

Sixty Minutes to Go

Paisley CD Series

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Bible Text: Matthew 20:6

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I want to preach this evening the gospel to you from the sixth verse of the 20th chapter of Matthew's gospel.

“And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?”¹

Sixty minutes to go, at the 11th The good man of the house said, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?”²

Often times in the days of his flesh the Lord Jesus Christ instructed his friends and silenced his accusers and enemies by parabolic teaching. He spake to them in parables.

Now the parables are well worthy of our special study and could I say that these parables of the kingdom have not only a personal application, but they have a national application and they have a special application to the Jewish nation at the time when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on earth.

A parable commonly known as the prodigal son has an application to the Jew. The elder brother, you know, is a perfect type of the Jewish nation. He didn't want the Gentiles to join in and get the blessing. And if you read Luke chapter 15 you will find that that parable was directed against the Pharisees and the Judaizers of our Lord's day.

Now, of course this parable here has a particular national application. The times of the Gentiles were about to commence, the 11th hour had come to the Jewish nation. The Lord Jesus Christ had appeared and the opportunity for the Jew was by them, even in their mouths and in their hearts. But at the close of the 11th hour, when the clock of prophecy came to 12 a new era was to open up and the gospel was to be spread to the Gentiles and God was to call out the people from the Gentiles for his own name's sake.

So there is a national application of this parable. But there is also an application in the gospel as there is in every parable. And I want to take the gospel tonight and take it from

¹ Matthew 20:6.

² Ibid.

this parable and its application. I am taking the vineyard to represent the Church. I am taking the master of the household to represent God the Father. I am taking the steward of the good man of the house to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and I am taking the day to represent the day of grace.

Now in this day there was a first hour, there was a third hour, there was a sixth hour and a ninth hour and 11th hour mentioned. Of course the Jewish day didn't start as our day started. It started in the morning early and the third hour was our hour of nine o'clock. That was the third hour. And the sixth hour was 12 o'clock. And the ninth hour with us would be three o'clock and the 11th hour would be five o'clock and the end of the working day, the 12th hour would have been six o'clock.

So here was this working day and this good man went out to hire laborers. And he commenced some at the first hour and then look at verse three. He commenced some about the third hour. And then look at verse five he commenced some at the sixth and at the ninth hour. And then an hour before the working day was almost spent, what did he see? He saw men still standing idle and the day was nearly over. And the sun was nearly setting and the time was almost past. There was only 60 minutes to go.

And yet the good man of the house said to these men, "Go ye also into the vineyard. Go ye also into the vineyard."³

Now let me draw the lesson for you tonight. Let me tell you that there are people and as far as spiritual things are concerned at the 11th hour they are spiritually idle. Oh, yes. They have had the first hour of opportunity and that hour has passed them. They have come to the third hour of opportunity and that hour has passed them. They have come to the sixth hour of opportunity and that hour has passed them. They have come to the ninth hour and that hour has fled from them. And tonight it is the 11th hour. They have only 60 minutes to go and they have been spiritually idle all their spiritual day of opportunity.

Let me tell you, friend, that you were not sent into this world for the things that are material. You weren't born into this world just to make a living. You weren't born into this world just to be successful in the trade to which you put your hand. You weren't born into this world to eat and to drink and go through life to get as much satisfaction from life as you could get. You were born facing a coming eternity and the things of time are secondary compared to the things that are eternal.

But that is not so with modern men. Modern men are only interested in the carnal, in the tangible, in the things that they can see, in the things that they can feel, in the things that they can handle, in the things that they can hold on to. That is all they are interested in. Is that what you are interested in? And the first hour has come and the third hour and the sixth hour and the ninth hour and, friend, you are in the 11th hour. And you haven't taken a step toward God. You haven't taken one step towards Christ. You haven't taken one step in regard to the salvation of your immortal soul.

³ Ibid.

There are two things necessary in order that when the 12th hour comes you may be prepared to meet the good man of the house and give account of your stewardship. And the first thing necessary is repentance towards God. You need to repent.

This was a burden of all the preachers that came. Do you remember John the Baptist appeared on the banks of Jordan and they gathered out to him from Judean and from Jerusalem and from beyond Jordan to listen to his fiery preaching and he cried, “Repent, repent, repent.”

What does repent mean? Repent means to do a right about turn on the road to hell. The man before he repents, his face is towards hell. After he repents his face is towards heaven. Before he repents he loved his sin. He practices his sin. He wallows in his sin. After he repents he shuns his sin, he rejects his sin and he hates his sin. That is what happens.

