

Living in the Now

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[0:00] My message this morning is living in the now. Living in the now. The Bible talks much about the three letter word now.

! And what we do now affects our future. What we do in the now affects our eternity. There's a saying that goes, so a thought, reap an action.

Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. So it can all happen just from a thought, an action, habit, character, destiny.

What we plant now yields a crop later. We reap what we sow. And so it's important to live in the now. To live in the present. To act now. To do what's important and not to put things off.

Now 38, nearly 40 years ago, I approached an attractive young lady at Elizabeth Shops. We had just had church together. And I asked her out. And it was my first date. And she said yes. Which was amazing, really.

[1:19] And when we were seated comfortably at our destination, we were sitting on a park bench overlooking the River Torrens. And we got to talking. To talk as we did. I'm sure all young couples do the same. We sang hymns together.

That was pretty radical, wasn't it? And then I said what I'm sure all young men say to their lady friend on a first date. I said, will you marry me?

I don't believe in beating around the bush, you know. Just get straight on to it, you know. I'm not interested in a girlfriend. I'm interested in a wife. And so, and of course she said, like any young, wise, wise young woman would say, no.

But I persisted and gradually broke down her resistance. As you can see. So it's important that we don't put off what's important. Amen? It's important that we don't put off what is important.

And what matters in the now is that we make it count. And the Bible tells us much about living in the now.

[2:30] Making the most of this finite resource that we all have called time. Someone has truly said, unlike other resources, time cannot be sold, bought, borrowed, stolen, stocked up or saved.

Manufactured, reproduced or modified. All we can do is make use of it. And whether we use it or not, it nevertheless slips away.

Time slips away, doesn't it? And what we do now impacts our future, doesn't it? What we do in the now. And sometimes we can put things off. You know, who's ever been guilty of that?

I have. We put things off and we regret what we haven't done. And perhaps it's that showing of affection. Of those words unsaid.

When we stand at the grave of a loved one. And we think, oh, I should have. I should have. We all have those moments, I'm sure, when you can think, how could I have expressed my love?

[3:36] How could I have shown more affection? How could I have told them I loved them? And those words unsaid. Or maybe those apologies unsaid. Those things that we regret.

We regret what we haven't done. So it's important to make the most of the now. It's all the time that we have is the now, isn't it? All the time that we have is the now.

Sometimes we can live in the regret. Make the mistake of missing what's important and wishing we had done it sooner. Some come to know the Lord later in life, as my parents did.

They were later in years. And we can all look back and think of wasted years. Lost opportunities. Time lost.

That we could have used more effectively. You know, that happened to me. It was some six months or more ago that I set up a vegetable garden in my backyard.

[4:40] Some six months ago. And I laid it out just perfectly. It's called the wicking beds. Where you make these frames and you manufacture it so that the water comes up and feeds the veggies.

So I had big plans of that. So I set it up. I had it planned out really well. And I laid it out really well. This was some six months ago. But I have yet to finish it off. And put the soil in place.

You know, that would help, wouldn't it? As well as planting them. As well as planting the veggies. But I lost months and months of vegetables I could have been eating. Months and months of vegetables I could have grown.

You know, things that we put off. We think, oh, I should have done that. And I would have reaped the benefit if I had done it sooner. If I had planted my veggies, I would have been able to eat some of them.

And what we sow or don't sow will have results. So how can we live in the now and make every day count?

[5:47] Someone has said in just two days, tomorrow will be yesterday. Tomorrow will be yesterday.

And procrastination means postponing, putting things off. Procrastination. You know, you hear some funny quotes about procrastinators. You know, they just put things off, put things off, and that never happens.

And procrastination, putting things off, it's associated with laziness. Really, procrastination, putting things off, is a ticket to hell. It's a ticket to hell.

Paul the Apostle was talking to Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, in Acts 24. In Acts 24, verse 25.

And it says, And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, self-control, and judgment to come, here was Felix.

[6:48] Hearing the message of salvation. Hearing about righteousness. How we can be made right with God. How we can live right, temperance. And how we can be right at the throne of God's judgment.

Judgment to come. He reasoned with Felix. Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

And Felix had several meetings with Paul. But when Felix was challenged with the gospel truth, he said it wasn't convenient.

