

Redeeming the Time

One of my great friends, John Featherston, once had a sermon that he called “Don’t Waste Time” in which he began with a quote from Benjamin Franklin: “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time—for it is the stuff life is made of.” His point was that we have no idea how much time we have while we are here on this earth, so we should use it wisely. Although Franklin wasn’t really talking about living for God (his philosophy was more “eat drink and be merry”) his quote could certainly have spiritual implications.

Jesus told the story of the “foolish farmer” in **Luke 12** to make the point that a person doesn’t necessarily have the time that he thinks he has. “I have a lot of stuff,” he thought, “I can just take it easy and live off of what I have.” He died that night, and all his stuff went to someone else. He was not “rich toward God” the passage says, and in that respect, he died penniless.

James, the Lord’s brother, makes a similar point in **James 4:13-17** when he says that making plans without regard to God’s will is arrogant. **“You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes,”** James says. You are not in control of how much time you have to live for God.

Paul told the Ephesians in **Ephesians 5:15-16**: **“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity (redeeming the time—KJV), because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”** He said much the same to the Colossians in **Colossians 4:5-6**: **“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity (again, redeeming the time—KJV). Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”** The point that he is making in these two passages is that you’re given a finite amount of time to set a good example for others. You need to live your life in the way God intended for you to live it.

My friend John would always end his sermon something like this: “I don’t mean to be morbid, but you could leave here and get hit by a truck....shouldn’t you give your life to Christ?” Well, maybe not in exactly those words, but the meaning was clear. Use the time you have in service to God. You have no idea when your time is up. I’m certain that my former student didn’t begin December 31, 2014 thinking that it would be her last. But it was. Was she ready? Only God knows.

Someone said this: “Tomorrow is a mystery, yesterday is history, today is a gift. That’s why they call it the present.” Paul left his former life behind and strained forward to the future, living one day at a time. That’s what we’re called to do. Ours should be a life devoted to God and his service, giving others an example to follow. Let us all begin

2015 with our mortality in mind, “**redeeming the time**” by making the most of every opportunity we have to, as we have been instructed, do good.