

“A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven”

A blog post by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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John 17:1 (NKJV)

¹ Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: **“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You...”**

Of course, in saying this, the Lord Jesus was referring to the ‘hour’ or time of His crucifixion—that time had come. But I want you to be aware that all the way through Jesus’ ministry (especially as recorded in John’s Gospel) we get the definite impression that He was living according to a divine ‘time clock’ or schedule.

We constantly see Him saying things like *“My hour has not yet come”* and *“My time is at hand.”*

Jesus’ whole life was planned out in eternity past—everywhere He would go, when He would get there, who He came in contact with, what miracles He did—and so on.

It’s very clear as we read the Gospels that Jesus Christ was operating off a divine schedule—and He never missed an appointment:

- *The Bible says he was born “in the fullness of time”.*
- *He died when his time came, and He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures (right on time).*
- *He’s going to return right on schedule—the signs are indicating it will be soon.*

Jesus lived according to a divine plan, a divine schedule that the Father had ordained in eternity past—and so must you and me.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God has a plan for all of our lives as His people—a plan that will only be fulfilled if we live our Christians lives under the control and leading of the Holy Spirit!

Too many Christians never fulfill the plan of God for their lives because they are not sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit—in other words, they put their head down and charge thru their day doing what they want, when they want and with whom they want.

Not only will this result in a lack of fruit in their walk with God—but it’s a sure way to be overcome and defeated by the world!

There is only victory in the Christian life when we are in the will of God for our lives.

One of the profound principles that we learn from Jesus' life and ministry is being sensitive to where the Lord Jesus thru the power of the Holy Spirit is working and therefore leading you and I to be at any given time:

John 12:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ **If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor** [with victory and blessing].

The only life that counts, the only life that has eternal value in the eyes of God—is a Christian's life that is being led by the Holy Spirit and lived on purpose—

As one author put it—

“Only a Christian has any sense of divine purpose and direction. For the Christian every moment, every second counts for eternity and is to be used for the glory of God because you've been redeemed by Him. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: ‘You no longer belong to yourself; you were bought out of slavery with the precious blood of Jesus Christ... Therefore, you are to live for Him and bring Him glory thru your life that now belongs to Him.’”

And so, once again—your life has been purchased by God and you are to now use it for Him.

That doesn't mean you can't go on vacation, watch a ballgame, or spend the afternoon with a dear friend—but it does mean that you and I can't waste precious time either.

To quote that same author again—

“Is everyday being used to serve God because you belong to him? Most Christians dilly dally and frivolously waste their time on meaningless, empty things. Wasting precious time hanging around watching TV or generally sleeping their life away. If most of us spend our employers time the way we spend God's time—we'd be looking for a new job! Listen Christian, you are living for an eternal purpose. Every moment counts.”

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*” (opportunities to serve God) is swiftly passing away—and the night is coming (physical death) when our service on earth will be forever over.

As someone has said—**“There is only one life it will soon be past and only what is done for Christ will last.”**

Imagine 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 (which is intrinsically worthless) to *buy* valuable opportunities to serve Him—opportunities that will bring you priceless eternal rewards in heaven.

The person whose time is spent on him or herself 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 Philipp Melancthon 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 here on earth—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—

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT2)

¹⁵ So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶ Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷ Don't act thoughtlessly [don't meander], but understand what the Lord wants you to do [live with eternal purpose].

Paul is pointing out to us that evil times *create* opportunities for good—opportunities that are 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 to make money—it's to save souls! For Christians these are very good times, the problem is only a few realize it (Col.3:2)—so let's get busy!

As more and more people try to live their lives *without* God and are experiencing more and more problems and emptiness—it creates more and more opportunities for us to point them to the only One Who can give them purpose and bring meaning to their lives (not to mention save them from hell)—the Lord Jesus Christ!

As Jesus said, “*The fields are white unto harvest (“the world is filled with souls ready to be harvested for God's Kingdom”)*—pray that God will send more workers into the harvest.”

God is able to do exceedingly abundantly in these last days to reach people with the Gospel.

But how effective you're going to be in reaching people for Jesus and fulfilling the ministry God has ordained for you—is going to depend on how sensitive you are to the leading of the Holy Spirit! That will be determined by how much time you spend with the Lord in prayer and in His Word.

There are no shortcuts in being spiritually fruitful for the Lord any more than there are short cuts in growing real fruit as a farmer.

Let me close with some personal application from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when He said, “**Father, the hour has come...**” (John 17:1)

We could paraphrase this based on what Jesus said in John 13:1 to start the evening—“**My hour has come.**”

Of course, the Lord in saying this used to term ‘**hour**’ to represent a moment in history—not a sixty-minute period of time.

A lot of you are discouraged because you've been praying for something for a long time—some of you for years (the salvation of your spouse, the return of a wayward or prodigal son or daughter, the birth of a child...etc.) And perhaps now you've pretty much given up that your prayers will ever be answered.

If that is where you find yourself this morning—remember these two Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NKJV)

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

Luke 18:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then [Jesus admonished us]...that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,.

Don't forget Zacharias and Elizabeth who prayed for a child for years...(finish the story).

"...But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son [on God's timetable], and you shall call his name John." (Luke 1:13)

Look, I know that some of you are discouraged because of unanswered prayer—but very shortly your time might come, your 'hour' might be fulfilled for your prayers to be answered—so don't give up!

God has got a timetable for everything He does—a timetable that is often quite different from ours! So be patient, keep praying and trust that God is never late, that His timing is always perfect!