

Redeeming the Time – Part 2

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Date: 28 August 2022

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[0 : 00] These next two things are means of doing that. Okay? So, redeem the time for knowing Christ.

You know, college students, a lot of you are just now figuring out what a lot of you believe. Was this what my parents taught me? Is this what I believe? It's a great time to grow. So, redeem that kairos to really know Christ.

But number two, redeem the time for growing in relationship with God's people. In other words, the church. The covenant fellowship of believers.

The Bible has some really great metaphors for the church. It's called a body. In 1 Corinthians 12. So, to be a part of a body means to belong to a living, functioning, you know, community.

A flock, which can sound degrading because you don't ever want to be compared to a sheep. But, belonging to a flock means belonging to a community dependent on Christ for food and protection and direction.

[1 : 02] A temple, Ephesians 2. To be a stone in His temple means to belong to a worshiping community. And then a household, a family. That's 1 Timothy 3.15.

Like we have a common fatherhood. And we will be together for eternity. So, this is a rehearsal for what is to come. So, understand.

I don't think most of us in here would be guilty of this. Maybe at some point in our lives we were. But there's a lot of people who say, yeah, I love Christ. I'm all about Jesus. But I can't stand the church. You've heard people say that before. Me and Jesus. That's like all I need. The last place, I think. Yeah, no. Just kidding. Just write it down or log it away in your head.

I had to preach on it yesterday at this wedding. Ephesians 5. It talks about the love that Christ has for His church. And it gives us an example.

[2 : 02] It says, husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. So, then it goes down in verse 29.

Christ loves His church. He nourishes and cherishes His church. Because we are members of His body. So, you can observe that. Christ loves His church and died for it.

He cares for the purity of His church. And He is one with His church. So much so that if you attack the church, you're attacking Christ. Any good done to the church is a good done to Christ.

So, the church, in one of those images, is called the Bride of Christ. So, how many of you husbands would get it on if someone called your wife ugly and deplorable?

Jesus could take some people to the cleaners if He wanted to. Don't insult His bride. If you love Christ, then you will love what Christ loves. Christ loves His church.

[3 : 03] With all its problems, He loves His church. And He died for the sake of His bride, the church. And so, we are to redeem the time by growing in relationship with God's people.

Amazingly, for some reason, God has determined that so much of what we need as believers comes through. This is just His design.

It comes through the fellowship of the body. We need our brothers and sisters. There are rich deposits of Christ in every single believer.

That's 2 Corinthians 4-7. The treasure of treasures is hidden inside the believer. Christ takes up residence inside the believer. And if that's true, there are things that we can learn about God and know Him by, by getting to know the body of Christ better.

By getting to know and understand our brothers and sisters better. And God has designed for us not to face all the crud and trials of this world alone.

[4 : 09] But to be there for one another. To help each other along as we go. But we've been saved. We belong to the body. We belong to Jesus.

Jesus suffered and died, it says in the Scripture. The church of God. That He had pained with His own blood. He died for His wife, the church. And so, I pray that as time goes by, we are known here, first and foremost, we are known.

I won't mess with other churches. I'm just going to really talk about ours. Like, I hope we are known as a people who love God, who worship Him with fear and reverence and joy, in spirit and in truth. So, what are one of the first things people talk about when they're asked about their church? What pops out of their mouth? Will it be something other than Christ?

What is the gathering component of a local church? That's a good litmus test. Why do certain churches gather and why does ours gather? And often you'll see an age demographic.

[5 : 24] We like being with old people, so we're with old people. We like being with young people, so we're with a bunch of young people. It could be affinity-driven. There's a bunch of singles at this church.

There's a bunch of married people at this church. But more than likely, it's program-driven. This church has a great children's ministry. This church has a great youth ministry.

This church has incredible music. And that's what people talk about, right? When you ask them about their church, Oh, we just love our music. We just love our worship service.

We have both a traditional and a contemporary service, so we can fit everybody in. And that just feeds the consumer mindset the opposite of what Christ would have us do, which is to unite around Him, right?

