

We Need To Know What Time It Is

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[0 : 00] Now may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be found acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen. It's nice to have the boys back and to find out that after the summer they're not rusty at all, they're right on key, and it's a delight to have you sing.

And can I tell you a story now about a country, a sort of once upon a time story, but it's not really a once upon a time story. Once upon a time there was a country that needed and longed for a king. The king came to them and they didn't recognize him. It was a country that was always at war and longed for peace.

But they didn't know what peace was. They wouldn't recognize it when they saw it. It was a country that hoped for a day when great opportunity would come to them.

They always lived in the glories of what had been in the past and the joys of what lay in the future, but it was a country in which it was never today.

[1 : 17] Always the past they thought about, the future they planned for, but it was a country in which it was never today. And it was a country that had at its heart a great city, a city that was known throughout the world.

And at the heart of the city, there was a great temple. And at the heart of the temple, there was meant to be the worship of God. And instead, there were robbers and thieves, robbing people, not just trespassing their neighbors, but robbing people in the name of God.

Do you want to read about that story? It's in Luke chapter 19 and verse 37. And if you look at it at page 79 in your pew Bible, you'll see the story laid out before you.

And I want to read it to you. Speaking of the Lord Jesus in Luke 19, verse 37, page 79. As he was now drawing near at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

[3 : 21] Now they are hid from your eyes. For the day shall come upon you when your enemies will cast up a bank round about you and surround you and hem you in on every side and dash you to the ground and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation.

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those whose souls saying, It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.

I watched the 11 o'clock news last night. And it was sad. One of the saddest things about it was that what happened last night was predicted a week before on the same newscast.

I don't know whether... And you never know whether the media creates the news or not, but it sometimes feels like it. But it would be sad if there was no king in a country but greed and selfishness and proud human ambition.

And it would be sad if there was no awareness of what belongs to peace. Chuck Colson in his book, Life Sentence, talks about speaking with one of the great leaders of Western Germany and saying that there were 40,000 East German spies in the country that all the people of the country wanted was money and cars and time off because they didn't know what was happening.

[5 : 16] Money and cars and time off are not the things that make for peace. Peace and prosperity we pray for, but peace doesn't come essentially by prosperity.

prosperity. That's not the only ingredient that's required. And then if in that country nobody knew what time it was, do you know what one person has described secularism as?

He says it's like having the clock taken off the wall so that everybody looks at their watch and for them it's a different time. And everybody is going by a different time.

And nobody has any idea of the official time signal. There is no clock on the wall.

And everybody is left to live their life according to their own time. That would be a sad condition.

And it would be a sad condition if in a country the worship of God was just another means of extorting money out of people because they had a bad conscience.

[6 : 39] And I suppose in all the crooked ways of earning money in this easy money society, there is none so crooked or tainted as those who make their money pretending to be the servants of God.

It's a very sobering thought that the worship of God is so quickly replaced by people robbing people in the name of God.

It's very sad, isn't it? That that can so easily happen and that you can recognize that that can so easily happen. Well, look at the picture because in a very wonderful way this picture that's in Luke chapter 19 says well, can I just say this?

That the background of the failure of the talks on Confederation this week could mean that with anger and bitter recrimination we point the finger at that group and at that group and at that group and at that man and that man and that man but there is undoubtedly in this story the awareness that when Christ came as king he came to his own people and if others didn't recognize him it didn't matter too much to him but if his own people didn't recognize him that was the thing that brought him to tears so that in this great land there is a special responsibility responsibility for us who claim to be the people of God we have a responsibility and our responsibility is first in acknowledging the king do you know why a prime minister is a prime minister?

because he gets that name from Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 13 he is a minister of God and we know that kings and thrones may perish and rise and wane as onward Christian soldiers tells us but there is a king of kings and there is a lord of lords and Christians are called to respect the constitutional authority of the land in which they live because they know that their leaders are responsible to that king and to that lord they are responsible to acknowledge before men the king of kings and lord of lords even when the authorities in the land come as they did to Jesus and say make your disciples be quiet please after all it's the Sabbath and we don't want anything to disturb the people of the land and Jesus said to them if these did not cry out the very stones would cry out and there is something about the creation that if men don't acknowledge the truth if men don't acknowledge

