

Are You Redeeming the Time?

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Events occur in history which have a lasting impact for a generation. Everyone of that generation remembers where they were and what they were doing when the event occurred. The news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the news of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, and the news of the terrorist attacks on 9/11 in 2001.

Back on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the hundreds of passengers who boarded American Airlines Flight 11, United Airlines Flight 175, United Flight 93 and American Airlines Flight 77 and the hundreds of employees in the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon never thought for one second when they woke up that morning that that day would be the last day of their lives. It never entered their minds that that would be the last time they would wake up, the last time they would eat breakfast, the last time that they would kiss their wives or husbands and would hug their children. They were excited about their business meetings, their plans for the day, their plans for the week, their plans for the rest of their lives. All those plans changed in an instant when the planes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and in the field in rural Pennsylvania.

Michael was one of the department managers at the engineering firm where I used to work. About 10 years ago, Michael and his wife were eating dinner together with their son and daughter-in-law at a restaurant on the east side of Houston. They were discussing over dinner all the plans for later that night back at their house and for later in the week. Their son and daughter-in-law left a few minutes before Michael and his wife, while Michael was paying the bill. On the way home, Michael saw many flashing police lights on the road ahead. All traffic was stopped. A wreck had just occurred. He was about 7 or 8 cars back. He got out of the car and as he approached the scene of the wreck, he found that there had been a two-vehicle head-on collision: A Ford F-250 pickup driven by a drunk driver and a small car, which had been totally destroyed. To his horror, he recognized the car as his son's car. The son and his son's wife, with whom he had just talked and made so many plans just moments before, lay dead inside the car.

The news is filled every day and every night of people being killed in wrecks, in murders, and in accidents. None of those people were expecting to die. They weren't aware that that day would be their last day.

In Luke 13, we read about a tragedy that killed 18 people. This tragedy in the town of Siloam was a major news event that had a lasting effect on the people in the region. Jesus referred to this tragedy to make a point.

Luke 13:1 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

2) *And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?*

3) *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

4) *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*

5) *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (KJV)*

None of these victims knew what their future held for them. They all had plans. They all had bright futures. They all had their whole lives to live. They probably all thought that they had decades to live, decades to do the things they wanted to do, decades to get around to doing the things that they hadn't done yet.

The same has happened in my life. I'd like to give you two examples in my life where I could easily have died but didn't.

In 1976, when I was 17 years old, in the summer between my junior and senior year in high school, I went to a friend's swimming pool party with about 15 other friends. It was a gorgeous, beautiful, sunny, summer's day. We all enjoyed swimming in the pool for about an hour or two. The others all got out of the pool, and I stayed behind to practice some underwater swimming. I was going to join them in just a few minutes. I was at the 9- to 10-foot-deep end of the pool. I remember thinking to myself, "*Just one more time across the pool, and I'll get out.*" I started across underwater, got halfway across the pool, and suddenly I couldn't go any farther and I couldn't get to the surface. I panicked. I thrashed around trying to get to the top, but I couldn't.

I remember thinking that this just couldn't be happening to me. I remember crying out to our Heavenly Father to save me. I didn't want to die. I didn't want my life to end, not at that time, not in that way. I thought of my parents. I thought of my brother. I thought of my friends. Your life does somewhat pass before your eyes in a single moment.

Then as the oxygen became depleted in my brain, I quit thrashing. I sank to the bottom of the pool. Then everything started to dim and fade, and then blackness.

Although it's been almost 48 years, I still vividly remember those moments. The fear. The desperation. Fortunately, for me, that was not the end of the story. After more than six to seven minutes at the bottom of the pool, someone from the party noticed I wasn't there with them. Someone went to the pool, looked in the pool, saw that I was at the bottom of the pool. They quickly jumped in and pulled me out.

They told me later that I was ice cold to the touch. My eyes were deep red. I was white as a sheet. My heart had stopped, and I wasn't breathing. Fortunately, 4 of the 16 guests were lifeguards. They gave me CPR, my heart started, and I began breathing again.

For whatever reason, our Heavenly Father let me live. The doctors were in disbelief that I didn't have major brain damage or major organ damage. Through our Father's

intervention, I was released from the hospital less than two days later, to the amazement of the doctors and nurses in the hospital.

Although that happened almost 48 years ago, I still vividly remember all that happened and all I felt. Afterwards, I came to the realization that if God Our Father hadn't intervened and saved me that day, I wouldn't have awakened in the hospital. My last thoughts would have been the thoughts in the pool as I was drowning.

