discussion of Christian stewardship, the use of the tools that God gives to us, has to be the discussion of time. As we look at time this morning we want to ask ourselves, "Am I using my God-given time wisely?"

There is a lot that has been written about time, but none so popular or famous as these words:

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

²a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

³a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

⁴a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

⁵a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

⁶a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

⁷a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

⁸a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Maybe the song by the Byrds starting playing in your head? Long before they were singing Turn, Turn Turn, King Solomon wrote these words to put time into perspective. There is a time for everything that we need or want to do. However, that time may not be exactly when we think it should be, or for as long as we think it requires.

Where does our time come from? Some would say that man created this concept of time as he saw the sun moving across the sky. But time is not an invention of man, God created time for man. From the time God said, **And there was evening and there was morning the first day.** The 24 hour day that we know was created. When God created the sun and moon and bound them together with the rotation of the earth and the planets, he placed it all into motion so that we would have set days, weeks, months, years and the passage of the seasons within them.

God created time as a good and gracious gift for man. I have never been walking in the forest and seen balloons celebrating a birthday for a chipmunk or deer. I have never seen the geese checking their watches to make sure that they made it to the lake before 10. I have never heard an alarm go off to wake the rooster up so that the rooster can wake us up.

God created time as a blessing for man, so that man could make good use of the time that he has been given.

The same Lord that created time is also the same Lord that gave a set amount of time to each and every one of us. From the moment you were conceived, the Lord already knew the number of your days. This is not a

fatalistic statement at all, instead it is something that shows us the great love and care that God has for us. When we look at the love and care that God has for us, we don't see a God who just cares about the big things, we see a God of every detail, even the smallest ones. God has the hairs of your head numbered and he also has your days in his hands. During this time, the Holy Spirit can work faith in your heart through the Word. You can grow in your faith and knowledge of God as we use our time to hear and study that Word and we can share that Word with others. God has not given us the blessing of time to disregard it or to be a slave to it. He has given us time that we can use it as a tool to praise and thank him by using our time wisely.

To do this we must always ask, "Am I using my time wisely?"

In our sermon text, the Apostle Paul tells us, "**A man reaps what he sows**". Looking at what we are sowing and reaping can help us understand if we are using our time wisely to thank and praise God, or if we are using it to thank and praise ourselves.

As I asked those questions at the beginning of the sermon, what did you think? How much time do you have in your day? How much time is spent productively? How much time is wasted?

What is sown if we are unproductive and waste our time? What is reaped of that time? I think many of us have to admit that we are not as productive as we want to be. There are times that we waste the precious gift of time that God gives to us. Our wastefulness may be seen in any number of ways. We may spend long amounts of time on social media, broadcast television, or other amusements. We might simply be lazy or a poor manager of time. Maybe we waste our time by filling it with needless 5 second pictures, sound bytes and trivial information. What will those cute puppies or kittens, an interesting article about the benefits of beets, or whether or not there is massive political corruption or just a little, factor into our salvation?

Another sin of wasting time is to use our time on the wrong things. The Apostle Paul says, "**Let us not become weary in doing good, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.**"

The Apostle Paul tells us that we are to use our time, not just for ourselves, but to be a blessing to others. How much time do you currently spend on work or did you spend when you worked? Did you spend an equal amount of time with your family or spouse doing good for them? Did you remember to spend some of your time with your friend who was hurting from a loss or a trouble in life? Did you spend time with your Christian Family encouraging them and building them up in God's Word?

We use time to selfishly that we miss that God says all that he has given to us, even time, is a tool that we are to use for the good of others. We use it to sow the great blessing of God's Word so that the harvest of souls is to God's glory.

After all that Solomon said about time, he added something very important, "**He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.**"

Solomon says that God has made all these things beautiful, but he does qualify that statement. All of the things that we can use our time for are only beautiful if our priorities are correct and we see time in the Lord must be most important. We must make time in our busy schedule so that growing in the faith and knowledge of Christ comes first and we order our days and our life around that.

Am I using my time wisely, am I using my time to focus on the faith which leads to eternity, or am I not fathoming what God has done and am I only using it on my own here and now. Am I ordering the time in my life so that I have time to worship my God with private devotions, so that I am in his house to hear his Word and receive his sacrament, so that I have time to grow in my faith and knowledge of God? Or am I wasting my time by ordering my time and days to achieve my own purposes, goals, or standard of success? Am I wasting the precious gift of time that God gives to me?

This eternity that Solomon says that God has placed into our hearts is special blessing that God has worked in our hearts. It is the message of our eternal Savior, Jesus. The one thing that has remained constant through the time of this world is that God always pointed to Jesus as his single greatest blessing to sinful man. Sinful people need a Savior. God took his Son and placed Jesus into time so that Jesus could save the world, that whoever believes in him should not perish, they will not experience the end of time, but will have that eternity that Solomon speaks of. God's promise of salvation is timeless. It extends from Adam and Eve to the last child that will be born before Judgment Day.

While he was here on earth Jesus gave us an example of a good use of time. Jesus was always living perfectly on our behalf. During his earthly life he was always preaching to the people, teaching his disciples, or in meditation with his Father. Jesus did not waste the precious time he had.

What am I sowing with my time? Time for myself? Time for work? Time for family? Time for fun? Or am I sowing precious time with my Savior, being built up in faith, and bringing my family closer to him as well?

What am I reaping with my time? Lots of money? A promotion? Good memories with family? A better degree or education? Or am I building up treasures in heaven through the Holy Spirit? Are the treasures that Christ won for me, also my treasures as well?

Thanks be to God. When we are sowing poorly and reaping less, when we are wasting the precious gift of time he has given to us, When we come realizing our sin, Jesus points to the cross, he tells us that he has taken these sins of unbelief and selfishness to the cross and you are forgiven.

In view of the forgiveness that Jesus gives of our poor management of time, may we be good stewards of the precious gift of time that God gives. May we seek to have hearts that want to use our time wisely in ways that build up our faith and the faith of others. May we not let any time pass, where our hearts are far away from the Lord, but may we always see time as a precious opportunity for us to be closer to God and to bring others closer to God. Amen