

Redeeming 2026

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles tonight, turn over to Ephesians chapter 5 quick here this evening, as we'll take a few moments and get a challenge here as we consider those things of a new year.

You know, it's important to always consider what a new year brings and the things and the elements with it as we look here. You know, this last year, we're in the last few hours of 2025 and a new year is just right around the bend here in just a little bit.

But, you know, when the reality is, is last year is behind us and a new year is before us. And so this year ahead, I just want to remind you, you do have 365 days in it.

You have 365 days, 8,760 hours, and 525,600 minutes.

And the thing is, you have a choice how you're going to use them. You have a choice what you're going to do with them. You know, that's the one thing that we do have is, is how will we use those things?

[1 : 08] How will we use that time in the year to come? And, and we know we're going to use them. You know, you can't bank time. You know, you don't get to put it away for later or, or say, well, I'll put, save that back for another moment.

You know, time is one of those things. It moves and gets consumed no matter what we do. And that's the reason you find Ephesians chapter 5 tonight. As we look down in verse 14 here, as we see here this evening, where the word of God tells us here, it says, Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now look here at verse 16.

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

You know, we see here we've been charged to do a couple things in this. You know, to walk circumspectly. You know, that circumspectly means to be carefully or intentional. You know, we definitely need to use our time intentionally.

We live in a day where there's a lot of things that consume our time. You know, I was reading an article today that they say the average teenager today spends somewhere between six and eight hours playing games.

[2 : 32] On a device of some kind. Now, think about adults. You have many adults do the same thing. They'll burn hours upon a phone. How many, you know, I won't ask for a thing, but how many of you have ever caught yourself death scrolling on your phone?

You know, you're killing time, and just all of a sudden it just keeps consuming. I mean, when we look at how we use our time, it's important. It tells us that we need to be carefully, use it carefully and accurately.

You know, use it as what's going to be profitable. And our walk is to use our time wisely. And notice here it compares wise and foolish.

Because it's going to be used up. The question is, is it going to be used wisely? Is it going to be used foolishly? Is it going to be used carefully and intentionally? Or is it just going to let it pass by?

You know, to do whatever. But we see these things. But I want to look at a couple things to draw your attention here as we get ready to close the year and begin a new one.

[3 : 31] And talk about some things that will help us walk wisely in the year to come. You know, how to use your time in the year to come. Because that's one area that we're all even.

Everybody has the same amount of time. You know, the person sitting next to you doesn't get a second longer than you have. Everybody is exactly on the same playing field.

And so we want to consider what are some things. We're going to look at seven things that will help you redeem 2026. Because 2026 is going to come and it's going to be used up.

What are you going to do in that time? You know, I want to encourage you tonight as we look here in Ephesians chapter 3. It tells us as Paul continues to look at this, he gives us an idea of one thing, the first thing that we can look at here when regards to this, as we look down in verse 17 of chapter 3.

And it says this, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that you may be rooted and grounded in love. You know, the first thing on the list there is to stay rooted and grounded.

[4 : 38] To be rooted and grounded in the things of God. Here it tells us to be rooted and grounded in love. And look at what it goes on. It says, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, the length, the depth, and height.

And to know the love of Christ with path to knowledge that may be filled with all fullness of God. You know, when we understand the reality of being rooted and grounded, you know, in understanding who God is, the fullness of God.

You know, look over to Colossians chapter 2 for a moment. Colossians chapter 2, you'll find there in verse 7. Here in Colossians chapter 2, you'll find that God brings forth something else here for us. Look in chapter 2, look there in verse 7 of the second chapter. It says this, Rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, that ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. You know, think about that. Rooted and built up in him. One of the things that we need to do is to be rooted and grounded, built upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the question is, say, preacher, how does that affect my time?

[5 : 47] Because that depends on how you use that time. Because consider what Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 2. In verse 15, he makes it clear.

He says, To study to show thyself approved unto God. To study to show thyself approved. That word study involves investment.

It involves labor. It involves directly time because it involves effort that's being made. To learn and to grow and to understand. You know, we live in a day and age where there's a lot of false teachings out there.

There's a lot of falsehoods that go around. How do you discern which one's right and which one's wrong? You know, simple truth is, if you're grounded in the truth of God's word, it doesn't draw you away.

Because when something false is said, you can go and think, hey, there's something wrong with that. And study to show thyself approved means, I know where I'm going to go to look.

[6 : 50] I'm going to understand how does this fit in the scope of scripture. You know, one of the things to do that, you know, how do you apply this being rooted and grounded in truth?