It wasn't convenient. Acts 24, 25 it says, Felix trembled and answered, Go thy way for this time.

When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. So, in other words, he was saying what we often say to the telemarketers. Don't call me, I'll call you.

You know, Hey, I hear the message, but it's not convenient. I'm not ready yet. I'm not wanting to be a Christian yet.

[7:52] I just want to have a bit more of me time. James said it's a sin to know what you should do and to not do it. Don't delay.

Use today. So, the word of God, God's promises, are for the now. There's many scriptures that talk about now.

One in part in 2 Corinthians 6 verse 2. It says, Behold, now. Now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. What a challenging verse that is. That it's not later.

It's now. It's right now. And the biggest and best decision that you can make in the now is to put your trust in the Lord. Put your trust in the Lord.

[8:51] To know Him. Him to know is salvation. Romans 8.1 God promises. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

And it's important that the latter part of the verse, which some Bibles lack, which is very critical.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The best decision we can make now is to trust in the Lord.

To trust in the Lord. Now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. And there is therefore now no condemnation. If we're in Christ.

If we're walking after Christ. If we're in Christ. There is no condemnation in the now. And you know some Christians live as if they're kind of half there.

[9:55] They're living way down. Still burdened down. Still not feeling that freedom in Christ. But we have it now. We have assurance now.

We have true freedom. And purpose. Now. As it goes on to say in Romans 6.22. But now. Being made free from sin. And become servants to God.

You have your fruit unto holiness. And the end everlasting life. Now. Being made free from sin. There's a freedom from sin. There's a fruit unto holiness.

And it says we made servants unto God. Not only are we saved. We made sons and daughters of the living God. We made his servants too. We're given a job to do.

We've given a commission. A call. We're sent. As servants. And it goes on. In 2 Corinthians 5. To tell us that we're ambassadors. For Christ.

[10:56] He makes us his servants. He calls us out. He calls us into his fellowship. He sends us out. Into his harvest. And he calls us to serve.

To be his ambassadors. In other words. His representatives. Now. If you've ever been to some capital cities. They've got embassies.

In the capital cities. Many nations. And they've got ambassadors there. Sent from their various countries. To represent. In our nation. The country that has sent them.

And we are likewise sent. From the kingdom of heaven. To this planet. To this world. To be. His representatives. On planet earth. And it says in 2 Corinthians 5.

20. Now. Then. We are ambassadors. For Christ. As though God did beseech you. By us. We pray you in Christ's stead. Be reconciled. To God.

[11:53] Now then. We. Now. Then we. Are ambassadors. For Christ. He sent us. So everywhere you go. That profess his name.

Everywhere you go. That knows him. And claims to be his son. His daughter. His servant.

Everywhere you go. You are a representative. Of the kingdom of God.

You represent the Lord. Jesus. Christ. The king. Of kings. The lord of lords. Everywhere you go.

You are his messenger. So question is.

Where are we at? In the now. In the now. There's a scripture. That challenges us. Romans 13. 11. It says. And that knowing the time.

Knowing the time. That now. It is the high time. To awake. Out of sleep. For now. Is our salvation. Nearer. Than when we believed.

[12:48] Now that ultimate. Glorification. When. We will see him. Face to face. It's ever closer. Isn't it? Our lord's coming.

Again. To planet earth. It's ever closer. Day by day. Hour by hour. Moment by moment. We're getting closer. We're getting closer. And closer. To that moment. Now is.

Our salvation. Nearer. Than when we believed. Of course. There is the present tense. Of salvation. And then there's the ultimate. As we see. Our lord.

And Romans. 13. 11. Paul writes. Now. It is high time. To awake. Out of sleep. There's that present tense reality. That.

This is no time. To be asleep. You know. I. I don't think anyone's asleep. Just yet. But. Sometimes. That happens to me. In church. And I think. Wow. I'm not. I'm not preaching.

[13:44] Loud enough. Or. Strong enough. Or. You know. Just got to find something. To throw it. That one. In the back row there. And just. Now is that time. It's high time. To awake.

