

Time with the Lord

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[0 : 00] Let's turn now to Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 6, and we'll read it verse 12. Luke chapter 6, reading it verse 12.

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And we all have choices to make in life.

All the time we're making choices. Some of them are very insignificant. And we make them almost just by a natural core. We don't even think about it.

The choices we make are so almost automatic to us that we don't really stop and think, am I making a decision here? Am I choosing one course or another? They're so automatic.

[1 : 26] They're so, in a sense, small. But some of the decisions that we make in life are huge. They affect. We know that they're not just going to affect ourselves, but they're going to affect our family.

They're going to affect other people. Sometimes these decisions are huge. They're vital. They're so important. And here Jesus is faced with an enormous decision because he is going to appoint 12 men from his disciples, from those who are his followers.

And he's going to choose them as apostles. These were men who had a special mission, a special work. They were going to go out from being with Jesus.

And they were going out to spread the great word, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we see that Jesus didn't choose these people just on an impulse.

That he didn't just look around and say, well, I'm going to choose him and him and him and him and so on. That it's very obvious from here that it wasn't just on an impulse. Because we read that Jesus went up into a mountain.

[2 : 36] That's what we read about there. That he went to the mountain to pray. And all night he continued in prayer. You see, Jesus knew the importance of prayer.

And it's very interesting that at critical times in the life of Jesus, that we find him spending huge times in prayer to his father.

And what a lesson that is for ourselves. For instance, when Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit came upon him in great power.

Indeed, we read the Spirit without measure. We find Jesus going off alone, being led by the Spirit into the wilderness. And there he was, although he was tempted by the devil.

He was there alone with his father. We find that before he picks these 12 important people to be part and parcel of not only his immediate life as he himself was here on earth.

[3 : 45] But regarding the whole future of the church. We find him spending all night in prayer. The night before his crucifixion, we find him withdrawing.

He took the inner three, Peter, James, and John. Remember in the garden of Gethsemane. But even they were left behind. As he went alone with his father. And he prayed.

And he said, could you not watch with me one hour? And he went back and he went back and he went back. The Lord is showing us that at these critical junctures.

At these important times. He saw the importance of prayer. And if Jesus Christ in our nature. If he saw the importance of prayer.

How much more we must realize and understand the importance of prayer. I'm thinking even as I was looking at this. Although it's not what I'm in any way setting out.

[4 : 48] But I cannot help but think. As we are to elect new deacons. I would say that at the very heart of what we're doing. Before we make any decision.

And I would like to think that that's what you have already done. But that before any decision is made. That it is something that we bring to the Lord in prayer. Because that is certainly what has happened here.

With the Lord Jesus Christ. That before he chose these men. He spent the night in prayer. And we must learn this as well.

Because it is vital for our Christian growth. And our Christian development. To spend time with the Lord in prayer. And we will be tempted.

Be absolutely persuaded of this. We will be tempted not to. We will all be tempted. Not to spend a lot of time in prayer.

[5 : 49] You know and I know the number of times. That you begin to pray. And all of a sudden comes into your mind. All the things that you have to do.

Isn't that true? You are saying to yourself. I am going to. I really have. There is a burden on your heart to pray. And you have no sooner begun to pray. Than this comes to your mind.

And that comes to your mind. And you say. I have got to do this. And I have got to do that. And somehow. You feel that prayer is. Well. All you are doing is. You are just there.

Whereas. There are so many things to be done. And you should be here. And you should be there. And you have to go there. And you have got to go there. And there is this meeting. And there is that thing. And you are saying to yourself. Oh I was supposed to.

And there are all these things. Running through your mind. And you give up praying. Because somehow. You are tricked. And I am tricked into believing.

[6 : 44] That the activity of prayer. Is just. Well. There are so many other things to do. Prayers down there. Yes. We will fit in a little time at night. We will throw in a few moments in the morning.

And just as we go along. We will say to the Lord. Lord help me here. Lord I love you. My friends. Remember. Every time you go to pray.

You will be tempted not to pray. Because Satan does not want you to pray. Because Satan knows. How vital. And powerful. And important prayer is.

To the development of the Christian. And the growth of the Christian church. And Satan will pull out all the stops. To prevent you from praying.

