

“Redeeming the Time”  
Ephesians 5:15-17  
(Preached at Trinity, July 19, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul is instructing his readers to demonstrate with their lives the reality of their Christian conversion. He is stressing the infinite difference between the believer and the unbeliever. It is the difference of night and day, of darkness and light.  
**Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
2. The nature of the deeds of darkness is the idea that they are hidden. The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ has shined upon us with such brilliance that we are forever changed. Paul's charge to us is that our lives shine with such brilliance that they expose and rebuke the deeds of the darkness.
3. But while we have been transformed from darkness unto light we are always being drawn back to the darkness. This is the reason for Paul's charge:  
**Ephesians 5:8 NAU** - "you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
4. The Christian life is one of caution, of serious watchfulness.  
**Ephesians 5:15 NAU** - "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise"
5. The danger is for us to become so drawn into this world that we forget the nature of the age in which we live. Paul reminds us here that it is an evil time.  
And it is a fleeting time passing quickly.  
Paul expands on this in **Romans 13**  
**Romans 13:11-14 NAU** - "*Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.* <sup>12</sup> The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts."
6. In **Galatians 1** Paul reminds us that we have been rescued from this present evil age.  
**Galatians 1:3-4 NAU** - "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father"
7. This morning I want us to consider the nature of time. Paul is using the term in two ways. He is speaking of this age or this season – “the days are evil.”  
He is also speaking of time as a commodity – something of intrinsic value that must be used well – “Making the most of your time”

I. First, consider the nature of the day.

A. We live in a world that is growing progressively evil

"making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

1. The word for evil is an adjective meaning wicked or degenerate. It fits perfectly with the darkness Paul has been describing. God is light and everything of darkness is evil.

**1 John 1:5-6 NAU** - "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth"

2. Jesus spoke of this present day as a sinful generation

**Mark 8:38 NAU** - "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

3. It is a dangerous time. Jesus said this age would be filled with many deceivers

**Matthew 7:15 NAU** - "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

**Matthew 10:16 NAU** - "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."

4. Paul warned Timothy that there are many imposters who would be cunning and deceptive

**2 Timothy 3:13 NAU** - "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Paul adds that this condition would go from bad to worse

Literally this verse suggests an advancement or progress in evil

B. The Bible teaches the progressive development of evil upon the earth

This can be seen in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares

**Matthew 13:27-30 NAU** - "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup> "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."

1. These are evil times because of the work of Satan and because of the corrupt natures of evil men

2. With this in mind it demands that we live with great caution

**Ephesians 5:15 NAU** - "Therefore be careful how you walk"

- a. The word translated "be careful" literally means "look" but here it carries the idea of "look out!" or "Beware!"

- b. With evil comes the ever present reality of temptation  
We must guard our hearts. There is always the temptation to live according to the standards of this present world of darkness

**Ephesians 5:11 NAU** - "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them"

3. For the Christian these are days of warfare
  - 1 Timothy 6:12 NAU** - "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."
    - a. We should see ourselves as soldiers
      - 2 Timothy 2:4 NAU** - "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
    - b. One of the marks of your Christian conversion is you are engaged in the war. You are fighting the fight. Christianity is for warriors—mighty soldiers.
    - c. Our war isn't of this world. It isn't fought with traditional weapons. We hold forth the powerful two-edged sword of the Word of God
      - 2 Corinthians 10:4 NAU** - "for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."
    - d. Obviously, if we are in a war it demands great attention to the battle. We are in constant danger of being wounded by Satan
      - Ephesians 6:16 NAU** - "in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*."

II. So what must we do? We must wisely spend each moment.

- A. Paul says we must make good use of our time - "making the most of your time"
  1. The phrase, "making the most" is a single word that literally means to redeem or pay a ransom or pay a price. This is the way the KJV translates it – "Redeeming the time."
  2. The same word is used to describe the work of Christ as our redeemer
    - Galatians 3:13 NAS** - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"
    - Galatians 4:4-5 NAU** - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."
  3. In the middle voice such as we find here it carries the idea of making wise use of or making the most of an opportunity. As good stewards we are to buy up the time that is being used for evil
  4. Paul sees time as a precious commodity. God has ordained a finite amount of time on this earth. Each human being has been assigned a finite number of days. They are easily lost in this world of darkness. We are to redeem them.