There's no time. For sleeping. There's no time. For slacking. Now is the time. Now is the high time. To awake. Out of sleep. So how are we making. The use of our time.

How are we making. The use of our time. It's a finite resource. We can look back. And think. The things that I should have done.

And then we can look back. And think. The things that I. Have done. I'm glad I did that. I'm glad I put that time. Into whatever it be. You know. Getting that qualification. Or. Or taking that job.

Or. Taking that time. To study the Bible. Taking that time. To learn how. To witness. Taking that time. To pray. Taking that time.

[14:40] To grow in my faith. Or we can look back. And think. Oh. If only. If only. And sometimes. We can put things off. Can't we. And think.

It's a trap. Really. To think. Oh. When I'm a bit older. I'll do something for God. When I'm a. When I'm a bit wiser. I'll do something. When I'm a bit more.

Freed up. I'll do something. And. Does it ever happen. We miss those moments. Those opportunities. There was a preacher. Planning to preach on the text.

Behold. Now. Is the accepted time. Behold. Now. Is the day of salvation. And. While in his study. Meditating on the subject. He fell asleep. That's.

That's usually how. I do my best sermon preparation. When I have a bit of a snooze. I usually get these. Dreams and visions. You know. But you know. I really get some inspiration. It's sort of. Things. Thoughts come to the mind.

[15:35] And here was this preacher. He fell asleep. As he was preparing to preach this message. And. He dreamt. That he saw Satan. And his fallen angels. Gathered. For the purpose. Of devising ways and means.

By which they might. Effectively. Damn souls. And he said. That in the dreams. That he saw. An infernal spirit. Arose. And said.

I will go and tell. The people. There is no. God. But Satan said. That will not do. For only fools. Deny that fact. Then another fiend.

Of unusual. Intelligence. Intelligence. Arose. And said. I will go and tell them. That there is nothing to religion. That it is all a farce. But Satan replied. That will never do.

For multitudes. Have seen. Saints. Die. Inside of heaven. Declaring that salvation. Was real. One other arose. And made suggestions. But Satan refused them all.

[16:34] One after the other. Finally. The most subtle of all. Arose and said. I will go and tell them. That there is a God. That the Bible is true.

That salvation is real. But that there is plenty. Of time. There is no hurry. And the minister said.

That in that dream. He could see. All the demons. Were jubilant. And Satan said. Go. That is the plan. And the meeting disbanded. Go and tell them.

There is a God. The Bible is true. Salvation is real. But there is plenty. Of time. And that there is. No hurry. Friends.

I was talking with someone. Just last night. And he was talking about. Witnessing to a man. And. He used an expression. That really stuck in my mind.

[17:31] And he said to this man. It is five minutes. To midnight. It is five minutes. To midnight. Here was this man.

Tottering on the edge. Of eternity. Playing games. With God. It is five minutes. To midnight. There is no time.

To toy. With such. Eternity. With such truths. There was a little boy. He was running to the station. And just as the train. Pulled out. Do.

Do. And the train. Was pulling out. How do you like that sound effect? And the train. Was pulling out of the station. Chh. Chh. Chh. Chh. Chh. Chh. Just building up steam. And the boy was running.

Like mad. To get to the train. And the door was shutting. And the guard sort of yelled out. You didn't run quite hard enough. But the boy yelled back.

[18:27] Oh yes I did. I ran as hard as ever I could. But I didn't start soon enough. He didn't start soon enough. When are you going to start?

When are you going to start? When are you going to trust Christ? When are you going to follow Christ? When are you going to obey God? When are you going to come to your knees?

The story is told of a family who moved into a new community. And they were probably visited by some Christian folk. By the preacher of the nearby church. Who cordially invited them to attend the services on the Lord's Day.

And the man of the family assured them that he would come just as soon as he got straightened out. He was a bit tied up.

Several months passed. And he still hadn't put in an appearance. So the minister called again. And he repeated his invitation. Come. Come to church.

[19:31] But he received the same reply. The fellow hadn't yet gotten everything straightened out. But he'd be there just as soon. Just as soon as he did.

A few weeks later he died. And his widow asked to have the funeral services in the church. And the preacher graciously agreed.