And if we are honest with ourselves. We will. I am sure. All of us. Can identify with what I am saying. The number of times. I certainly will say it.

[7 : 42] The number of times. Where the burden is on me to pray. And to begin to pray. And I have no sooner started. The phone will go. Somebody will come.

Now I am not. Don't. I am not saying. That is not. It should not be phoning. And people can call. I am not saying that for one moment. But. Or somebody. I will be distracted. Or if that doesn't happen.

Then. This will come to my mind. Oh you should. You have got to go to that. See and that. You have got to go and see that person. Oh. You were supposed to have got that.

And all of a sudden. You say. Oh. I will pray later on. And the number of times. You are tricked. And fooled. By Satan.

And to say. I will put the prayer aside. And I will pick that up again. And often we don't. Satan has got us. Again and again and again. Because you see. Time spent with the Lord.

[8 : 36] Is never. Ever. Ever. Wasted time. And we so often think. That it is way down. Our list of priorities. It is not. Jesus is showing us.

That it is at the very forefront. Of our priorities. What is God's great purpose. For you today. As a believer. And for me. It is to become more.

And more. Like Jesus Christ. That is it. And how do we become. More and more. Like Jesus Christ. Well you know the expression.

We have said it so often before. You get like those you live with. Well if you spend. Time with the Lord. You will begin to be.

Get like him. More and more. And more. And that is why. Satan does not want us. To be going. That is why he tempts us. Away from.

[9 : 34] From spending time. With the Lord. God. It is. An absolute vital. Within the ministry. Not just looking at the ministry today.

But I will say. One or two things. As we go through this. Because that really is at the heart. Of these people. Who have been picked by. The Lord Jesus. Are the apostles. Who are going to be going out.

To preach. Last Sunday night. The minister was looking. At that very area. Where they picked deacons. And the apostles are saying. Look. That is too much for us.

We are going to give our time. What was it to? To prayer and the word. Prayer and the word. And that you see.

It is so important. And so often. We find ourselves. Being distracted. By a hundred thousand things. Again even.

[10 : 29] Going out to preach. We cannot. And yet. Satan will do everything. In his power. To make that happen. We cannot. All of us. Go out to proclaim.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Go out and proclaim. The message of God. And yet. Not have spent time. In the presence of God. And yet. Satan will do everything.

In his power. To make that very thing happen. So that. You are having to go out. To proclaim. Unprepared. And when I say.

Unprepared. It is not. Unprepared. In the sense. That you have never. Sat down. With the Bible. And you have never. Worked through. What you are going to say. Or never looked up. Any commodities. Or never did any studying.

That is not what I mean. By preparation. It is preparing. Your soul. To go out. And if you are. You are so. To listen. And prepared. If you haven't.

[11 : 23] Met with the Lord. If you haven't. Come out. From the presence. Of the Lord. Then you are not. In a fit condition. To go. And proclaim. The message.

Of the Lord. And that is why. Satan will do. All in his power. To make sure. That that doesn't happen. And he is a master. At it. And I am sure.

We have all. In other. In different ways. Discovered that. So Jesus. Is showing to us. How absolutely. Vital. And important. Prayer is.

And I thank the Lord. For. Prayer. Being made. In this place. You know. It is one of the things. People. Preachers. Are always conscious of. When you go. To a place.

To preach. That where prayer. Is made. And you find. When people come here. They are very conscious. People come here. To preach. They are conscious. Of prayer. Being made. Continue to pray.

[12 : 19] Pray for the ministry. But pray for the word. Pray that the word. Will go out. And touch people's hearts. That is what we want. The word is food. The word is life.

And we are praying. Surely as we come. To God's house. We are not just coming. Out of habit. Although that is a really good habit. It is an important habit. But we are coming.

In order that we might meet. With the Lord. And that we might receive. Something for our souls. We need a bit of nourishment. We bid to help us along. Or if we have never come.

To know Jesus. As we come Lord. May today. May the word come. In power. Remember what it says. That the word of God. Is the power of God. And to salvation. To everyone that believes.

Remember that word. The word power. Is dynamite. The word we get a dynamite from. That is what the word does. It blows up. Blows up the resistance. Blows up all the obstacles.