I heard on a local Christian radio station several years ago, and it's not a bad station. I won't hate on it. It's not a bad station at all. But for 20 minutes, I had people call in and explain, answer the question, How do you do church?

[6 : 27] But that whole time, no one said, What does Jesus say about the church? Isn't He the head of the church? Didn't He die for the church? That was the whole point.

And a lot of well-meaning people just sort of missed that. So what is our church going to be known for? We do a lot of good things here. We're about a lot of good things. So these aren't bad things when I say this, but we don't want to be known as the homeschool church.

We plan on homeschooling our kids, Lord willing. So you know I'm not hating on that, but we don't want to be known for that. We don't want to be known as a church that each family has to have X number of kids.

We don't want to be known for that either. We do want to be known for the fact that we love children. But is Christ the gathering component of our church, or does it become something else? Here's how you know. If that one component is removed, sometimes that church falls apart. There's nothing else there. If it's a pastor personality or a certain style of music, it just vanishes.

[7 : 33] When that is gone, that church falls apart. And that happens with a lot of megachurches out there, with a cool pastor. When he's gone, like, no one knows what to do because they haven't been functioning.

But I pray that our church is known for its love for Christ and love for one another and not allow good things to become the main thing.

So the Scripture teaches us that we have unity already in Christ. We don't have to create unity. We don't have to make it up out of thin air and unify over some, you know, worldly thing like this ministry or that program or this style of music.

We are united in Christ. And so we need each other in discipleship. We need each other for accountability and discipline, encouragement and prayer and leadership.

I could go on and on. So that's why this is really more of a bigger thing, but you'll just have to maybe talk to me later if you can handle any more. But we're all gifted, too.

[8 : 38] When you are saved, you are given gifts by the Holy Spirit. We just read that, which is so cool. You are given gifts. And just because you can't stand up here and do something, it doesn't matter. There are tons of ways that you can serve the body that are special and that have eternal value.

So, quick word to students, you know, campus ministries are amazing. I was a part of one, campus outreach, for a little over three years. Loved it. It's not in North Georgia anymore, unfortunately. But understand, as cool as campus ministries are, they don't replace the church. They just don't. And a good one, in fact, will point you to the church. They'll say, we're just here to kind of help serve the body.

And we see sort of a movement in that now, which I'm thankful for. So just to kind of remember, just come and be a part of a fellowship. We hope it's here, but it's not. There's some other healthy churches out there.

And then lastly, whew, man, maybe a few more minutes here. That water looks really good to me right now. But lastly, number three, to redeem the time, to redeem the Kairos, redeem it for obedience to God's mission.

[9 : 50] Obedience to God's mission. We are called by Jesus in Matthew 28 to go and to make disciples of all nations.

And what is the goal of that? Read in Revelation. The large myriad of myriad and thousands of thousands from every nation, tribe, and tongue worshipping Christ at His throne at the end of time. And that's only going to happen if we go. Most of the men who heard Jesus say that didn't even make it out of Judea. So we know that that wasn't the plan. It was meant for the disciples that they made to continue that good work, to go to the ends of the earth.

And so Paul says, walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. That's Colossians 4, same word. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders.

So we all have neighbors, coworkers, family members that are still walking in darkness. And it's hard.

[10 : 56] It hurts to watch. But we have the message. We can't save them, but we know the one who can. All right? And students, you will never have, probably most of you, some of you going to the army may have as much opportunity, but you'll never have as many chances to connect with unbelievers as you do now.

Like just the relationships, it's just a sea of relationships, of needy people. It's that depressed guy that never leaves his room, who just plays video games and sits on his phone because he's scared to go and like face the world.

Right? It's that person in the gym just trying to always exercise like crazy because they want people to give them glory for how they look.

It's that girl that spends two hours putting makeup on because she's afraid to go out and afraid that people will think that she's unattractive. She's being evaluated by the people that are around her.

And a special heart for these guys, the ones who just got hammered and partied and went crazy.

They need the Lord too. You've got to find ways to get them through their life safely, of course.