Tell me. Has that happened in your life? Do you know anything about repentance toward God? Do you remember what Jesus Christ said? He said, “Except e repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”⁴

What does that mean? That means that the unrepentant soul goes to hell. That is what it means. So it doesn’t matter whether you are religious or irreligious, Jesus said, “Except e repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”⁵

It doesn’t matter whether you are honest or dishonest speaking from man’s moral standards. God says, “Except e repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”⁶

It doesn’t matter whether you are a drunkard or whether alcohol ever crossed your lips. God says, “Except e repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”⁷

It doesn’t matter whether you are a member of the church or whether you are from the church and you wouldn’t have anything to do with the church, Jesus said, “Except e repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”⁸

And this is a task that you need to set about, friend, immediately. It is the 11th hour for many of you, just 60 minutes to go and you have never repented.

In the early days of my ministry in Ravenhill a young woman attended regularly the Sunday evening service. She was concerned about her soul. I went one day to see her and to talk to her and I called her by her name and I said, “Mary, you ought to be saved. You ought to be saved.”

⁴ Luke 13:3, 5.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

She said, "Mr. Paisley, I know that. When I sit in those services something says to me, 'You must be saved now.'"

And I said, "What do you do?"

She says, "I harden myself against that voice and every night after the [?] I walk out."

I said, "Do you realize you are doing a very dangerous thing?"

She said, "Well, I am just 18 years of age." And she said, "I would like to enjoy life."

I said, "You will enjoy life if you receive Christ."

She said to me, "Well, I would like to go on with the dance. I would like to go on with the pleasures. I would like to go on with my companionship. I would like to go on and fulfill some of my ambitions."

I said, "My dear young woman, God says in his book, 'Now is the accepted time...now is the day of salvation.'⁹"

She said, "Do you think that God at 18 would take me into eternity?"

I said, "Mary, let's be honest. People have died before they were 18. People have died before they were 18."

She said, "Well, I am not coming to Christ. I am just 18. Leave me, Mr. Paisley, to my pleasures, to my dance, to my companions. I don't want to hear the gospel anymore."

And the next week, my friend, that young girl was suddenly ushered into eternity. She was in her own home and just like a flash the thread of life was snapped and the heart ceased its beating and the lungs ceased drawing in the oxygen of life and she was in eternity.

Near eternity, 60 minutes to go and not ready.

I wonder, my friend, how soon you will be in eternity. Am I preaching to some man some woman in this hall tonight and it is the last Sunday night they will ever be upon this earth? You have come in tonight to listen and you plan that you will be here next Sunday and the following Sunday and the following Sunday? But, my friend, you will not be here. This is your final opportunity, 60 minutes to go and you have never repented.

There is something else necessary if you are going to get into heaven. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ. This is the work of God that ye believe in him whom he has sent.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 6:2.

Let me repeat this. This is the work of God that ye believe in him whom he has sent.

My friend, that work of God has not been wrought in your heart. There is just 60 minutes to go. It is the 11th hour. It is the 11th hour, man. I am convinced, my friend, that there are people in this hall and they are nearer eternity tonight than to think I am convinced in my heart there is someone here and this week is going to be their last week on earth and this service is going to be their last gospel service. God help me to speak to your soul. God help me to speak words of plain [?] to your heart that you might not be a fool and spend all eternity in hell, but, by the grace of God in the 11th hour you may repent and turn to Christ and, praise God, be saved forever more.

You know, this story is the story of grace, isn't it? The man that worked from the first hour and the man who come in at the 11th hour, they got the same wages and, praise God, there is mercy and grace with the Lord.

Here is God's sovereignty friend. This is what God says. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"¹⁰ And God can give grace to the sinner in the 11th hour just before midnight, just before the darkness of eternity falls upon the soul. Praise God there is mercy with the Lord.

Just reminded as I preach of an experience I had some years ago. I was asked to visit a man in the Royal Victoria Hospital and I went up to the ward. I have the man's name and the nurse smiled and she said, "Would you believe it, sir, there are two men in this ward called by the very same name, both their Christian name and their surname."

I said, "That is strange."

She says, "Do you know the man that you are going to talk to?"

I said, "No. He is a friend of one of my members. I was asked to visit him."

She said, "Well, let's come and look at both men and you can have a little word with them and tell who the friend was and you will find the right one."