[13 : 14] That are in the way. Where people do not believe. That is what we need to pray. So that every day. As the word is preached.

That the word will go out. With power. And so Jesus is highlighting here. The importance of prayer. Before a decision. Is made.

And I think we need to take that on board. Because I'm sure. Far too often. We've. We've gone along. And we've. We've made our plans. We've made our decisions. We're going down the road. And then we say. Oh you know.

Need to ask the Lord. To bless this. Far too often. We put the cart. Before the horse. Now there are times. That God will lay something. On our heart. And we go down in that.

And then afterwards. It's afterwards. We say. Well you know. I didn't really pray about this. But there are times. The Lord. That's the way it works. But. If we are walking. In the way that we should. Then the Lord is going to be.

[14 : 08] Constantly directing our paths. In all your ways. Acknowledge him. And he will direct your paths. So that there's an ongoing. Direction. In life. But all the time.

We should be going to the Lord. And saying Lord. Please. Give me. Your agenda. For life. Far too often. We put it the other way around.

And say to the Lord. Well. Here's my agenda. I hope it's all right. Will you bless. Will you bless my agenda. And prosper me. Instead of going to the Lord. First of all.

And saying. Right Lord. What do you want me to do? Show me. The way to go. This is really the way. That we ought to be doing. And so. We find. Jesus doing that.

And we sang now. In Psalm. 25. That the secret of the Lord. Is with them. That fear him. Now of course. And he would show them his covenant.

[15 : 02] Now at one level. That is true. In the experience. Of every single believer. That the Lord. Reveals. More and more. Of. His covenant love.

And reveals. That's part of what. Happens in salvation. Is where a person's heart. Is opened. To see. And to know. And to understand.

And where spirit. Your things. Take on. A new meaning. And we begin to see things. We never understood before. However. Where it says. The secret of the Lord.

Is with them. That fear him. I believe that. We're talking. Almost here. And it can be developed into. That there's almost a secret. With those. Where a greater.

Intimacy lies. You find. That those. In the scripture. Who seem to be closest. To the Lord. John. For instance.

[15 : 56] Take John. The disciple. Whom Jesus loved. The intimacy. With John. And Jesus. Jesus. Reveals. Many things.

To John. Daniel. The greatly. Beloved. The Lord. Revealed. Many things. To Daniel. The secret. Of the Lord.

Is with them. That fear. You won't tell your secrets. To a stranger. You won't even. Tell your secrets. To a friend. That. Although they're a friend. You maybe don't know them.

Very well. You would only. Tell a secret. To somebody. Who was. A real friend. That you could trust. Christ. And.

In a sense. There's an. An element. Of that. With the Lord. Because. And I'll. I'll put it in this way. You know. That sometimes. Supposing. You're living. As a Christian.

[16 : 50] But. You're maybe not living. That close to the Lord. You're just going through. Day by day. And. There's maybe. A week. Quiet time. Here and there. But it's. By and large. You're not too hot.

On things. Then all of a sudden. Some huge thing. Comes into your life. And you have to find. What God is saying. In this. And all of a sudden.

It's like all the stops. Are pulled out. And you mean business. With God. And you're saying. Lord. I've got to know. I've got to know. And nothing's happening. There's no answer.

And you're saying. Why Lord. And then. As it were. Very slowly. It's like. The Lord. Is beginning to. Open your mind.

To this truth. And he's. It's almost as if the Lord. Is saying to you. Why should I. All of a sudden. Tell you. What you want to know.

[17 : 47] When all these days. And weeks. And months. You haven't really bothered. With me. And you're rebuked. And you realize.

That. You've really just been playing. At your devotions. That you haven't. Been that serious. Yes. You've read your Bible. Yes. You've prayed.

But there's been no heart. In your prayer. When you finish reading your Bible. You couldn't tell anybody. What you read. It's like you were just. Playing at it. And everything else. Was filling your heart.

And life. That's how it was. For Israel. Long ago. That's why God. Had complaints against them. They didn't stop. Worshiping. In the bad times. They were still.

Sacrificing. But their heart. Wasn't in it. They were involved. They were. You know. The incredible thing is. They were involved. In idolatry. And involved. In the worship of God. At the same time.