Then, 12 years later in 1988, I was living in an apartment on the northwest side of Houston. I was expecting a friend to come over that night. I heard a knock at the door. I opened up the door, but it wasn't my friend. Instead, there were two very large men standing at the door. The man in the front had a pistol. He immediately shoved the pistol up under my ribcage and pushed me back into the apartment and up against the wall. The other man stood in the doorway. My life suddenly turned upside down. It happened so quickly. My mind raced and I thought of the fact that I had around \$60 in my wallet. The news of the time was that people were being killed in their homes when they couldn't produce any money for the robbers. The man with the pistol yelled "Where is it?" I calmly answered him, "Where's what?" At that point, the other man in the doorway said, "Hey man, this ain't it!" The man with the pistol then got angry and cursed and turned around and both men ran out of the apartment. As the man ran away, he fired his pistol into the ground. Apparently, they were looking for drugs and had gone to the wrong apartment.

I sat down on the couch contemplating just what had happened, and how I could have just been shot and killed. Our Heavenly Father protected me that night and no harm came to me. But it showed me how quickly life can change. The outcome could have been very different and very tragic.

Paul gave an exhortation to the congregation in Colossae to do something very important in their lives.

Colossians 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
3) Withal praying also for us, that God [ho theos - God Our Father] would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

4) That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5) Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. (KJV)

Brethren, what are we doing with the time that God Our Father has given to us in our lives? Are we doing what we can do now instead of putting things off until sometime in the future? Are we redeeming the time that our Heavenly Father has given to us?

My sermon this afternoon is entitled:

Are You Redeeming the Time?

In this sermon, I would like to explore the subject of *redeeming the time* that our Heavenly Father has given us and making a concerted serious effort to deepen our relationship with Him with the time that we do have. But first, as always, we must define our terms.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines *to redeem* as:

“to buy back, to extricate from or help to overcome something detrimental, to change for the better, to repair or restore, to convert into something of value.”

The Greek word for *redeem* in Colossians 4:5 is *exagorazo*, Strong's #1805 meaning

“to buy up, to ransom, to rescue from loss”.

So, are we rescuing from loss the time that our Heavenly Father has allotted to us? Are we making concerted efforts to please Him, to draw close to Him and to deepen our relationship with Him?

To help determine if we are indeed redeeming the time that we have left that our Heavenly Father has given us, I would like to ask five simple questions.

The first question to help determine if we are redeeming the time is:

1) Are we becoming weary in well doing?

Our adversary, the devil, is after all of us. He wants us to be frustrated. He wants us to be disappointed, depressed and weary with our lives. He wants us to give up. He wants to destroy us. He hates us with a passion. He wants more than anything else for us to fail.

In 1 Peter 5, we read a warning from the Apostle Peter.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: (KJV)*

The devil wants us to fail. He wants us to quit trying. He wants us to become weary.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us not to become weary in obeying our Heavenly Father and making the right choices in life.

Galatians 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*

8) For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (KJV)

The Apostle Paul repeats this exhortation to the Thessalonian congregation in 2 Thessalonians 3:13.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. (KJV)*

In Psalm 69 King David battled with becoming weary while he waited on Yehovah. We all experience this weariness in our lives.

Psalm 69:1 *Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.*

2) I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3) I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: my eyes fail while I wait for my God. (KJV)

Do we find ourselves growing weary, being tired of our trials which seem to just keep going on and on and on, wondering if our Heavenly Father even hears our prayers.

God Our Father does indeed hear our prayers. Our Heavenly Father will give us the strength not to be weary.

Isaiah 40:28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

29) He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increases strength.

30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31) But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (KJV)

In Mark 4 Jesus gave a parable as a warning to the called-out ones of our Heavenly Father. We read about a group of called-out ones who grow weary in well doing and weary in following our Heavenly Father's way of life.

Mark 4:3 *Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:*

4) And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5) And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6) But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. (KJV)

Continued in verse 16)...

16) And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17) And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. (KJV)

So, let's never grow weary in well doing. Let's never tire of fighting the pulls of the world, fighting our own human nature, and fighting to stay obedient to God Our Father and His laws, and to follow the example of His Son, Jesus the Anointed One.

The second question to help determine if we are redeeming the time is:

2) Are we asleep?

Have we fallen asleep spiritually? Have we become numb to the world events happening all around us? Are we slumbering instead of studying? Are we half asleep instead of being vigilant? In Matthew 25 Christ addressed this issue in the parable of the ten virgins.

Matthew 25:1 *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

2) *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

3) *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*

4) *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

5) *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (KJV)*

The point here is that all ten virgins, even the five wise virgins grew tired and fell asleep. All ten were probably excited about the coming wedding and festivities. They just didn't know when the bridegroom was coming and with the passage of time, they all fell asleep.

