

Plenty of Time?

This week's lesson was inspired by Friday's Daily Berean. It started out with **Acts 1:7-8**- "And He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; But you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth."

What was said in their essay made sense and made me think about human nature, beginning with me. If you are at all like me, you can probably look back into your school years and remember getting homework assignments on Friday. *Knowing* it was not due until Monday, Sunday nights right after Disney was a good time to start.

This thinking carried over into projects that were to be handed in at the end of the marking period. The big one we can all relate to is "cramming for a test." I'd always wait until the last minute. There were even times of copying someone else's homework on the bus *on the way to school*. Hindsight is always 20/20 and looking back, I could have saved a lot of stress just by doing assignments or studying first.

But when we're young we rarely think about the finish line. We always *think* we have time. But do we really?

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”- Abraham Lincoln.

I'm sure God in His infinite wisdom knows of human nature as He made us and knows we need *all the time we can get* to transform into the image of His Son. Not knowing when Christ will return *eliminates* the false sense of security thinking we have all the time in the world. True, there may be things yet to take place as quoted in Matthew and Mark.

Matthew 24:48- “Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, “Be on guard, so that no one deceives you. For many shall come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’; and they shall deceive many. And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb you. For it is necessary *that* all *these* things take place, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in *different* places. Now all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows.”

The rest of Matthew 24 prophesies of the Second Coming of our Lord and what will take place prior. If we just read the above scripture it would seem we are at *the beginning of sorrows*.

Mark 13:6-11- “For many shall come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ’; and they shall deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for it is necessary for these things to come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in different places, and there shall be famines and disasters. These things are the beginning of sorrows. But keep yourselves on guard, for they shall deliver you up to councils and synagogues. You shall be beaten, and you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. But whenever they lead you away and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand nor meditate on what you should say; but whatever shall be given to you in that hour, that speak. For you are not the ones who are speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Again, the rest of Mark 13 tells of the return of Jesus and what will occur before He does. Both Matthew 24 and Mark 13 warn us to “Watch.” We know from our studies this does not mean to be glued to a TV set watching world events. It means

we are to be closely examining our spiritual condition. Time is flying by. It seems like yesterday we were in our teens and snap! We're senior citizens! People view the passage of time in various ways. The fact that some of the prophecies in **Daniel 9, 11, and 12** have not yet come to fruition does not relieve us of our spiritual devotion to growth and producing fruit.

Proverbs 6:6-9- “Go to the ant, sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, Who having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provides her food in the summer *and* gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you sleep, O sluggard? When will you arise out of your sleep?”

We keep hitting the snooze button and roll over and ignore the alarm going off. We already know if we fail to answer this alarm, the sleep is one thousand years. Those who are baptized will not be as fortunate.

Proverbs 19:15-16- “Laziness throws one into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger. He who keeps the commandment keeps his own soul; he who is careless in his ways shall die.”

Proverbs 21:25- “The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to work.”

God does not want us to be lazy. Not being told of the exact time when Jesus will return is a blessing. It is one less thing to be concerned with. If we are prepared spiritually it will not matter when He returns. We have been given all the warnings we need, and all of the equipment required to be in His First Harvest. We have His Word, His promises and His Son as an example. Those who are not prepared will face the consequences.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-6- “For you yourselves understand perfectly that the day of *the* Lord will come exactly as a thief *comes* by night. For when they say, “Peace and security,” **then sudden destruction will come upon them**, as travail *comes* upon a woman who is with child; and they shall by no means escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness that the day *of the Lord* should overtake you as a thief. *For* you are all children of *the* light and children of *the* day; we are not of *the* night, nor of *the* darkness. So then, we should not sleep, as others *do*; but we should watch, and we should be sober.”

Matthew 25:26- “His lord answered *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather what I did not scatter.’”

Matthew 25:30- “And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.’ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

It’s easier to *deny* the presence of God and *our dependence* on Him and His ways *than to submit to His will*. Coincidence is an easier excuse for trials happening rather than seeing God’s Hand directing our lives. Having an Ostrich mentality burying our head in the ground (they don’t really do that) and ignoring our calling may work for a while but don’t do it standing in the middle of a railroad track with a train coming. It won’t work. None of us know how much time we have left.

The moment when we get the nudge, the whisper, the tug on the heart string, God is stirring us. It is our wake-up call. There was a catalyst in our life (probably more than one) that shaped and directed our walk in seeking God, His truth, His Son and His Word. Some may not know it; some may not recognize it and many refuse to acknowledge it. How sad is that? Those that know the truth of God’s Word and still

refuse to act upon it thinking, “I still have time.” The passengers on the Titanic thought the same thing.

Proverbs 14:12- “There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death.”

For some of most of us, typically later in our adult years, in our youth we didn't think of our own mortality. Some of us just may beginning to take those first steps onto that path of truth. No matter. Better late than never. Remember the parable of the workers in **Matthew 20:1-16**? The reward is the same whether we received God's Truth at twenty- five or seventy-five.

Genesis 49:18- “I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD.”

I can remember all the churches I have been to in my life and while they appeared to be uplifting, there was always a void. All along it was God's way of revealing Himself. It was God's will that made us hunger for His truth in the first place. It was His presence through His Holy Spirit around us that led us to the feeling

something was missing. We may not have been in the proper condition or place in our lives to where the seeds of His Word would have fallen on good ground. He knew when the time was right. God was preparing us for the time when He would reveal His truth to us.

If you have been presented the truth, God's truth, how can you continue in the wrong path? How long can you deny doing things according to God's Way? Once you know you are doing something wrong, why would anyone of good conscience continue to do it wrong? Especially if it is one of **God's Commandments**? "Oh, *we choose* to worship on the Lord's Day..."