[18 : 41] And God. Found that offensive. So you see. Sometimes the Lord. Will work like that. And he'll show it to you. You know. You're asking me now.

All of a sudden. To come close. And reveal everything. What's most important for me. Far more important. Than you finding out.

What is so important to you. Is that you get close to me. First of all. Has that ever happened in your life? I'm sure it has. And that's what we need to learn.

What we need to understand. That God puts as a priority. Our closeness. To him. He wants us. That's what love wants to do.

Love wants to be. With those. That we love. We want to be with our family. Because we love them. That's what love is. And that's what the Lord wants.

[19 : 36] Of us. To be. With him. And so we find. Here that Jesus. That he chose. In these days. He went to the mountain. To pray. And all night. He continued in prayer.

To God. And when day came. He called his disciples. And he chose from them. Twelve. Whom he named. Apostles. And the word apostle. Is from two words. Which means simply.

Set apart. And messenger. And. Jesus. Chose. These twelve. And it's. It's quite interesting. In the account. That we read in Mark.

And it's just following. From what he said. He. He ordained twelve. That they should be with him. And that he might send them out. To preach. So you see. It's just what we were saying earlier. That they would be with him.

And then out to preach. That's. That's the order. With him. In his fellowship. In communion with him. And then out. That's the order. And that's what we.

[20 : 31] What we find here. And so. We find that. That. He chose twelve. A lot of people wonder. Why. Why twelve. And I cannot honestly say.

But. In all probability. It's as it's been suggested. That in the old order. God had set apart Israel. They were to be. The channel.

From which the blessing. Was eventually. To become worldwide. There were twelve tribes there. And here in the new order. As Jesus Christ. Has come now.

Here there are twelve apostles. And where the. The message of the gospel. Is to be. Proclaimed. But it's very interesting. There's a lot of things. That we could look at here.

But just to. Really kind of focus. Down one particular level. You'll notice. The people that Jesus chose. He didn't choose. Any. That were of.

[21 : 25] Real prominence. In the land. At that time. He didn't choose. Any Pharisees. Or scribes. He didn't. Choose.

Any. From the priests. Or the rulers. They were. Just. Ornate. We were told. We're told elsewhere. In fact. In a very critical way. It says.

That they were ignorant. And unlearned men. That's what it tells us. In the acts of the apostles. That they were ignorant. And unlearned men. In other words. Not necessarily. That they were ignorant.

As such. But. That they had never gone to the schools. They didn't have any. Grounding. In sort of the. In the. In the colleges. Or in the universities. Of the day. They had no place.

As such. A position. In society. They were fishermen. There was a zealot. There was a. A. Tax gatherer. There were. They were. Just. And when I use the word.

[22 : 20] Ordinary. In some ways. I don't like using. Because we're all just. Ordinary people. But they were just taken from the. Just. Without. Not in any places. Of. Of prominence.

And. Though. I believe this was deliberate. On Jesus's part. For various reasons. One. Jesus has. No place. For pomp.

In the whole sphere. Of the gospel. It's not about. Great. Outward displays. And great. Rituals. And great. Man made.

Things. The gospel. Is simple. It's personal. It's powerful. It's intimate. It's one to one. It's dealing with people.

It's Jesus coming. And. Speaking to people. And we've got to realize. That that's what it is. That's where its greatness lies. In its transforming power.

