

Living for Giving: It's About Time

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[0 : 00] So let's open in prayer this morning. Father God, you're a good God. We love you and we thank you that you're with us and you care for us and you will provide for our needs.

Lord, we recognize this morning that some of us are struggling. Some of us are anxious about the unknown. Some of us are anxious about our health, previous health conditions and our challenges that we face during the pandemic.

And so, Lord, we know that you're in control. So, Father, this morning we pray. I pray for peace for each one. I pray for a sense of confidence that you are in control and that you are providing for our needs.

You're watching over us and you are good and your plans for us are good. And so, Father, thank you for this time that we have this morning. Thank you for this time that we can spend together in this way that you've also provided.

for us to connect with one another and to have community in a virtual way. And so, Lord, I pray that you bless each person that's here this morning. May the worship that comes from their mouths, the prayers that come from their hearts, and the things that reach their ears, the words that you have given me to share this morning.

[1 : 14] May they be a blessing and an encouragement to each one. We pray these things in your name. Amen. All right. Well, let's join together again this week in some worship singing.

And this morning we're going to sing two great hymns. Come thou fount and I surrender all. And so, I encourage you to reflect on the words of these great songs of our faith.

And so, as last week, you'll be able to reflect. You'll be able to see and follow the lyrics as they appear on the screen. And so, let's praise God together in that way this morning.

Beginning with, Come thou fount. Come thou fount of every blessing.

Tune my heart to sing thy grace. Streams of mercy never ceasing. Call for songs of loudest praise.

[2 : 32] Teach me some melodious sonnet. Sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mountain fixed upon it.

Mount of thy redeeming love. Here I raise my Ebenezer.

Here by thy great help I come. And I hope I thy good pleasure. Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus saw me when a stranger. Wandering from the fault of God. He to rescue me from danger.

Interposed his precious blood. O to grace how great a debtor.

[3 : 52] Daily I am cut stream to thee. Let thy goodness, like a fair, Mind my wandering heart to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, Lord.

Take and seal it. Seal it for thy courts above. All to Jesus.

All to Jesus.

I surrender all. To Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust in Him.

[5 : 09] In His presence daily live. I surrender all. I surrender all. I surrender all.

I surrender all. All to thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender. All to Jesus I surrender.

Make me Savior, holy thine. Let me feel the Holy Spirit.

Let me feel the Holy Spirit. Truly know that thou art mine. I surrender all. I surrender all.

[6 : 06] I surrender all. I surrender all. I surrender all. I surrender all. All to thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender, Lord. Jesus I surrender, Lord.

I give myself to thee. Fill me with thy love and power. Let thy blessing fall on me.

I surrender all. I surrender all. I surrender all. I surrender all.

All to thee, my blessed Savior. I surrender all.

[7 : 13] I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. It's so great to be able to worship God together in this way.

You know, it's different, but it's also familiar. And so I hope that's comforting to you because these are great old hymns of our faith. And so these words are not less true today than they were when they were first written.

And so I hope they are encouraging to you and that you're enjoying the ability to be able to sing together like this. So this morning we're continuing in our sermon series titled Living Forgiving Perspectives on Christian Stewardship.

And so each week we'll be looking at a different aspect of the idea of stewardship. And last week, you'll remember, we began with an introduction. So as we began unpacking the concept of stewardship, we looked at some of the preconceptions or even misconceptions that we may have about stewardship.

[8 : 38] So I hope last week's sermon set the stage for you and perhaps even gave you a different perspective from one that you've previously had. Last week I shared a quote from author Randy Alcorn, and I'd like us to hear that again this morning.

Randy Alcorn says, A steward manages assets for the owner's benefit. The steward carries no sense of entitlement to the assets that he manages.

It's his job to find out what the owner wants done with the assets and then carry out his, that's the owner's, will. Alcorn continues, Whenever we think like owners, it's a red flag.

We should be thinking like stewards, investment managers, always looking for the best way to invest what the owner has given us.

And that's a powerful perspective, I think. It's one that may require us rethinking how we've previously thought about what we believe to be ours.

[9 : 45] This morning we sang the song, I surrender all. And that really is a goal and a challenge for us, I believe. Because are we really surrendering all to Jesus?

Now that we've had a foundation of the biblical concept of stewardship, we're going to begin digging deeper into the main ideas, into the resources that God has given us, and what we're called to manage according to his will and for his glory.

And over the next few weeks, as we explore the concept of stewardship in various areas of our lives, my hope is that you'll develop a new perspective, that what's yours is not actually yours, but God's.

Our sermon this morning is titled, It's About Time. I want to start by sharing some interesting stats with you this morning. Most of you who know me know that I love information and stats and context. So did you know the average human spends roughly 79 years, or 28,835 days on Earth? How's your time going?