[12 : 09] And so, redeem the time. Make the best use of it. The scripture says, rescue those who are being taken away to death. Hold back those who are stumbling to slaughter.

Understand that as we bear witness to Christ, he's going to use you to reach those who are around you. And in closing, a couple things.

I thought it was worth mentioning. There's some good clips on YouTube if you want to go watch this. I thought, wouldn't that be a shocker if I played a video here on Sunday morning? I've done that here in probably 100 years.

But, the movie, Schindler's List, is a movie I just can't watch. Like, I watched it a long time ago. I can't turn it back on. But, it's about the Nazi death camps, the Holocaust.

A true story, though, of a German named Oskar Schindler. And he was broken over what Germany was doing. And he took it personally to, like, work.

[13 : 18] And he ended up saving about the lives of 1,100 Jews from the Nazi death camps. And at the very end of the movie, this is what you can actually go and watch. It's, after all his sacrifice, all the stuff he did, all his labor, he's there with all those people that he was able to deliver and save.

And he's with his really close Jewish friend, Stern. And, he's looking around at all of them. He says, he looks at his body and says, I could have gotten more out. I could have gotten more out.

If I had just done this, I could have done more. And his friend is so gracious. He's like, look, you did so much. There will be generations of people because of what you did.

And he looks at his car and he goes, what about this car? This car could have been 10 more people. Why did I keep this car? And then he said, I had so much money.

If I just had a little bit more money, I could have gotten more people out. And he says, I wasted so much money. And he just breaks down crying unconsolably like in front of all these people.

[14 : 31] And his friend picks him up and he's like, hey, you did this. Look at their faces. Like, they're here. He pulls off his Nazi party pen. Like, this is gold. And he gives it to him.

Like, this could be two more people. Use this to get them out. But he was so, you know, as you know, in that time, Germans were taught not to show emotion, but he just loses it. And he kept just saying, I haven't done enough. I didn't do enough. And I'm not trying to produce some form of ungodly guilt on you, ungodly conviction. ungodly but none of us want to get to the finish line before the throne and just say, look at all my stuff. And look at all my possessions. You'll just say, why didn't I do more? Sort of a, I think John Piper calls it a heavenly regret. So not a sinful regret, a heavenly regret of like, ah, like, if I knew that this was where things were going, like, I just would not have squandered so much.

[15 : 35] But Jesus says, do not lay for yourselves treasures on the earth where moth and dust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures that are in heaven.

That is the goal. But then he says, where your treasure is, there your heart's going to be also. You're going to see it on display. So, as I said last week from that one missionary, he said, only one life, and it will soon be passed and only what's done for Christ will last. And then lastly, in application of this, we can rest bringing it all into Christ, okay? We see in the Gospels that Jesus was very aware of the providential time that he was here on earth. He was aware of the Kairos. He said, there were times that people wanted to kill him and he said, my hour has not yet come. My Kairos, my time has not yet come. And then eventually, when he had died and breathed his last, he said, it is finished. It is done.

[16 : 42] And like this one verse in John 17 is one that I, man, I really hope on my deathbed, if I make it to a deathbed and don't die in some crazy other way, that I think this verse haunts me just about more than any.

But Jesus says, Father, he's praying like the hour has come, glorify your son, the son may glorify you, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. He was done so he could go and rest, right? So even though we have squandered so much time, ridiculous things that we do with our time, me too, our cell phones don't help. So if you drop it in the commode, just rejoice for the 30 minutes that you're going to have before you fix it with rice. The good news is that all the time we've wasted is not going to bear witness against us on the judgment day if we have Christ, because he was faithful. He saved us. We don't have to pay him back for what he did, but if we do belong to Christ, it's going to create a holy desire in us to want, to redeem the time for eternity.

[17 : 55] We're going to desire that. Make the best use of the time and strive for that daily. It's not about the here and now. So just prepare yourself for the bigger picture, for us going to be in the Father's presence forever.

I'll stop there. Yeah. So much more to say on all that. Each one of those could be its own thing, but let's pray together and then we'll respond in song. Let's pray together and respond in song.