Look back in the Old Testament for a moment. Go to Psalm 119. You know, Psalm 119. I think God tells us exactly how we need to be rooted and grounded.

You know, the application here is very simple. We look in verse 11 of Psalm 119. It tells us this. It says, Thy word have I hid what? In my heart.

That I might not sin against thee. You know, if you're going to be rooted and grounded, it means that you've put time into not only reading God's word, because the one thing you'll find, there's a lot of people who read the Bible.

You actually find more people read the Bible than you realize, but you know what? A lot of them, it's just reading. They don't really consider how does it fit? How does it apply to me?

[7 : 49] Study implies that you take what you're reading and say, how does this apply to me? How does it apply to life? How does it apply to the principles that I need to use that I might be rooted and grounded in him?

You know, have that word hid in his heart. In other words, to know what it says, not just to read it. Not just to consume words on a page, but to have those words on a page have an impact upon you. You know, to hide those words. So when something comes up, God has something to draw from. You know, I think oftentimes as Christians, we can be foolish because we don't know what God says about something.

And we just react according to what we think instead of what God says. You know, to be rooted and grounded means that you have God's truth instilled in you.

You know, one of the things for this coming year I want to encourage you is to really get rooted and grounded in the truth of God's word. To stay there. To stay rooted and grounded in the truth of God's word.

[8 : 54] Secondly, I want you to pray earnestly. Because you never separate the word of God from prayer. You know, the two are together. Just the word of God is God speaking to you and prayer is you speaking to God.

You know, last I checked, any time you have a relationship or a conversation, it usually takes two directions. It takes two parties to be involved. To pray, you know, look over in James chapter 5. Now, James chapter 5, it tells us over there. In James chapter 5, we find here that the word of God tells us, he says, in verse 16, he says, Confess your faults one for another, pray one for another, that you may be healed.

And notice this, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. You know, in other words, to have that relationship with God makes a difference.

And to invest in that. You know, now we notice over here, in Matthew chapter 26, think for a moment as Jesus is telling his disciples, when it comes to this idea of prayer, and one of the things we need to do, if we're going to redeem the time, we need to spend time with God.

[10 : 06] We need to spend time with him to actually pray. You know, to have prayer. Notice what it says in Matthew 26. Look down in verse 41. It tells us this, watch and pray.

That word watch means to be alert. You know, a lot of times we go through life, aren't paying attention. You know, if you drive in traffic in Lincoln, you'll know there's a lot of people that don't pay attention.

Whether it's the stoplight or traffic. I mean, how many times has somebody just pulled blatantly out in front of you? You know what they're doing? They're not watchful. They're just going through and not being observant.

They're not paying attention. When Jesus told his disciples to watch, he said to be paying attention.

To be alert to what's going on. He says, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. You know what? It takes effort in your flesh to pray. You know, I've learned over the years that prayer is not easy.

[11 : 08] Prayer takes intention because you know what? There's a hundred things to distract you that can draw your attention. You know, you'll be starting to pray about something and pretty soon, you know, well, that's a concern.

And then you start thinking about the concern instead of what you're doing. It takes intention to be alert, to be watchful. You know, over in 1 Peter chapter 4, it tells us this, but in verse 7, it says, and the end of all things is at hand.

Be therefore sober and watch unto prayer. You know, if you watch the news, the world is getting worse and worse. You know, I always tell people this way, when it comes to the Lord's return, I don't know when he's going to return, but I guarantee you we're one day closer than we were yesterday.

It's getting closer to the end. We understand the reality of that, but we need to be sober. That means to be right thinking, to be thinking properly about what's going on about us.

And that comes from the word of God and to pray, to talk to the Lord. You know, think about Philippians 4, 6, a verse we often hear. It tells us, be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

[12 : 20] You know, if we're going to redeem the time in 2026, we need to be rooted and grounded in the truth of God's word. We need to be praying. We need to pray earnestly, you know, to be focused on what God has.

Now, the third thing we're going to look at here tonight, if we're going to redeem the time, is you need to guard your heart. This is an area sometimes we let slide a little bit. Because when we understand what God's speaking about here, look over to Proverbs chapter 4.

You know, Proverbs chapter 4. Because what we do impacts what we're looking at, how we deal with things.

You know, look here in Proverbs 4 and verse 23. He tells us this in 4, 23 of the book of Proverbs. He says, keep thy heart. To keep thy heart with all diligence.

Now, when we stop and consider, what's he talking about? If we're going to redeem the time, we need to guard our heart. Because you know what? Your heart draws you away. What your heart is focused upon makes a difference.

[13 : 29] Because he says, keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. You know what? Your heart and the things of life intertwine.