[11 : 03] Each of us have the same 168 hours per week to spend as we see fit. Did you hear me say spend there? They're an average of 692,040 hours in a lifetime.

The average person spends about 26 years sleeping, 9,490 days, or 227,760 hours sleeping.

And surprisingly, we spend roughly, believe it or not, seven years trying to get to sleep. If you're lying in bed, tossing and turning, you're adding on to your seven years.

So we spend roughly 33 years, or 12,045 days in bed. So now 13 years of time on average at work?

Is that weighing on you at all? 8.3 years in front of the TV, if you're a TV watcher. 3 years on social media, Facebook, YouTube, and so on.

[12 : 12] An average of just over 3 years on vacation. Too bad we couldn't take it all in one chunk, right? 4.5 years eating. 1.3 years exercising total.

Which seems low, I think, compared to watching TV especially, right? And to hopefully give some students a sense of relief, in reality, we only spend 334 days in school from elementary to high school.

Although I know it can feel like an eternity. And so for many parents and students who are doing their studies and their schoolwork during this time of the pandemic, it can be even more challenging.

And so for parents and students who are wrapping things up and getting to the end of the school year in the next couple of weeks, God bless you. Continue to have patience and energy in the Holy

Spirit that you will cross the finish line with success and summer is on the horizon.

So after all the essentials like working and eating and being entertained and things that I won't talk about, we're left with all the extras. Things that we do every day without even thinking about them.

[13:33] We spend 235 days of our lives in lines. This is my favorite. 115 days worth of time laughing.

I hope that's true for you. And worth noting here, women spend an average of 136 days getting ready. While men take only 46.

So ladies, let me say now, we appreciate it. We appreciate your time in that way. And guys, I think for ladies' sake, let's up our game here a bit.

What do you say? Think that might be a good idea? So as I've been reflecting on the concept of time this past week, I've come to the realization that as humans, we have a somewhat complicated relationship with time.

So many of our expressions seem to be anchored in the concept of time. Have you noticed that?

We can be somewhat dismissive about our time or the time of others.

[14:39] We talk about, maybe use these expressions yourself. We talk about killing time. I've got some time to kill. What the heck? Let's do that. Wasting time.

I can't believe this is such a time waster. Down time. I'm so tired. I really need some down time. Me time. I need to take some me time to function.

We talk about having time to spare. But at other times, we seem to recognize the fleeting nature of time and a sense of being on the clock.

See? There's another time expression right there. Running out of time. Being short on time. We don't have enough time. If only I had more time.

Time flies when you're having fun. Have you ever reflected on your life, on things in your past and said, You know, it seems like only yesterday.

[15:38] As Connor is graduating from high school this year, Michelle and I have many times reflected that it seems like only yesterday that we held him as a baby.

That he was a young boy running and playing in the playground. That he was in junior high. Junior high was three years ago and it feels like a month or two to me.

So in other times, at other ways, at other times, we become exasperated with our concepts of time. We say things like, I do not have time for this.

Have you said that? Sometimes that happens when you're waiting in a line. I do not have time for this. This is such a waste of time. Have you said that? Do you recognize in yourself any of these perspectives on time that I've shared with you?

If you do, you know what that makes you? It makes you human. So this morning we're going to look at three different facts about time and gain a perspective on what the Bible says about them.

[16:47] We're going to look at the fact that time can be measured. Time has value. And time can be invested. And as we've already recognized a bit this morning, time can be measured.

Even if we don't stop to specifically focus on it, the passing of time does not go unnoticed. The idea in my mind popped up this week that time can be measured in mirrors and in memories.

In regrets and remembrances. And as humans, I think we can, at times, see time as somewhat vague and immeasurable.

Hard to quantify. There are two Greek concepts of time that are presented in the New Testament. One is called kairos and the other is called kronos.

Kairos, which is seen as the appointed time and the purpose of God. It's seen as specific godly time. The time when God acts. Kairos.

[17:59] Kairos is used 86 times in the New Testament. And it refers to an opportune time. A moment. Or a season.

And as I said, it's a time when God acts. And in contrast, the Greek word kronos, where we get the English word chronograph, which is a stopwatch or a watch.

Those are examples of a chronograph. It's used 54 times in the New Testament. And it refers to a specific amount of time. Not a moment in time or a period of time.

But a specific quantifiable amount of time. Such as a day or an hour. While each of us may differ in the total number of time.

The total amount of time God has given us. The ultimate number of years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds. From our birth until our death.

[18 : 58] I want you to think about this unique perspective for a moment. God has given you precisely the amount of time needed for you to accomplish the unique purpose he has for you on this planet.

You have enough time for what God has for you to accomplish. And so this is not a selfish perspective.

It's a biblical one. And remember that God has a purpose for your life. And you've been given the correct amount of time for you to accomplish that purpose.