When you read it for yourself, it becomes undeniable, the Sabbath isn't Sunday and we do not go to heaven when we die, there are two resurrections, and so on. God knows it takes time to come to the place of accepting His truth, contrary to all we were taught our whole lives.

Psalm 119:59-50- "I considered my ways and turned my feet unto Your testimonies. I made haste and did not delay to keep Your commandments."

Proverbs 14:18- “The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.”

Romans 12:11-12- “Be not slack in business. Be fervent in spirit. Be timely in serving. Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer.”

Hebrews 6:10-12- “For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work, and the labor of love *by* which you have showed *honor* to His name, *in that* you have served the saints and are *continuing* to serve *them*. But we earnestly desire that every one of you be demonstrating the same diligence, unto the full assurance of the hope until *the* end; So that you do not become lazy, but that you be imitators of those who through faith and steadfast endurance inherit the promises.”

Before our calling and finding God’s Truth, what were we waiting for? What was it that was missing in our spirit that we were searching for? What led us to look for God? Was there a hollow spot in our lives that remained void until God filled it with His truth? If this makes sense then we are headed in the right direction.

Romans 1:17- “For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith, according as it is written: “The just shall live by faith”

1 Peter 1:5- “Who are being safeguarded by *the* power of God through faith, for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time.”

Most of us came from Protestant or Catholic backgrounds and were not raised in God’s true church. How much different would our lives have been if we would have come to know God’s truth at a much younger age? Likely we were not ready. It wasn’t our time. God had to “heat the metal” before He began to forge us into who we are today. God was searching His creation for the hearts that were seeking Him.

Psalms 53:2- “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understand, who are seeking after God.”

Ezekiel 34:11-16- “For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep, so I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of

all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land and feed them on the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the places of the land where people live. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their fold shall be upon the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture they shall feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down,” says the Lord GOD. “I will seek that which was lost, and bring again those that were driven away, and will bind up the broken, and will strengthen the sick. But I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.”

Psalm 25:21- “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on You.”

Wait. There’s that four-lettered word nobody likes. Not all of our waiting is actually "waiting on God." He is more likely waiting on us, procrastination, our lack of growth and bearing good fruit. It could be our stubbornness, pride, or outright laziness. It could be we are dragging our feet because we are fearful of change, judgments from family and friends, or like Jonah, we just flat out do not want to do what God wants us to do.

“And the Word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. And he went down to Joppa. And he found a ship going to Tarshish. And he paid its fare, and went down into it, in order to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”- **Jonah 1:1-3.**

How many times have you avoided doing what God wanted you to do? God used the “great fish” to get Jonah’s attention. What has God used to get your attention?

“And the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”- **Jonah 1:17.**

In this, we see that there is a difference between God's *promises* and God's *instructions*. When God tells us to jump, “yes Lord how high” would be the proper response. The time to wait on God is *not* when He gives instructions. When He instructs us, He expects us to act on it. Our time to wait on God is when God promises to do something or says that something will happen. He provided us with scripture that gives us a glimpse of the future, but we will have to wait on Him to

bring it to pass. That waiting is not always pleasant. It takes work, it takes discipline, restraint, patience, and our all-out effort. With all the blessings you have been given and all that you have learned, is God truly calling you to be in His family? If so, what are you waiting for?

Joshua 24:15- “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, *choose this day* whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

God certainly does not have to wait on anyone. It is His Divine mercy that gives us the time to repent and grow in grace and knowledge. Waiting on God is the very foundation of our hope. Hope is used in the Bible not as something wished for but as a promise and the confident trust in a future event. We have the promise of God in His Word for our future redemption and adoption when we are resurrected at The Lord’s return. But until that event occurs and our hope is fulfilled, we wait. Our hope lies in God’s promises and our future meeting with Jesus Christ at the harvest of His first fruits.

Romans 8:22-25- “For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience.”

God is patient and merciful in His timing. He desires all of us to come to repentance and not perish. He is so merciful to mankind. Not knowing when Christ will return is *motivation to get ready now while we still can*. Another thing we all *do not know* is when will we be called to our rest? As we do not know the day or hour of Christ’s return, we should be striving to grow in spiritual righteousness while we still have time.

Acts 22:16- “And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Can we say with certainty in our hearts that we are ready? Do we believe we have fulfilled our creation purpose according to God’s will? Having the promises in His

Word, are we to sit idly by and “hang out” waiting for Christ’s return? Certainly not. Time is **not** on our side; we can delay but **time will not**.

2 Peter 3:12-14- “**Looking forward to and striving** for *the* coming of the day of God, during which *the* heavens, being on fire, shall be destroyed, and the elements, burning with intense heat, shall melt? But according to His promise, **we look forward** to a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. For this reason, beloved, since **you are anticipating these things, be diligent**, so that you may be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”

Not knowing when Christ will return means our waiting is a *time for preparation*. It can be challenging, but our reward is eternal and God will give us the strength we need.

Isaiah 40:31- “But those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up *with* wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Hosea 12:6- “Therefore return to your God; keep mercy and judgment and wait for your God continually.”

We no longer have to wait on filling the void we once had. God called, we listened. He has told us *all we need to know in His Word*. We have been filled with His truth. God has given us His Word, His Son, and His Holy Spirit. We have the example of Christ Jesus to emulate and God's Commandments to follow. Waiting teaches us patience and endurance and is a foundational aspect of *faith, hope, and love*. We look forward to the return of our Savior Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. We will wait with all hope and anticipation.

If you continue to ignore God and still think you have time so did the people of Noah's day...*until it started raining*.

Psalm 27:14- "Wait for the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, wait, I say, *wait* on the LORD." Amen.