

Why We Must 'Redeem Our Time' During COVID-19 Lockdown

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph, 5:15-16, NKJV).

"Squeeze all you can out of this time," I heard the Holy Spirit say as I was fretting about my circumstances and wanting a change of location as quickly as possible. God was telling me, in the words of Paul, to "redeem the time," and it proved to be a strategic and timely word.

After this, I did one of my most important research and writing projects ever, which could only have happened in that place and at that time.

When Paul instructed the Ephesian believers to "redeem the time," he was on lockdown; under house arrest awaiting trial in the city of Rome. Instead of fretting and questioning God, he redeemed the time by praying and writing letters that became foundational for our faith and continue to bless and instruct believers around the world.

During this coronavirus crisis with its confinement and restricted activities, I encourage you to "squeeze all you can out of this time." Do things that you would not be able to do if life were "normal." Take the opportunity to read books, study the Bible, pray and nurture family relationships.

In my situation mentioned above, Sue and I were doing doctoral studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. The studies were fine, but we felt cut off from the rest of the world and did not like our living situation. We were there for one year, and I had settled into an "endure and wait it out" mindset.

But when I heard this word from the Lord, I knew He was telling me to be proactive and make the most of the fact that I was in the midst of an academic community with access to one of the best theological and historical libraries in the world. God was telling me to redeem the time—"squeeze everything you can out of this time."

As a result, I accepted the opportunity for a Directed Study, which was a course that I would create and do all the research for without attending classes. I would be graded on the final paper, which I would produce based on the research I had done.

I chose to do a study of the Montanists, a second-century Christian movement that has traditionally been condemned as pagan and heretical. Based on my research, I concluded that the Montanists were a legitimate second century revival group that was seeking a renewal of New Testament Christianity. I can't begin to tell you how significant that research project has been for me and for the church at large.

That research paper became a chapter in my first book, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity*, which is used as a textbook in colleges and seminaries around the world. I presented the paper to a group of Protestant and Catholic scholars, and it was very well received. I was later invited to write the entry on Montanism for the massive *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* published in 2008. Numerous articles and books have utilized that research, and it has helped reshape the church's thinking about the Montanists.

I am so glad I responded to that word to "squeeze all you can out of this time."

So, during this coronavirus lockdown, do not squander the opportunity. Redeem the time. Squeeze everything you can out of it. You may be amazed at what God will do once this crisis is past. {eoa}

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passion is to see the church return to her roots in New Testament Christianity and America return to her roots in the First Great Awakening. His books on the topic are available from Amazon and his website at .