Many in the Church have been attending for over 30 years or 40 years or even 50 years or more. Back in the 1970's, the topic of conversation at Church was on world events and all the many news items which seemed to be fulfilling Biblical prophecy. I started attending Church almost 50 years ago in 1974 when I was 15. I can still remember wondering if I was going to even be able to finish college before Christ came back. There was a sense of urgency then.

We live today in a paradox. Today, when so many incredible events are happening, when so much in-depth news and research are at our electronic fingertips, when the early stages of Biblical prophecy are unfolding right in front of us, we can tend to get into information overload. We can begin to shut down. We've heard and read about Biblical prophecy for so long, we can lose that sense of urgency.

Jesus had to contend with His disciples who seemed clueless to the events soon to unfold upon them.

Matthew 26:36 *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and says unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. (KJV)*

Continued in verse 40) ...

40) *And he comes unto the disciples, and finds them asleep, and says unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

41) *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (KJV)*

Here we have Christ praying during the final hours of his physical life. He knew what was coming. He knew that He would be arrested, tried, tortured, and killed. He had a definite sense of urgency. The disciples seemed to be absolutely clueless. They didn't apparently sense the immediate danger that was coming. They all fell asleep.

Jesus warns us all to watch and pray.

Mark 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

33) *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. (KJV)*

In Luke 21 Jesus warned us not to get caught up in the world.

Luke 21:34 *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

35) *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*

36) *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (KJV)*

Luke 21:34 *Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, (NLT)*

In each of these verses, the Greek verb translated as *watch* is *agrupnéo*, Strong's #69 meaning "to keep awake, to be sleepless, to be careful, to be vigilant." It is the direct opposite of "falling asleep".

This same Greek verb *agrupneo* translated as *watch* in all these verses we've just read is also translated as *vigilant* in 1 Peter 5:8.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: (KJV)*

So, we all need to be awake, watching and be vigilant that the comforts of this world, the hectic pace of this world, and the distractions of this world do not lull us into slumber. To a point where we do not discern and understand the events happening all around us.

In Germany back in the 1930's, many German Jews simply did not heed the warning signs of Hitler's speeches, mandates and actions. They simply did not think that the coming Holocaust could ever occur in the modern world. While some German Jews did heed the warning signs and safely emigrated out of Germany; most Jews remained in Germany. They were German. They were born in Germany. Germany was their home. They simply could not believe that something so horrible could ever happen to them. When they all finally woke up to the fact that Hitler really did mean what he had written in Mein Kampf and what he had continuously proclaimed concerning his plan to exterminate them all, it was too late. Their means of escape and salvation were gone.

So, brethren, are we asleep? Are we discerning what is happening here in this country and in the world? Do we realize just how quickly this country, all that we possess, all that we enjoy, all that we know could be undone in a matter of days and weeks? Do we realize just how close we could be to the fulfillment of all the prophecies we've heard about for decades and just how close we could be to the return of Jesus? Brethren, let's strive to never fall asleep spiritually.

The third question to help determine if we are redeeming the time is:

3) Are we comparing ourselves to the world and to others?

The world today is on a steep slope of decline morally, spiritually and ethically. God Our Father has called us out of this world, and we are not to be part of the world. The world has become so evil and so corrupt and so sinful, that we can begin to feel that our sins are not all that bad. At least we're not like the world. Do we begin to compare ourselves to the world? Do we use the world as our yardstick on righteousness? In Luke 18. Christ instructed and warned His disciples not to compare themselves with others. He warned His disciples by telling them a parable that we can read in Luke 18.

Luke 18:10 *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13) And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. (KJV)

So, the Pharisee was comparing himself to others who were considered very sinful people. In doing so, the Pharisee lifted his own heart with pride. He recounted all the reasons why he was righteous, and by comparing himself with others that he knew would be sinning worse than him, he set himself up to look good, at least to himself. That's what happens when we compare ourselves to others who, we believe in our minds, will not measure up. It's just false security. In Revelation 3 the Apostle John

wrote about an attitude in some of the called-out ones in the Church that results in this false security.

Revelation 3:14 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God [God Our Father];*

15) I know thy works, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would you were cold or hot.

16) So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

17) Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18) I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
(KJV)

The moment when we begin to believe that we truly are righteous, when we begin to believe that we really are just not all that bad. When we begin to believe that at least we're not like the rest of the world, we start on a journey down the road of self-deception.

In 2 Corinthians 10 the Apostle Paul warned the Corinthian congregation not to *compare themselves among themselves*.