It was indeed a sad affair. Later when a member of the congregation asked the pastor if the man was a Christian. He answered. He never attended services here.

And no one can recall he ever gave a testimony of his faith in Christ. So I cannot say. I only know he was a man of his word.

He promised to come to church just as soon as he got straightened out. And he did. In the coffin. Now don't wait to serve God.

[20:30] At some later time. Do it now. Now. Now. Isaiah 55 verse 6 it says. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.

Call upon him while he is near. Do it now. This is the moment of truth. There's got to be a time when we quit intending.

Intending. And start acting. NASA tells us the greatest amount of energy is in getting the rocket off the launch pad.

Once it gets into orbit it's a cinch. It takes that moment of truth. The right time is now. Behold now is the accepted time.

Behold now is the day of salvation. Ecclesiastes 12.1 it says. Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.

[21:32] Young men. Young women. What an opportunity you have. To decide early. Decide young. Decide in the youth of your days.

To decide now. Decide today. To trust Christ. To trust him. Give him your heart. You know. I like to say sometimes.

And it's tongue in cheek. But it's so true. As someone has wisely said. Like sand through the hourglass. So are the days of our lives.

Isn't that true? You know. There's wisdom in that silly series. There's like sand through the hourglass. So are the days of our lives.

So fleeting. The Bible tells us that life is a vapour. Just blows in and blows out. And it's gone. Proverbs 27.1 it says.

[22:26] Boast not thyself of tomorrow. For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Don't boast about tomorrow. Some people have got big plans.

Big plans. You know. Next month. Next week. Tomorrow. I'm going to. You may never see it. You may never see tomorrow. Someone has said.

Procrastination is my sin. It only brings me sorrow. I know that I should give it up. In fact I will. Tomorrow. Procrastination is my sin.

It only brings me sorrow. I know that I should give it up. In fact I will. Tomorrow. We put it off. We put off getting right with God. We put off wanting to live for God.

And we can miss out. I was reading a quote lately that talked about. In Isaiah 6 it tells of. Isaiah. How he was convicted of his sin.

[23:25] Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. He realised his sin. And then God touched him. It was that picture of him trusting the Lord. Receiving God's cleansing.

Of forgiveness. Of salvation. And then the Lord said. Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? He says. Here am I. Here I am. Send me.

Send me Lord. And someone has said. Sometimes we. We can impress. We can impress. For example. The young people. To say. Here am I. Send me. But I haven't had the.

Woe is me first. We've got to get. The woe is me first. We've got to realise. I need to get right with God. Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips. I live in a people of unclean lips.

I'm. I'm lost. I'm. Foul. I need Christ. To cleanse me. Of my sin. That's the. Starting point. Then. Here am I. Send me. Then God can use you.

[24:23] It's getting that. In the right order. When somebody comes to me. And says. I'm aiming to change my life. I'm aiming to change my life. I want to say. This is someone's quote. Well then.

When are you going to pull the trigger? Quit aiming. And shoot. You know. I'm aiming to change my life. I'm aiming to trust the Lord. I'm aiming to be a Christian.

I'm aiming to follow Christ. I'm aiming to serve God. Stop aiming. And pull the trigger. Pull the trigger. Stop stalling.

Stop putting it off. Somebody said. But preacher. It's a big job. I might start it. But I can't finish it today. I can't even finish it this week. Doesn't make any difference.

Do 10 minutes today. Do 10 minutes tomorrow. Do 10 minutes the next day. And it will astound you. In 6 weeks. It will astound you. What you have done. You might think. This Bible is too complicated. [25:18] It's too. It's too hard. Take it. In little bite sized pieces. Bit by bit. Inch by inch. It's a cinch. Just. Eat it.

As we heard. There's that. That receiving. As it were. A picture of eating. Of partaking. You can feast your soul on these words.

On this truth. You can get a real feast. And sometimes. It's bit by bit. And as a Christian. It's like that too. We're growing.

All of us. I know. I think Joshua. Might have had his first opportunity. Stand before. A group of people. And deliver a message. When he first came.

It was something. That he hadn't perhaps done. So much. Before. But. It's taking that first step. Isn't it? It's taking that. Those baby steps. Those. Bit by bit steps.