They're woven together. And when we understand the reality of that issue, that our heart needs to be diligent in that.

You know, take a look over to Deuteronomy chapter 4. You know, Deuteronomy chapter 4. And you'll find over here in Deuteronomy chapter 4, down in verse 9. That God even told the children of Israel this same principle.

As they were getting ready to come out of Egypt. You know, he told them that they needed to do something. And he tells them here in verse 9, only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently. You know, one of the most important things here is we spend more time worried about somebody else sometimes than we are worried about ourselves. Well, look what they did.

[14 : 31] Or look what somebody over here is doing. But notice God tells us to keep our heart, keep those things within ourselves, to keep thy soul diligently.

Now notice here what it continues to say in Deuteronomy chapter 4. It says, You know, I want you to see here, because there's an important element in what we keep.

Because when we keep our heart right, it impacts others. We ought not to be overly concerned. There is a concern for others. But I want you to understand, it starts making sure you're right with God.

Because if you're not right with God, there's a problem in how you redeem the time. You're not redeeming it in that, you know, think about what's needed to guard your heart.

Well, one of the things, as a psalmist gives us, look over to Psalm 139, because guarding your heart sounds good, but you know, one of the ways you guard your heart is to allow God to inspect your heart.

[15 : 35] For God to inspect you and reveal to you what needs to change. You know, oftentimes we want to guard our heart and use ourselves as the measuring stick.

To use what we want. But notice here in Psalm 139, notice what it tells us here. In Psalm 139, look at verse 23. It says, Search me, O God, and know my what?

Heart. Heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there, what? Be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. You know, I want to encourage you, if you're going to redeem the time in 2026, it's going to be built upon spending time with God and say, God, you need to do an inspection of my heart to make sure that it's where it needs to be.

And where it ought to be. To say, God, is there something that needs to change? Do I need a change of perspective? Do I need a change of attitude? Do I need to change the way I look or accept the truth of your words?

You know, all those things play into that to redeem this coming year. You know, fourthly, we're going to see here is if you're going to redeem the year, you need to stay connected.

[16 : 56] You need to stay connected. Look over to Proverbs chapter 20 for a moment. Proverbs chapter 20, look down in verse 20. Proverbs 20, Proverbs talks a lot about who we hang out with.

You know, I imagine all of you, especially if you're a little older and for the younger ones, you might even have your parents tell you, you know, that you've got to be careful who your friends are. You know, the people you hang out with will influence you.

Oftentimes, we'll tell kids that, but you know what? Adults, we need the same advice. We need to be careful who we're hanging out with. Look here at Proverbs chapter 2. Look down at verse 20.

It says, that thou mayest walk in the way of what? Good men and keep thy path, keep the path of righteousness. Now, when it talks about walk in the way of good men, walk with others that want to walk with God.

You know, to be around where people want to walk with the Lord. You know, look a little later to Proverbs 13. Proverbs 13 and verse 20, the Word of God tells us this. It says, he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

[18 : 09] Who you're hanging out with will impact you. You'll either be wise or foolish. You can either wisely use 2026 or foolishly use 2026.

The reality is yours. Psalm 119 and verse 63 says this, I'm a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts.

In other words, we ought to be connected with those that want to serve the Lord. You know, if you're a believer, you ought to have a desire to be around other believers. You know, often I question when people say, I love the Lord, but they want to hang around with people who are contrary to God.

Intentionally choose to hang around people that are counter to the things of God. Now, I want you to understand, we're not talking about not communicating or not being friendly or not being a part, but you know, your desire ought to be to be around other believers that are going to encourage you in the truth and not draw you away.

When we get drawn away by the people we hang out with, it influences us. You know, 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 33 tells us this, Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners.

[19 : 29] Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. You know, think about that. It's a shame when you don't want to be connected to the things of God.

Be connected around what God has said because I want to, just consider for a moment, what does that look like? You know, one of the best ways to use time in 2026 is be with God's people when we're meeting together.

And there was simply this, be in church. To be where you ought to be, consider what the Bible tells us. Acts chapter 2 verse 42 told us this, in the early church they didn't have to be told, it says they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers. In other words, they didn't have to be forced to get together. You know, you shouldn't be forced to come to church. You know, there's a lot of people come to church for different reasons. But if you're going to use your time wisely, it's having your heart right to say, this is where I want to be.

This is where I need to be. This is what's going to benefit me. And that's the reason that the Bible tells us in Hebrews 10, he says this in verse 24, he says, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another so much the more as you see the day approaching.