- [23 : 17] In people's lives. But again. Jesus chose. From. As we say. And using it in that sense. The ordinary people of life. And I will. I believe that.
- I will. Just highlight. For instance. Two reasons. If Jesus. Had. Chosen. Save. From those. Who had. Titles. And position.
- And who were of. People of means. Of wealth. Then. In time. The criticism. And the accusation.
- Which would be leveled. Against. Christianity. Is that people. Began to follow. In order. To get money. That the people.
- Were being bribed. Into following. That people. Followed. So that they would. That they would also. Get some money. And get wealth. So Jesus. Picked from those. Who had no money.
- [24 : 12] Well. Just the. The ordinary. I suppose. The fishermen. It was just whatever. They could get. In fact. There was a period. Where they had no money. They were just dependent. As time went on.
- And what they could get. Remember when Peter. And John. Were going up to the temple. And the lame man. Was there. And he said. Oh could you give me some money. And Peter. Said to him. Look he said. Silver and gold. I have none.
- I don't have any. Pockets are empty. But what I do have. And what he did have. Was the power. Of the Lord. Upon him. Remember how he healed.
- That man. Again. Jesus. Didn't pick. From those of. Who might be. Amongst. Say the soldiers. Or people of power. People of might.
- Because again. The accusation. Might be leveled. Oh yes. It's no wonder that. Christianity developed. And grew. Because they were forced into it. There was a sword. At their back.
- [25 : 06] And they were saying. Come on. You've got to join up. No. They were just. Ordinary. People. And that's the great thing. About the gospel. It's not by might.
- It's not by power. But by my spirit. Saith the Lord. Now. Again. It would be worthwhile. But we're not. And just. We're going to draw this to. A close.
- We have the list. Of these disciples. And at the first. At the forefront. We have Peter. And at the last. We have Judas Iscariot. Now.
- Of course. Peter is the first. And he was the most prominent. And he became the leader. Of the early church. A dynamic. Powerful man. Mightily used. By the Lord.
- Thousands. And thousands. Converted. Through his preaching. And you know. If we were only. To look at Peter's life. As is revealed to us. In the acts of the apostles.
- [26 : 03] And Peter's life. In the letters. That he wrote. We would say. Wow. What a man. But you know. The Bible. The Bible is so honest. So wonderful.
- It tells us. More about Peter. Peter. Peter had a passion. And a zeal. And a love for the Lord. But Peter was as human. As any one of us.
- He was open. To every temptation. And frailty. And failure. And Peter failed. Failed drastically. In fact. Last Sunday morning. In the baptism. We were looking just.
- It was in the context of. Where Jesus was restoring Peter. After his. Terrible denial. With oaths. And curses. Of Jesus. Peter is there.
- Showing us. As an example. Of just. How great men. At the end of the day. That were weak as water. And that is why we need to pray. For ourselves.
- [26 : 58] And to pray. For one another. That will be kept. And then Judas is the last. Jesus didn't make a mistake. He knew. He knew about Judas.

When the others had no idea. Jesus in fact. Mentions that. That he had a devil. The other disciples. Didn't figure. They couldn't see. The black heart of Judas.

Because Judas. Appeared just an ordinary person. Judas. You know what I find. Really frightening. Is Judas was out preaching. Judas was out healing. Judas came back.

With a good report. Judas had a place of prominence. Amongst the disciples. He was. The treasurer. So Judas. In fact. When Judas. When Jesus said. That one of them.

Was going to betray him. None of the other disciples. Automatically said. Oh that will be Judas. They began to think. Is it I? Nobody. Immediately thought.

[27 : 52] Of Judas. And yet. The tragic. The awful thing. About Judas. Is that he was. The son of perdition. And I think. Judas stands.

As a stark warning. To us all. The importance. Of being right. With the Lord. To be. On the right. Footing.

On the firm. Foundation. Because. At the end of the day. Jesus is going to. Says that. He said. There are people. Who are going to say. You know. I did many things. In your name. I did this.

And I did that. In your name. And Jesus is going to say. To them. Depart from me. I never knew you. One of the most. Solemn. Parts. Of God's word.

I never knew you. See. It's so. Important. That we know the Lord. That we don't. Kid ourselves on. The fact that.

[28 : 48] That we may slip. And stumble. Doesn't mean. That we're not. In the right road. Peter slipped. And he stumbled. But he was restored. Lord. Judas.

When you look at his life. Was actually moving. Further. And further. And further. Away. From Jesus. Peter's life. Although it was moving.

Closer to Jesus. Although there was. One wee period. Before the denial. When he followed. Jesus afar off. My friend. If you're following. Jesus. That's good. If you're following. Afar off.

Be careful. It's a dangerous. Place. But make sure. Whatever you do. Whatever you see to. That you see to this.

That your feet. Are on the rock. That is Christ. Because if not. Well the future. Is awful.

[29 : 46] If you have Jesus. Then your future. Is wonderful. Let us pray. To them. All right.