

“For Such a Time as This”

(4/26/20)

I think it’s safe to say that we are in a unique time in American history.

As I was praying about what to teach on this morning—the Lord impressed on my heart the phrase, “*For such a time as this.*”

Of course, that statement comes out of the Book of Esther and how a wicked man named Haman plotted to have the Jewish people exterminated. (Finish)

Esther 4:13-14 (NLT2)

¹³ Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

For Esther, it was a time of testing to determine whether she was going to use her position as Queen of Persia for her own glory, pleasure and satisfaction—or would she use her influence with the king and stand for her people, risking her own life to help save them from annihilation?

Esther answered the call and was used by God to deliver her people—and they have never forgotten her courage and faithfulness.

Each year, the Jewish people celebrate her selfless bravery during a feast dedicated to her honor—the Feast of Purim.

It's interesting how a time like we are currently going thru, a time of fear and uncertainty, effects people—and how they are responding to “*such a time as this.*”

For many it has become a time for pornography as they are trapped in their house (often alone) and have become addicted to the sexual images that they have opened the flood gate to.

The flood gate being the monitor connected to their computer which is dialed in to any number of pornographic websites—sites that are designed by the devil to trap, entangle and ultimately destroy them (they don't call it the ‘world-wide web’ for nothing!).

For others it has become a time where, in an effort to cope with the stress and anxiety of being isolated and cooped up for weeks on end, they have turned to alcohol and prescription drugs for relief—and now find themselves dependent on these to get from day to day.

Unfortunately, for far too many ‘*for such a time as this*’ means—the time has come to end their lives as we are seeing suicides escalating.

For Christians, the statement “for such a time as this” means—it is a time to, “*report for duty*” and use this time as an *opportunity* to serve God!

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

The Greek word translated ‘**circumspectly**’ carries with it the idea of “*precision and accuracy*”— but also contains the idea of “*looking, examining, and investigating something with great care*”.

However, this Greek word further includes the idea of *alertness*—as one author put it: “*As believers walk through the spiritual mine field of the world, they are to be constantly alert to every danger that Satan puts in their way*”.

And so, to paraphrase what Paul is telling us, “*See that you walk (live) your Christian life carefully with great precision—looking all around and giving strict attention to all things as one might do—when passing through a very dangerous place.*”

Paul ended by saying, “*If you do this you will be wise and not a fool*”.

Walking in wisdom for such a time as this—first of all means that we as believers redeem the time.

The Greek word for ‘**redeeming**’ (Eph.5:16) was a term used in the marketplaces which meant to “*buy out*” or to “*purchase completely*”.

The word ‘**time**’ is not the Greek word ‘chronos’ which is time in the sense of seconds, minutes and hours—but ‘kairos’ which is better translated “*opportunities*”.

This word was used by Paul in Gal. 6:10 when he said—“*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*”

The idea is that as Christians we should “*purchase completely*” or “*totally take into our possession*” every opportunity that presents itself to be used for God.

We should be capitalizing on every opportunity we have to witness; to help another in need; or to minister in Jesus’ name—why?

Well, not only because it’s right and good to do so—but also because “*the days are evil.*”

In other words, there is a tremendous amount of pressure that is being exerted on us by the world around us to waste our time or even worse—to use it in sinful ways.

Look, for Christians to properly apply the statement, “*for such a time as this*” to our lives—we must believe that God has sovereignly brought us to this moment in time—having prepared us for and placed us in this situation or circumstance to use us in a special way for His glory.

In other words, we must see our lives as being created by God—on purpose, for a purpose.

I will say this—a life without purpose is a life without meaning and a life without meaning is a life not worth living.

During the Second World War a group of Allied prisoners were sent to a German concentration camp. While they were there the Nazis’ made them move a large pile of rocks from one end of the camp to the other. This went on day after day, week after week. They would no sooner finish moving the pile of rocks from one location to the next that they would have to move them back to where they started. As I said this went on for many days.

However, after a few weeks of this the prisoners began to experience an overwhelming sense of depression that increased day by day until something incredible began to happen. Some of the men charged the guards knowing that they would be gunned down. As time went on other prisoners followed—choosing to die rather than to go on moving this pile of rocks back and forth endlessly from one place to the other.