[20 : 51] You know, we've already talked about that. The world's getting worse and worse. If you haven't noticed, people don't like God. We're getting into a more and more wicked society. Matter of fact, we have people that they'll stay put up for anything but truth.

You can have the Bible as long as you don't take it literally. You can worship God as long as you don't believe what God tells you. You know, you can say whatever.

You see a rise of syncretism within even people that call themselves believers. They'll come to church on Sunday and play around with the occult on Monday.

They're not redeeming the time. We need to be careful how we're using that time that God gives us to it. Now number five, if we're going to redeem 2026, I think one of the things we need to do is a little reflection.

Because if you're saved, you always need to keep in mind, remember where God brought you from. You know, this is one of those things of redeeming time that helps keep your mindset correctly because, let's put it in a different term, humility.

[21 : 58] You know, when you realize where God found you, it changes your perspective. Because you're not going to think more highly of yourself than you ought. Because you realize that where God found you, God found you as a sinner.

You know, think about for a moment, look over to Psalm 103. You know, consider what God has done for us. You know, 103rd Psalm there in verse 2 tells us this, it says, bless the Lord, O my soul, and do what?

What's that say? Forget not what? All His benefits. Well, what's His benefits? Notice what it lists. Look at verse 3, who forgives all thine iniquities.

You know, think about that for a moment. If you're saved, God has forgiven you. He took the penalty of your sin and placed it upon Himself.

You know, if we're going to redeem the time, it'll help keep our perspective correct if we understand and always remember where we've been. Where were you when God found you? Because it'll help us focus on what we ought to do, where God brought us from.

[23 : 10] You know, notice this, He forgives all our iniquities, who healeth all our diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

You know, think about that. What God has given to us, forget His benefits. You know, oftentimes we forget what God did for us. It's easy to overlook and to take things for granted. It happens all the time that people forget what God has done.

You know, Isaiah 63 tells us this in verse 7, I will mention the loving kindness of the Lord and the praises of the Lord according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us. the great goodness towards the house of Israel which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His loving kindness.

You know, I want you to understand it's important to remember what God has done for you, where you've come from. Because think for a moment, go to Luke chapter 17 for a moment. Luke chapter 17, you'll find over there that there's an account here with Jesus that's recorded for us.

In Luke chapter 17, down in verse 15, you'll find that Jesus healed some lepers. Now notice what it says, in one of them, in verse 15, when he saw he was healed, notice what he did, he turned back with a loud voice, glorified God, and fell on his face at his feet, giving him thanks, and he was a Samaritan, and Jesus answering said, were there not ten clans, but where are the nine?

[24 : 49] I want you to understand, a lot of people forget very quickly what God has done for them. We need to remind ourselves what God has done for us, what God has provided, what God has given to us.

Look into the Old Testament for another example. Go to 2 Chronicles chapter 32. We talked about this a few Wednesday nights ago, but I think it's important as we think about here, remember where God brought us from, what God has done for us.

We see here in 2 Chronicles 32, and you'll look down in verse 25, and you'll find a very important statement here. It's about King Hezekiah. You know, Hezekiah was a good king, but notice Hezekiah forgot something.

The Bible tells us this, but Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.

Why did he not consider where he was? Because his heart was lifted up.

His heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon him, upon Judah and Jerusalem. You know what? Pride and humility, because sometimes we can just assume God is going to do something.

[25 : 59] You know, today we have a lot of people that assume God is going to do something. Let me give you an example. When was the last time that you heard any type of a decent politician not end their statement with God bless America?

It rolls off the tongue and we almost expect to hear it. The problem is, is there's a lot of presumption in that. It's not a bad statement, it's not a bad request, but there's a lot of presumption. The presumption is that we're worthy of God giving His blessing to what we do.

Our nation has a lot of problems that definitely don't deserve God's blessing. But you know what? We have been blessed by God, but I think it's dangerous when we presume, be presumptive about His blessing.

Because we'll find God's blessings are attached to things that we do and responsibility. You don't bless disobedience. You know, what kind of kid do you end up with if every time they misbehave, you give them a cookie?

I mean, think about that for a moment. A good parent, if you saw a parent that had a kid disobeying and you gave them a cookie, what would be going through your mind? Would you say that's a good parent or a bad parent? You know? That parent's going to come to reality pretty quick too that they weren't a very good parent.

[27 : 09] If He's our Heavenly Father, we ought to understand that He's going to be a Father to us and He's going to discipline when we need and He'll bless when we do good. You know?

When we understand the things that we need to in that and not forget to render not a good according to the benefit that unto us. You know, if we're going to redeem the time in this coming year, we always need to keep in mind what God has done for us.