Scripture directs us over and over to use the time we've been given wisely. To manage the time that we've been given wisely.

The Bible says in Ephesians 5, 15 to 17. Where Paul writes, Be very careful then how you live. Not as unwise, but as wise.

[20 : 05] Making the most of every opportunity. Because the days are evil. Interesting quote from Paul. So Paul is not suggesting here that time itself is evil.

As we may read that or perceive that statement. But that the human tendency is to become distracted and selfish. The world we live in is largely geared towards gratifying and satisfying human desires and urges.

Would you agree? There are so many distractions that can take away from the plan for our lives. Take away from the amount of time we have been given.

And I'll be the first to tell you it takes discipline and active engagement to focus on being Christ-like. To focus on actively engaging in God's plan for our lives.

So if you've already begun to think this morning, So Pastor Ken, are you telling me it's sinful to take a day off? Just stay with me. We'll get there.

[21 : 15] As we read in the Bible in Psalm 90 verse 12, Moses recognized that time could be measured. As he prayed, Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

See here, Moses asks God to help us learn a valuable lesson. That our days, our time is literally numbered. And that time can be measured.

Our second point this morning is that time has value. I talked a moment ago about the fact that it can be hard for us to quantify it. We tend to write time off.

We tend to let it slip through our fingers at times. See, there it is again. A measurement of time is the nature of humanity. But in recognizing that time has value, It stems directly from the perspective that time is a gift from God.

It's precious. It is a non-renewable resource. Time has value inherently. And in knowing that, we need to spend it.

[22 : 29] We need to invest it. We need to manage it wisely. Recognizing our time is limited, And it's been given to us by God for a specific purpose, I think we can agree that time has value, right?

The Bible says in James 4, verse 14, James is not intending to make us feel significant with his words here.

Insignificant, sorry. But to emphasize the temporary nature of our existence. And in light of the temporary nature of our existence, How valuable the time is that we have been given.

The Apostle Paul so powerfully anchored the concept of human time Within an eternal perspective.

The Bible says in Romans 13, verse 11, And that knowing the time, That now is high time to awake out of sleep.

For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Do you see that? From the moment we accepted Christ, From the moment we yielded our lives to him, Time continued to move.

[23 : 57] So the time of our salvation, The time of the end of God's plan for all things, For all creation, Is sooner now than it was when you accepted Jesus.

Time is moving. So knowing that Jesus could return at any moment, And in so many ways our allotment of time Will come to an end, Can that change your perspective on the time that you've been given?

In light of eternity, Even a long life by mortal standards, Even if you live to be 110, A long life by mortal standards is still A snap of a finger By the measurement of eternity.

In the light of eternity, We need to remember that our time is short, And we need to spend it wisely. As we've recognized this morning that time can be measured, And time has value, Let's consider now that time can be invested.

As I reflected on the many resources we've been given by God, I really came to realize how little attention we often give to our time. Our hours, our days, weeks, months, years, Can become quickly cluttered with things.

[25 : 24] Our calendars can become packed with stuff, Packed with activities and appointments and commitments, Some of which can be good, But not necessarily all are the best.

And perhaps it's due to the fact that, Unlike our money, Which can buy us stuff, Our time seems somehow less tangible, As I talked about a moment ago.

And perhaps, because it's less tangible, We somehow deem it to be less valuable? From a very simple perspective, I was talking to someone about this the other day, You can earn more money. You can generate more income. You can get a second job. You can cut back on your spending. You can put money away in savings. You can affect your income.

But aside from consciously reclaiming the time that you've been given, And resolving yourself to make it count, And invest it wisely, Time?

[26 : 34] You get what you get. So with that in mind, I believe it's important for us to seriously consider, How we're spending our time. This is not in any way meant to make you feel guilty, About reading a book for fun, Listening to music, Watching TV or movies, Or just taking some me time when you need it.

We all need balance in our lives. But my challenge for all of us is, Knowing that any time we spend, Any time we use, Is gone for good, It will never come back.

Should we take the opportunity to invest our time more wisely, Whenever we can? I believe the answer is yes. So what does that look like?

How do we consciously invest something, That's largely intangible, And that we may already take for granted? Well maybe you're a list person like I am.

If you know me, You know I'm a list person. But however you prioritize the things in your life, Seek to prioritize your perspective on time.

[27 : 49] Seek to assign it more value. Give it more weight. Be more intentional about the idea of how you spend, That time that you can never get back.

If we don't regularly assess the way we spend, Our 168 hours per week, Our schedules may become cluttered with things, That may be good as I said before, But not the best.

Spend 8 hours watching episode after episode of TV, Maybe you feel better, De-stressed, But that's 8 hours that are just gone.

So as you reflect on your average week, How much quality time do you spend with God? How much time do you spend talking to God in prayer?