- B. We must live out our days in service to our Master
1. The charge of our Savior is, "Come follow me." It is a lifetime commitment.
  2. We are continually tempted to set our sights on the pleasures of this life. It's ok to take times of leisure. It is vile to go into retirement from service to Christ. We are not allowed to set aside our labor. Our retirement doesn't come in this season  
**Luke 9:61-62 NAU** - "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
  3. Our work will soon be over, but not yet  
 The fields are rich and full of a bountiful crop of souls. We must labor until all has been brought in  
**John 4:35-36 NAU** - "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. <sup>36</sup> "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."
  4. Today is the day of the salvation. This is the season of God's mercy. Do you understand the time in which we are living?
- C. These are also days of preparation - We are the chaste bride of Christ
1. The bride spent time preparing herself for her bridegroom. She lived in constant watchfulness for his arrival  
 We can see this in the parable of the 10 virgins
  2. We are to strive to become more and more adorned with the beauty of holiness
  3. This is a season of seeking to know Jesus more and more.  
 We should be seeking richer and more glorious communion with Christ  
 This age is filled with things that hinder that communion.
  4. We should see our life as a great time of drawing nearer and nearer to Christ – **Verse 10** - "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."
- D. These days are passing quickly. This season is rapidly coming to a close
1. Paul says the end is nearer today than ever before  
**Romans 13:11 NAU** - "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."
  2. This is a season with time passing quickly
  3. This is not a time for wasting time. It demands from us great vigilance and great discernment. How are we using our time?
  4. It was a danger in Paul's day:  
**1 Timothy 5:13 NAU** - "At the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention*."

5. It is a greater danger today. The internet has opened up a whole new way of killing and destroying time. Young men spend hours playing video games.  
In an article in World Magazine it described women using the internet to counteract their boredom. Quote: "But here's a little secret that's gone unnoticed by most. It's *women* . . . Especially when it comes to social networking and shopping, women rule the internet. Sixty million users each day play Zynga games like Farmville, Cityville, and Frontierville. They are particularly popular with women, especially those between the ages of 25 and 44. Women are the majority of users of social networking sites and spend 30 percent more time on these than men; mobile social network usage is 55 percent female. Women have more friends on Facebook, and spend more time on the site. They post more messages, pictures, and updates."
6. These things have their place – but it demonstrates how much caution is essential.

#### Conclusion:

1. Do you know the nature of the times in which we are living? Do you see this world as fading before your eyes? Do you see your sojourn here as brief?  
How tragic when God's people set their roots deep upon this earth. It is as if they are trying to make earth their reward. How tragic when we forget the nature of the season and live as if this is all there is.
2. Paul referred to this age as an evil age.  
**Galatians 1:3-4** – "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,"
  - a. Do you see this as an evil time, an evil age?  
**Ephesians 5:12 NAU** - "it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."
  - b. It is tragic when Christians become so comfortable in this world that they see it as a delightful place of great enjoyment.
3. We must know the nature of the times and such knowledge must cause us to make the most of our time.
  - Knowing the nature of the times in which we live must keep us diligent and watchful. We must press on upholding the truth of God's Word.
  - Knowing the nature of the times in which we live must spur us on with the gospel message. There are billions of lost men who need to hear the gospel of Christ.
  - Knowing the nature of the times in which we live must drive us to an ever increasing desire for holiness. We must shine as the light in this world of darkness.  
**Ephesians 5:11 NAU** - "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them"  
**Romans 13:12 NAU** - "The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."

**1 Thessalonians 5:5-6 NAU** - " We are not of night nor of darkness; <sup>6</sup> so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."