After the war psychologists learning about this phenomenon interviewed the remaining prisoners and they concluded that the reason those men committed ‘guard assisted suicide’ was because they had lost a sense of purpose and without a true sense of purpose for existing, life becomes meaningless and unbearable to endure often resulting in increased anxiety, depression, and suicide. Whereas those who maintained a sense of purpose—whether it was to stay alive for their families back home or because they had a strong faith in God and believed that He had a purpose in the experience for them—they were able to cope with the situation and survive.

We absolutely need a sense of purpose to survive—without it life becomes a meaningless, mind numbing exercise in futility and despair.

The Bible says that God has put “*eternity in our hearts*” (Eccl.3:11)—in other words God has put into the heart of man a sense that we exist for more than just this life.

That there is an ultimate purpose in life beyond simply surviving or living to make money to buy more and more material things and experience more and more pleasure.

And so, no matter how much a person tells themselves that being successful and making money is life's main purpose—there often comes a time when they just can't kid themselves any longer—when they just can't keep buying into the lie that their life has any *real* meaning.

When that happens, as it did for those prisoners in that Nazis concentration camp—depression, despair and even thoughts of suicide begin to sink in.

They have now come to a 'crossroad' in their life—they can keep going down the road they're on and maybe wind up drinking themselves to death or committing suicide—or they can receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and find real meaning and purpose in life.

Remember, Jesus didn't just die to save us from hell *someday*—He died to give our lives meaning and purpose here on earth right now!

Jesus said, **“I have come that you might have life, and that more abundantly”**—or as the NLT puts it—“*My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*” (John 10:10b)

Unfortunately, many people in our society have embraced a *naturalistic* worldview.

Naturalism is the belief that everything in the universe came about thru *natural* causes (starting with the Big Bang) and not thru the *supernatural* input of a divine being.

One scientist has said—“ <i>Naturalism has now replaced Christianity as the main religion of the Western world, and evolution has become naturalism's principal dogma.</i> ”

The Bible says that God made man, “*a little lower than the angels*” (Psalm 8:5)—but modern science has rejected the Creator and has embraced evolution which teaches that man evolved “*a little higher than the apes*” (competing world views).

And depending on which world view a person chooses to live their life by will greatly impact the way they live their life now—and most importantly, where they spend eternity forever!

Of course, evolution is amoral, so by rejecting the God of the Bible, Who is a moral God, and replacing Him with the 'gods of naturalism' (chance and time)—man is free to live anyway he likes—or so they think:

Romans 1:18-25 (NLT2)

¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. ²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. ²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴ So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. ²⁵ They traded the truth about God for the lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise!

Many people who have embraced the naturalistic worldview don't realize the implications and ramifications this has had on our society.

If there is no God—if man is just a cosmic accident, the result of countless genetic mutations—then there is no purpose or ultimate value to life—and no afterlife!

This leads to a philosophy of life that is nihilistic and hedonistic the motto of which being, "*Let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die and that's it!*"

But fortunately, that isn't true—there is a God who created everything and everyone!

In fact, the Bible says that, not only are we not an accident—we are God's masterpiece!

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us for a purpose, so we can do all the good works he planned for our lives even before we were born." (paraphrase of Ephesians 2:10)

And so, God created you on purpose for a purpose and He has been preparing you for that work—from even before you were born!

The apostle Paul mentions this in Galatians 1:15 when he was giving his testimony how that it pleased God, “*Who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace...*” (Explain)

Like Paul, God has been preparing you for His divine purposes—even from your mother’s womb—you are no accident!

I mean, who you would be—your race and gender; where you would be born, the family and economic status you would be born into, the talents and abilities you were born with—all of these were God’s way of preparing you for the purpose He had for your life.

And ever since you were born God has been further preparing you through the experiences of your life (good and bad) for this work—shaping and molding you into who you are today.

God has your future all mapped out—He knows exactly the work that He wants you to accomplish for His glory and His Kingdom.