[10 : 23] God if men don't acknowledge Jesus Christ there comes a time when the very stones will cry out I think that's happening in parts of the world today I think in Poland the stones are crying out I think in Russia the stones are crying out and in part it's it's the responsibility of the people of God to stand up and say this is the truth and this is the king and not to let anybody silence them because we need a king and we need truth and secondly the people of God are responsible to know what makes for peace Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers for they are the sons of God and Paul in his letter to the Romans says we're to pursue the things that make for peace and the people of God are to recognize the peace of God in their hearts and they are to declare a peace that has been established between a man and his neighbor between a man and his enemy between Jews and Greeks and Gentiles and heathens and whoever you want there is peace that's been established and we know about that peace and we're to declare that peace because we know the sources all men long for peace but not very many men know the sources and the people of God are responsible to know the things that make for peace the truth and the just and the relationship between parents and children between husbands and wives between neighbors and neighbors between nation and nation between peoples and peoples to know the things that make for peace and that is in Jesus Christ

I came that you might have peace he is the prince of peace and that's that's at the heart of it isn't it and the people of God are responsible in a unique way to know what time it is that they are in touch in a sense with the time in which we live to know what's happening in our world and it would almost seem a deliberate and malevolent ploy of the powers of evil that all the clocks are taken off the wall and people are left in chaos and confusion about what time it is are we living at a time when a prosperity such as men have never known is about to break upon us as a land or are we like Jerusalem in the last days of a decadence which within a generation was to mean that that city would be destroyed utterly so that not one stone was left on another who knows what time it is for us was George

Grant right when in the 60s he wrote about Canada a book which he entitled Lament for a Nation trying to tell Canadians what time it is we don't know what time it is but it's the special responsibility of the people of God to know what time it is to study and to pray and to work and to read and to be aware of the kingdom of God in our world so that if somebody comes up and says have you got the time we can say yes we've got the time please set your watch accordingly that's the responsibility of the people of God to know what time it is you know no one knew what time it was in his day and everybody laughed in his score and when the Christ child was born the shepherds knew what time it was and when the Christ child was brought to the temple to be circumcised on the eighth day the old man

Simeon knew what time it was and he knew that his time had come when he said Lord now let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word for mine eyes have seen thy salvation thou hast prepared before the face of all people to be a life to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel he was a man of God who knew what time it was and in our society we don't know what time it is as in West Germany money and autos and time off is the only thing we know and as the people of God we're responsible to know what time it is finally we're responsible in this strange way that Christ came on that day to his father's house and he knew that his father's house was to be primarily a house of prayer and when he got to it he found it bustling with commerce people selling things and buying things and exchanging money all in the name of

God and he said to his people you've made it a den of robber so where do we go as the people of God we as this congregation in this church have this responsibility that it is our supreme business to acknowledge the king who is king of kings and lord of lords it is our supreme business to know the things that make for peace and to pursue the things that make for peace in our world and in our society and it is our business to know what time it is and it is our business that this house should be a house of prayer and to make it that and that in a very special way

[18:16] I have to tell you that individually and personally that you need to know who is king and you need to know within the dimensions of your own life the things that make for peace and you need to know within the dimensions of your life what time it is nice to spend a few weeks in hospital to get to know what time it is for you or me you need that at the center of our world and at the center of our life there is to be not a den of robbers but a house of prayer where we need to learn to pray at the center of your life there needs to be the reality of prayer so let us pray

Lord Jesus as you came to your ancient people and found that only a handful of them knew that you were a king and only a handful knew the things that make for peace and only a handful knew what time it was and your father's house had become a den of robbers instead of a house of prayer Lord Jesus we are your people and we are bowed before you and we ask that you will spare us and have mercy on us and give us such grace that we may acknowledge from our hearts that you indeed are king and lord that you are true and righteousness we may know from you the things which make for peace because you are the prince of peace and the peace of

Christ is to be the arbiter in our hearts and make us to be a people who by your word know what time it is in the whole process of history above all we ask that this house may be in a new way a house of prayer lord Jesus grant us this mercy for us as a congregation and for us in our individual lives we ask in your holy name amen wine to somm to show us this is in aeties of you have sor who and