I'm not talking about fancy and flowery language. I'm talking about an honest conversation, With the one who knows you, And created you. Knows you better than anyone else.

[28 : 54] Knows what you're struggling with, And your challenges. God sees you and cares for you. He wants you to spend time with him. What about reading the Bible?

Scripture itself talks about it being food, Being bread, Being nourishment for us. Do you spend time reading the words of God That have been communicated to us through centuries?

That have changed lives, That continue to change lives. That probably at one point changed your life. And my prayer is that The word of God changes your life every day, Every moment you open it and read it.

How much time do you spend on relationships, That you say are important to you? Do you spend time on those? Do you spend time investing, In the people that you care about?

And what about close relationships, Or friendships with people who don't know Jesus? I'm not talking about, Making an investment there, Hoping that it will bear fruit, By bringing someone into the kingdom.

[30 : 01] That's an amazing result. But do you spend time with people who don't know Jesus, Sharing about him? Reflecting what it means to know Jesus, What it means for you to know Jesus, And how that relationship has changed your life personally.

Do you spend time in those relationships? And if you don't have them, I encourage you to seek them. Maybe you're someone who sees value, In investing time in your church.

And as your pastor, This is my moment to encourage you, And to possibly convict you as well. We greatly, Greatly appreciate the people who serve and volunteer, In so many ways at our church.

Your church. From leadership as elders and deacons, To washing dishes, And caring for our building, To caring for kids, And cooking meals.

To just being there for people, And not putting a time limit on that. We have prayer warriors, Who I know I can reach out with a prayer request, For someone in our church family, And they're on it.

[31 : 15] They're spending that time, In an intentional way, Interceding on behalf of someone they care about. So in all those ways, Invest your time in things like that.

And you'll be creating real value. As your pastor, I see God leading us into new areas, Of opportunity as a church.

There are new things, That we can explore together. And those things, Those opportunities, Those ways that God is leading us, Will take time. They'll take time to plan, But they will take time, Invested by people, To make them happen.

If you're looking to invest your time, In what God is doing, In and through our church, I'd love to talk to you, About opening, A time investment account.

Because, As much time as we have, At our church, And have been given by people, We can always use more. God will use us. But we need to seek out, The opportunities.

[32 : 25] And we need to invest our time, Intentionally, In those things. Time spent, Time invested wisely, Is time, Invested in eternity.

I hope this morning, That you've come to recognize, That time can be measured. That time has value. And that time can be invested.

My friends, The time you have available to you, Is a precious resource, That God has given you personally. As stewards, Of a non-renewable resource, As we've learned this morning, We need to be wise, In how we invest that resource, On behalf of the owner, Who has given it to us.

We are the managers. I encourage us, To talk to the owner, And seek his guidance, His direction, In how he would have us, Spend our time.

Ask God to reveal to you, Personally, As the steward of the time, He has given you. And be intentional, About assessing your time, And the ways that you're, Currently spending, And investing it.

[33 : 44] I want you to be encouraged, This morning. But also challenged, And convicted. As all of us seek, To use this resource of time, For God's glory, And for the kingdom.

Let's pray. Father God, Thank you that, You have given us time. But we recognize, It is fleeting. It is limited. And so Father, Make us aware, Of the opportunities, That you put before us, To invest our time, To spend our time.

Father, Help us to not be, In a sense of panic, About doing this, About needing to tear, Our lives apart, To try and, Worry and stress, Ourselves into, A panic.

But Lord, Just help us, To be intentional. Help us to be aware. And I pray, That you would give us, Opportunities, And make us aware, Of when they are, Right before our eyes.

Help us to be, The hands and feet, Spending our time, Wisely, In our church, In our community, And in our city, And around the world.

[34 : 59] Lord, Thank you for the time, That you've given us, This morning, To spend together. I believe, It has been spent, Wisely. Lord, I pray that, Each word, That's been heard, This morning, Will penetrate, Hearts and minds, And we'll all, Go this morning, Our separate ways, Mindful, Of time, And aware, Of how you're going, To use it, To make a difference, According to your glory, And according to your will.

We pray these things, In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, Amen. Our benediction this morning, Comes from Ephesians 3, Verse 20, Now to him, Who is able to do, Immeasurably more, Than we ask, Or imagine, According to his power, That is at work within us, To him be glory, In the church, And in Christ Jesus, Throughout all generations, Forever and ever, Amen.

My friends, Go in peace, Knowing that God, Has given you, All the time you need, To accomplish what he has planned, For your life. Use this precious resource, Of time wisely, In the days, Weeks, Months, And years you have ahead of you.

And my prayer for you, Is that you would see God at work, And feel his presence, His peace, And his joy, In every moment, Of your lives.

Be blessed, And have a great week.