

Three Ways to Use Time Wisely

More than 75 years ago Henry Luce wanted a name, in just one word, for a weekly news magazine that would describe the passing events of the day. He chose the word time.

The Bible says, "The days of our lives are 70 years" (Psalm 90:10). Time is a mystery. We sense its passing in our consciousness. We measure its progress with delicately adjusted instruments. We mark its flight and read the record it leaves behind. But the one thing we cannot do is define it.

The Bible teaches that time and life are tied together. It seems that the whole universe is organized for measuring time. Nature is like a huge clockmaker's shop in which thousands of timepieces are ticking. Pulse beats indicate the fleeting moments; the rotation of the earth marks the passing of day and night; the phases of the moon, the moving on of the months; the revolutions of the planets, the march of the years.

Geology studies the wrinkles written by time on earth's brow. Astronomy studies the clockwork of the heavens. Archaeology, peering about among the relics of the ancient past, traces the footprints of time in the ages gone by.

At this time of year we speak of Father Time and visualize an old man with a long white beard who is holding a scythe in one hand and an hourglass in the other hand. But time is a thief. Time steals strength from our muscles and youth from our faces. Time robs us of our health and strips us at last of everything that we have.

To the Christian, time has a moral significance and a spiritual meaning. Let us consider time in three ways.

First, time is a trust. What are we doing with it? Are we frittering it away, letting it slip through our fingers,

squandering it in wanton waste? Or are we treasuring it, using it to maximum advantage, filling every minute with 60 seconds' worth of service to God? The Apostle Paul counsels us to "redeem the time" (Cf. Ephesians 5:16). Time cannot be relived; it can only be redeemed. Let us treat time as a trust.

Second, time is a test. Suppose I were to ask you what you propose to do at 1 o'clock yesterday. You would think I had lost my mind. You might reply, "Don't be silly. I cannot decide what I shall do at 1 o'clock yesterday, because I've already decided that issue."

But suppose I were to ask you, "What do you propose to do at 1 o'clock tomorrow?" You might answer, "I may do this, or I may do that."

Time past is time over which we have no power, but time to come lays upon each one of us the possibility of moral and spiritual choices.

As life goes on, there are billions of events happening in every moment of historic time. To those billions of events we contribute our quotas. What is the next contribution that you will make? In the next instant you can tell a lie or commit other sins, or you can choose to use that time to serve God and to lay up treasures for eternity.

Time in itself is neither good nor bad except as we make it so. But it becomes a crucial test, sifting us through and through, minute by minute.

How are you reacting to that test? How does it affect you? Are you growing daily in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18)? Do you take advantage of every opportunity to study the Scriptures and to pray? Do you take advantage of every opportunity to witness to Jesus Christ?

Third, time is an appointment. Time has been given to us for

the purpose of glorifying God in this life. Time has been given to us to have an encounter with the living God. However famous a person may be, or however great his wealth, or whatever his contribution to literature or science, if he has not come into a vital conversion experience with Jesus Christ, then that person has lived in vain.

Thus time is an appointment with Christ, and the Bible says, "Now is the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2). God has given us a moment in which we can come to know His Son Jesus Christ. We can come out of time and enter eternity with Him. From now on, everything we do can be done with eternity in view.

A story has been told about a party of men shipwrecked and adrift in a small boat on a stormy sea in the mid-Atlantic Ocean. After floating for several days, the men one night saw the light of a passing ship. But how could they attract the attention of those on the ship? How could they make them aware of their desperate plight? They had a lantern—but only one match.

Someone in the boat had to accept the responsibility of striking that one match. That solitary match was all that stood between them and the liner that was steaming by. What was to be done? They decided to cast lots, and the heavy responsibility fell upon the youngest sailor.

With a prayer on his lips and with trembling fingers, he struck the match. For a moment the flame flickered as though it would go out. Shielding the match with his cupped hands, the young sailor put it through the open door of the lantern, lit the stub of the candle and quickly closed the door. On the liner the lookout man spotted the light and informed the captain, and soon the men were saved.

Amid the stormy seas of life and against the background of eternity, the present moment flickers like the flicker of that lighted match. What will you do with your moment?

Ebenezer Erskine wrote that in the summer of 1708, he “got his head out of time into eternity.” That was the hour that he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. That hour was his existential moment, his life’s crowning instant. Will you keep your appointment with Jesus Christ?

As the world moves from crisis to crisis, a moment will come on God’s clock, and that hour is about to strike. The Bible tells us that the end will come but that the end also will be the beginning. When Jesus Christ comes again, it will be the end of this world’s system of evil and the beginning of God’s reign throughout the earth.

But before that hour strikes, our world is in for crisis after crisis. There will be wars and rumors of wars, revolutions and riots everywhere. People will betray each other as the deceitfulness of their hearts comes out into the open—crucifying Jesus Christ afresh.

The hour is late. The time is coming when people will call upon God, but they will not hear an answer. They will look for God, but they will not find him (Proverbs 1:28).

Today is your day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Today you can accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. You can put your faith, your trust and your confidence in Him. He will change your dimension of time and put you into eternity with Him.

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