To remind ourselves of the things God has done. Number six here quickly, it says, live in light of eternity. Now we're talking about some of that on Sunday morning through the book of Thessalonians, but I want you to understand to live in light of what's going to happen.

Not just in light of the present, but of the future. Look over to Colossians chapter 3 for a moment. Colossians chapter 3 and verse 2, we find here in the Scripture that God reminds us very clearly here, and this goes back to the issue of our heart, to guard our heart, because notice what it tells us.

Set your affection on the things above, not on the things on earth. To set your affection on the things above. You know, if we're going to redeem the time, you need to love the right things.

[28 : 25] Because you know what? What you love affects what you do. What your heart is set upon is what you do. You know, I've observed something over the years when it comes to people, and

even myself.

If you set something in your mind that I want this, I'm going to work for it, I'm going to do it, you know what? You'll give up other things to make it happen. Why? Because you've set your affection upon it. What are you setting your affection upon?

Is it the things above? Is it eternity? Is it standing before the Lord one day? For reward? You know, do we understand those things? You know, look over to Romans chapter 8.

Romans, Paul here tells us in a little bit different context here, but the same application. You know, we find here in Romans chapter 8, look down in verse 4.

It tells us this, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

[29 : 25] For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. You know, consider that dynamic. It's the same thing. It's your affection. Is your affection yourself?

Or is your affection the things of God? We need to understand the importance of living in light of eternity. If your eyes are on eternity, you're not only concerned about your destiny, but you're concerned about the destiny of others.

You're going to be concerned about others knowing and understanding the gospel. You know, Proverbs 11, 3 tells us this. It says, The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.

You know, to speak to others about it. You know, about what God has done. You know, John chapter 4, Jesus says, He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

You know, to sow the seed of the gospel. You know, James chapter 5 and verse 20 tells us this. Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.

[30 : 40] You know, we ought to be concerned about others. You know, in 2026, if we're going to redeem the time, we need to put the importance upon what are we doing to reach somebody else.

What priority is you put? Is it secondary? Is it optional if I just happen to bump into it? We need to consider those things. And if we're going to redeem the time, the last thing I want to encourage you here tonight is this, and that's to find rest in Christ.

Because we live in a crazy world. If you're going to redeem the time, you need the refreshment that comes from being in Christ and spending time with him. And to find that, you know, Psalm 37.

Look over there in Psalm 37 in verse 7. The Bible makes it very clear for us. Very simple here. It says this, rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

You know, resting in the Lord is trusting him as we walk through life. To say, Lord, I'm going to rest. I'm going to put myself with you.

[31 : 47] I'm going to wait patiently for him, it says. Fret not thyself of him that prospereth in his way because the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. You know the reason we need to rest in the Lord this year?

Because there's going to be some things that don't make sense. Because you're going to be looking and say, Lord, why does that person get away with that? Aren't you going to deal with that? We get our eyes upon that instead of resting upon the Lord.

Resting upon what he has done for us. Look over to Matthew chapter 11. Matthew chapter 11, you'll find Jesus tells us this same reality. He invites us.

He says this in Matthew chapter 11 verse 28. He says, what? Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you what? Rest. He says, take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find what?

Rest unto your souls. You know, we live in a world that's disruptive. A world that's upside down from where it ought to be because of sin.

[32 : 52] If we're going to redeem the time, we need to find our rest in the Lord. To trust Him in the year to come. You know, when we understand that Hebrews 4 verse 9 tells us this, Therefore remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

For he that entereth into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own work as God did from his. You know, when we rest in the Lord, we do what we're responsible for and trust God for the rest.

That God's going to make up the difference. He is the one that's going to be there. He's the one that's going to accomplish those things in our life. Now I want you to stop and consider, even tonight or tomorrow, to look down this list as you get ready to enter into a new year and consider those things.

How are you going to intentionally use or redeem this coming year? What are you going to do to redeem it? It's going to be redeemed one way or another.

It's either going to be redeemed wisely or redeemed foolishly. The question is, what are you going to do? What direction is it going to be? Some things to consider as we consider walking here in 2026.

[34 : 12] Will it be a wise walk that knows the will of the Lord? You know, back where we started there in Ephesians chapter 5, it talks about that reality that we know the will of the Lord.

Of what God would have or will be consumed foolishly. You know, think and consider as we get ready to start a new year, how are you going to use your 365 days?

How are you going to use your 8,760 hours? How are you going to use your 525,600 minutes that you have in a coming year?

I want to encourage you seven things to redeem the year to come. Because it will make a difference, not only for you, but for others. Let's pray.