[26:14] That we can come. And gradually grow. And. Flourish. In Ephesians 5.16. It tells us. To redeem the time. Make the most. Of every opportunity. Redeem the time.

In other words. Make the most. Of that time. Time. Time is a finite resource. Make the most. Of that time. That we have. There was a famous author. Who wrote his first book.

While he was riding on the subway. In New York. And he made the most. Of every opportunity.

There's people like that. We've all got the same. Amount of time. Effectively. Haven't we?

Those that. Live the same. Length of life. As us. We've all got the same. Extent of time. It's about how we use. That opportunity. There was one man. Who memorized. A thousand Bible verses.

At stoplights. Just as his car pulled up. At the red light. He grabbed that little. Bible verse. And read it out. A few times. Then put it back. In his pocket. And before long.

[27:08] He memorized. One thousand. Bible verses. He used the most. Of every opportunity. Wise men. And women. Plan. And schedule. And as a Christian.

Don't be daunted by what you don't know. Just take bit by bit. Step by step. Bite sized pieces. And you'll grow. But the point is that the time for decision is now.

Stop stalling. Stop aiming. And pull the trigger. As someone has said. When you stop to think about it. There's no such thing as a future decision. You face only present decisions.

That will affect what will happen in the future. Procrastinators. People that keep putting things off.

Wait for just the right moment to decide. If I wait for every objection to be overcome.

I will attempt nothing. You know. We can all find excuses. We can all make excuses. We can all think of reasons why. It's hard for us to grow as a Christian.

[28:06] Maybe you've not even started yet. You might think. You might be like Felix. And say. Oh. When it's convenient. When it's convenient. It's not. It's not convenient for me at the moment.

And we can put it off. And likewise as a Christian. You might. You might think of so many excuses. Why? You just want to coast along. Instead of pulling the trigger. And friends. There's no time like the present. Make the decision now. The word says.

Choose you this day. Whom you will serve. It tells today. If you hear his voice. Take action. We've looked today at.

The question of today. Now is the time. The accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. And. Just in closing. Let me.

[29:04] Leave these thoughts with you. To. Not. Put it off. Don't delay. Do not delay. You might say. Preacher. I'm. I'm feeling like I'm not. I'm not right with God today.

You might say. I can't recall. A day. A moment. When I've trusted the Lord Jesus. As my saviour. I'm. Not sure. How. How.

There was a moment. That I. That I was saved. I'm not sure. That I'm saved. The Bible says. You can know. That you're saved. It says. Now this is the record.

That you can know. That you have. Eternal life. You can know it. As a certainty. As a present tense reality. You can know today. That you're saved. You can know today.

That your destination. Is heaven. 100% guaranteed by God. You can know that today. And it's important. Not to put that off. But to make that.

[30:02] Step today. Take that step today. We're going to close. With a prayer now. Lord. We thank you. That you call us. To yourself. That your word. Calls us to.

Take this step. Of faith. And Lord. As Christians. As believers. Here Lord. Help us. To. Stop aiming. And pull the trigger. As it were.

With our Christian walk. And life. To determine. To make. Every day count. To redeem the time. To use it wisely. Because the days.

Are evil. That we live in. These days. Are. Heavy. Godless days. And. Now more than ever.

We need. To be a people. That. Are. In your truth. Lord. That are walking. In your light. Lord. We pray for everybody. Here this morning. If there's any.

[30:56] That have yet. To make that. Decision. To trust. In you. As their Lord. And saviour. To realize. That you've died. On the cross. For their sin. And rose again. And to confess.

Their faith. In you. As Lord. As master. As saviour. That they will put. Their trust in you. Even this very moment. They'll seek prayer. To. Confirm that.

Lord. For every believer. We pray. That we'll be encouraged. To stop. Putting things off. To. Determine. To make each day count.

Help us Lord. To. To put steps in place. That we might. Remember your word more. That we might. Call it to mind. As we've memorised it. That we'd be. That we'd be able to pray.

And. Walk in fellowship. And. To be a. An ambassador. That. Has got a message on our lips. To those who know you're not. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

[31:53] Thank you.