The question is—will you submit to Him and fulfill the plans and purposes He has ordained for your life?

Will you, like Esther, stand up for God and say to Him, “*Lord I believe You created me for a purpose, for such a time as this, and I want to use this opportunity to serve You and bring You glory.*”

And folks—by saying this I have more in mind than just this Coronavirus pandemic lockdown in mind.

I'm talking about the time we're living in, in general and the soon return of Jesus Christ to planet earth to establish His Kingdom—for such a time as that!

For those of us who are evangelical Christians—we know that God's plans and purposes always follow a definite timetable—as does every purpose of God.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ To everything *there is* a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

Galatians 4:4 (NKJV)

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman...

Romans 5:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

And likewise, He is coming back at a time appointed by God the Father—and He's going to be right on time—even if the day and hour of His return hasn't been revealed to us:

Matthew 24:36-39, 42-44 (NKJV)

³⁶ "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

³⁷ But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸ For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be... ⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Until then, to quote Paul the apostle one more time:

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

We are living at a time when wickedness and immorality abound—a time like the days of Noah, when the darkness is so pervasive and so persuasive that the only way to keep from being swept away by it—is to stand up against it and walk circumspectly with purpose and vigilance:

Proverbs 4:25-27 (NLT2)

²⁵ Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. ²⁶ Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. ²⁷ Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

The reason Christians get tripped up and fall away is because they don't keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and the narrow road He told us to walk (Matt.7:13-14)—they get distracted by the world and all its enticements. (1John 2:15-17)

As someone has said, *“It is sad to see many professed Christians ‘drift’ through life like sleepwalkers, who never really make the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him.”*

John 9:4 (NKJV)

⁴ [Jesus said] I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.

This is a solemn reminder to everyone who is a Christian that life's “day” is swiftly passing and the night is coming (physical death) when our service on earth will be forever over—

(“There is only one life it will soon be past and only what is done for Christ will last.”)

“*Redeeming the time*” means that you're going to have to sacrifice some pleasures, comforts and goals in exchange for opportunities to serve Jesus—are you willing? (Jim Elliot)

Imagine for a moment, that the days of your life are like worthless pieces of fake money that you might see used in a board game—we'll call it the '*game of life.*'

A game where God is letting you use your time (worthless in and of itself) to '*buy* valuable opportunities to serve Him—opportunities that will bring you priceless eternal rewards in heaven.

A person whose time is spent on themselves winds up with a worthless, wasted life—but the person who spends their time serving Jesus winds up with a precious life and a priceless eternity!

The great sixteenth-century reformer Philip Melanchthon kept a record of every wasted moment and took his list to God in confession at the end of each day—it's a small wonder that God used him in such great ways.

Psalms 90:12 (NKJV)

¹² So teach *us* to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

None of us knows how many days we will have in our lives, but here we are being told to—*“make every day count”!*

How? By walking with purpose and not wasting our opportunities to be used by God—because the days are evil (Eph.5:16).

Paul is pointing out to us that evil times create opportunities for good—opportunities actually created *by* evil days.

Henry Ford said this during the Great Depression—*“These are actually good times—the problem is only a few people know it.”*

What others saw as *tragedy* Ford saw as *opportunity*—in his case the opportunity to make money.

The same is true for Christians today—only the opportunity set before us is not the opportunity to make money—but to save souls!

For Christians these are very good times, the problem is only a few realize it—how about you?

God is able to do exceedingly abundantly in these last days to reach people with the gospel!!

“How can I start?”—by getting involved in ministry right now—thru prayer!

Look for anywhere to serve—and don’t *“despise the days of small things”*. (Explain)

Get to know others in your church so you can minister to your family in Christ first. (*Gal.6:10*)

How? By being a part of our small group ministry to deepen your relationship with Jesus and His Church—the Body of Christ.

Nothing can make up for a wasted opportunity—once the opportunity is gone it’s gone forever.

The road to heaven will be paved with wasted opportunities and unclaimed rewards.

But it’s no use crying over the wasted opportunities of the past—just make sure to make the most of the opportunities of the present and the future.

The Lord has created you and I *“for such a time as this”*—don’t waste it!!

Close