So we went into the ward and she came to one bed and she said, "That is one of them," but he was sleeping.

Well I said, "There is no use disturbing him, let's go up the ward to the other one."

And she introduced me to the other man. He had the same name, too.

And I said to him when she left, I said, "I have a member of my church called by such and such a name and they asked me to come and see you."

¹⁰ Matthew 20:15.

He said, "Well, I don't know anything about that." He says, "I don't even know that person."

Well, I said, "I have come now." And I said, "Sir, if you don't mind, I would like to talk to you."

He said, "Mr. Paisley," he knew me. He said, "Mr. Paisley, I would like you to talk to me. I would like you to talk to me about salvation."

I said, "That is what I want to talk to you about."

He said, "I have been disturbed about this man."

So I talked to him and I led him to the Lord. He got saved. He came to Christ. And I left the ward and I passed the other man. He was still sleeping.

The next day I was back up in the hospital to visit the other man and when I went in to the ward I went to his bed. This time he was awake. I made myself known. He said, "You were in the other day."

I said, "That is right." And I said, "You were sleeping."

He said, "That's right and you went up the ward to a man called by the very same name."

I said, "That's right."

He said, "You know, he died a few hours after you left."

He was in eternity. But, friend, he got saved in the 11th hour, 60 minutes to go. But thank God for the grace of God. God didn't make any mistake putting two men of the same name into that ward. God didn't make any mistake. He had it all worked out. In his sovereign plan of infinite tenderness and compassion God had it all worked out for his own glory.

My, I am going to meet that man in heaven. Praise God I will meet him and we will rejoice together.

Do you know the other man, he wouldn't have anything to do with me. He said, "I don't want to hear anything about the gospel. I don't want to be saved." He said, "I didn't want my friend even to ask you to come. Why did you do that?"

But I read and prayed with him anyway. You know, it is a good thing when people are sick, they are in bed. They can't get out of bed so you have an opportunity. So you just take the opportunity.

It reminded me of George Gipson the old cattle dealer of Crossgar. He was bringing a Roman Catholic sergeant home from a fair one day in County Down and he was preaching to him. And as George preached he got the foot on the accelerator and he pressed it down farther and farther and the sergeant saw the needle of the speedometer come to 50, 60, 70, 75 and he said, "George, take it easy. It's 75 miles an hour you are doing and you are preaching with one hand on the wheel and the other hand you are preaching to me."

And George says, "That's right, 75 miles an hour, sergeant, into hell. You better get ready. You better get ready. You better get ready."

Oh, George preached in season and out of season. That's the way you have to do it, 60 minutes to go and the grace of God calling you. The good man of the house came out and he touched them and he said, "Go, join the rest. Go in to my vineyards. Hear my call."

You know, my friend, this message is applicable to those who are advanced in age. And there are some older people here. And, my friend, you have been up the incline of life and you are on the decline now. Your youth is gone. Your young manhood and young womanhood has fled forever. The days of maturity are passed and the age of frailty has come upon you.

And, friend, you are not saved. Some of you have sat under gospel preaching all your days and you are not saved. And you have got old and grey headed under gospel preaching, but you are not saved. And so tonight I would appeal to you in God's name, 60 minutes to go. But, praise God, you can be saved tonight. You can turn to Christ and be saved.

When I was a student studying for the ministry I visited often in a home and there was a dear old lady in that home. She was an Irish Presbyterian, one of the old blue stocking Presbyterians, knew the catechism backside forward, not only the Shorter, but the Larger.

She was a real old Presbyterian, but he wasn't saved. I used to call her grandmother. And she took ill and I went out to see her and I climbed up the stairs and went in to her room. She said, "Ian, I am glad to see you."

And we talked about many things and then I opened the Bible. And I said, "Grandmother, I would like to talk to you about the Lord." And then the atmosphere got very tense and I read to her about Nicodemus and what the Lord said, "You must be born again." And I said to her as tenderly as I could, I said, "Grandmother, you would need to be born again."

She was very angry. She said, "Ian, you had no right to come here and tell me that." She said, "You know just how I think about these things. And I don't go in for this salvation business and I don't go in for this new birth business." She said, "I was baptized in the Presbyterian Church and I have attended it all my life. I never did anybody any harm. I

am a good, straight, honest woman. I am 76 years of age.” And she said, “If anybody will get into heaven, I will.”

I said, “Grandmother, I want to tell you it will not be in heaven you will be in. You will be in hell.” And I said, “I know after today our friendship is finished. I know that. I know after today you will not want to talk to me,” but I said, “Grandmother, some day you and me will be at God’s judgment bar and it would be a terrible thing if you turned around to me and said, ‘Ian Paisley visited in my home and talked to me and never told me I needed to be saved.’”

So I said, “I have come to tell her.”

She said, “You can go.”

So I set my book and I went to the door of the [?]. I discerned a little tear in Grandmother’s eye so I stood in the doorway and I said, “Grandmother, is that final? Are you saying goodbye not to me, but to Jesus today?”

She burst out into tears. She said, “Ian, could Jesus wash away 76 years of sinning and receive me, an old woman that rejected him all my life? Could he do that?”

I said, “Praise God he can do that.” And I went back into the room and I knelt down and I took her frail hand in mine and I prayed and I said, “Lord, Jesus, here is grandmother, 76 years of age, a Christ rejecter, a religious woman, a good woman from the standards of the world, but as far as you are concerned a rejecter of your Son and she wants to come to you.”

And grandmother prayed the sinners prayer and came to Jesus, got gloriously saved.

Not long afterwards she passed the river and she said to the Presbyterian minister, he was an old apostate. He knew nothing about the gospel. She said when she was dying, and, of course, she was a good churchwoman and paid into the church and he would have done anything for her. She says, “I want Ian Paisley to preach at the grave side.”

He says, “What do you want him for?”

I had a bad reputation even in those days, 22 years ago. I never had a good reputation in my life.

She says, “I just want him to preach at the grave.”

So I went to the funeral and he went over his antics in the house, for that is all you could call them. He was an old sinner himself, knew nothing about the gospel, led his congregation to hell, made jokes about gospel preachers, laughed at Bible thumpers as he called them. But at the graveside I was there and he said to me, “This woman told me that you were to preach at the grave side.”

I said, "Sir, that is what I intend to do."

So he stood there like a stuffed mummy and I preached the gospel hot and strong. And after I had finished I said, "Man, I am going to tell you a wee story. I am going to tell you what Grandmother would have told you if she had been here."

And I told how I led grandmother to the Lord. You would have seen those big men standing and the tears running down their cheeks as I told bout 76 years of sins going under the blood.

It is a great thing, isn't it? There is a man sitting up in the gallery tonight on my left hand side. He got saved many years ago and he had a dear mother. She was just like that woman. She was a good religious woman, but she wasn't saved and one night that man came into a mission I had in Lisburn and he said, "Mr. Paisley, a miracle has happened tonight. My mother who is a religious woman, but a Christ rejecter she is in this service." And he said, "Mr. Paisley, if we got mother saved tonight, what a night it would be."

And do you know? After I had finished preaching tonight the first hand that was raised in that meeting was that brother who is in this service, his mother's hand. And I led her to the Lord. She is in heaven tonight. She is in the glory land.

Sixty minutes to go. I am appealing to you older people. Yes, you are good people. You are decent people. Your loyalty can't be questioned. You have supported me in my battles. God knows I love you, but you are not saved. Oh, if I could carry you, Grandmother, Grandfather, in my arms and place you in the arms of Jesus I would do it. But I can't do that. You have got to come.

You know, this Scripture is applicable to those who are feeling the scourge of sickness. Is God shaking the frail tabernacle? Do you feel the posts shivering and the tent pegs being pulled up and you are not too well. You haven't the energy you used to have. You haven't the exuberance and vitality you used to have. You tire easy now. Things are different now and you go home and you say, "I used to be able to do those things. I can't do them now."

Sixty minutes to go. The old body is feeling the burden and the heat of the day. Oh, let me appeal to you, friends. Why go on down life's journey without Jesus? Why go on to meet death and eternity and hell? Why not meet my Savior tonight and go away rejoicing in a friendship that sticketh closer than a brother?

And, my friend, this applies to every one of us. You go into a grave yard and there are long graves there. Adult people die. But in the graveyard there are short little graves. Children die. Young people die.

Friend, it is really only 60 minutes to go for every one of us and I would appeal to the young people tonight in this meeting. I would appeal to you, friend, in your youth, in

your exuberance, in your joy, in life's vista opening up before you. I would appeal to you tonight to come and take Christ as your Savior.

“Sixty minutes to go, but I am saved, I am ready.”

Is that what you can say? God grant that you will say it tonight.