2 Corinthians 10:12 *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*
(KJV)

If we want to compare ourselves, then let's compare ourselves to Christ and to God Our Father. We'll always come way, way, way up short. Comparing ourselves to God Our Father is the great equalizer. None of us compares to our Heavenly Father, the Most High God.

In Daniel 4 after Nebuchadnezzar recovered his saneness after seven years of living like an animal in the field, he praised God Our Father and proclaimed that nothing compares to Him.

Daniel 4:34 *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*

35) And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He [God] does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of

the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are You doing?
(KJV)

Let's reread verse 35 in the New Living Translation.

Daniel 4:35 *All the people of the earth are nothing compared to Him. He does as he pleases among the angels of Heaven and among the people of the earth.*
(NLT)

Comparing ourselves to others will stifle spiritual growth because it gives us an out. It gives us an excuse not to continue to strive for perfection and to settle on a lower standard of conduct. Instead, let's always compare ourselves only to our Heavenly Father and to Jesus the Anointed One. In that way, we'll always come up short.

The fourth question to help determine if we are redeeming the time is:

4) Are we overcoming our sins?

Looking back over the past year, have we overcome any of our sins? Are there persistent sins and weaknesses that we just haven't rooted out yet? Do we feel that we are stuck in neutral? Do we sometimes feel overwhelmed?

Romans 12:17 *Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*

18) *If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.*

19) *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.*

20) *Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head.*

21) *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* (KJV)

Let's reread verse 21 in the New Living Translation.

Romans 12:21 LT) *Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*
(NLT)

In both Romans 6 and in Romans 12, Paul wrote that we shouldn't feel overwhelmed by sin. We should not be conquered by sin. Rather, we should conquer sin by *doing good*.

Romans 6:12 *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

13) *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God [God Our Father], as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God [God Our Father].*

14) *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

15) *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

16) *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

17) *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

18) *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (KJV)*

Let's continue reading the parable of the sower and the seeds in Mark 4.

Mark 4:7 *And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. (KJV)*

Continuing in verse 18)

18) *And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,*

19) *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (KJV)*

There are so many distractions in the world that can begin to choke out the importance of overcoming. As Christ said, *the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things* can bring us to the point where we just don't care to fight against the stream anymore. We cease to swim upstream against the current. And as soon as we cease struggling and swimming and trying and overcoming, the devil and his demons along with the world will float us downstream away from our Heavenly Father.

God Our Father is more powerful than our adversary, the devil. He is more powerful than any sin. Our Heavenly Father will give us this power to overcome through His Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [the people and the evil in the world] because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. (KJV)*

Brethren, let's strive to repent and to overcome our sins, to vanquish them, to leave them behind in our lives. Let us never grow tired of overcoming, and let's ask our Heavenly Father for His power to help us in overcoming.

The fifth question to help determine if we are redeeming the time is:

5) **Are we procrastinating?**

Are you a procrastinator? Do you abide by the saying “Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?” Do we find ourselves telling ourselves that we have loads of time left to do what we need to do? There will always be tomorrow. Do we always wait until the last moment to do everything? Do we cram for tests? Do we pull all-nighters at work in order to finish a project? Do we procrastinate in overcoming? The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6 that today is the time for salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:1 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God [God Our Father] in vain.*

2) *(For he says: I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)* (KJV)

Let's reread verse 2 in the New Living Translation.

2 Corinthians 6:2 *For God says, 'At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.' Indeed, the 'right time' is now. Today is the day of salvation.* (NLT)

Paul didn't write that tomorrow or next week is the day of salvation. It is the present time. It is today.

The question is: What will you do with the rest of your living years? The time is now. But there can always be an excuse. We won't turn there but:

Proverbs 26:13 *The slothful man says, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.* (KJV)

The procrastinator will always come up with an excuse for not doing something. Do we find ourselves coming up with our own excuses?

Let's go back to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:1 *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins , which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

2) *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*

3) *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*

4) *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

5) *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*

6) *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*

7) *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*

8) *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*

9) *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

- 10) *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.*
11) *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*
12) *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*
13) *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

The five foolish virgins procrastinated. They thought that they had time to obtain oil before the bridegroom came. They thought that they could get serious about preparing for the bridegroom when the arrival of the bridegroom was announced. There would be some advanced warning given, some advance notification. They could buy oil for their lamps then. But the bridegroom came when they had not prepared themselves. Again, all of the virgins, both the five wise and the five foolish, were asleep. The five foolish virgins had not redeemed the time because they had not prepared themselves. While they were away preparing themselves, the bridegroom came, and the door was shut. When they returned, it was too late.

Are we one of the five wise virgins or one of the five foolish virgins? Are we procrastinating, putting off to the future what we should be doing in the present? Do we feel that we have plenty of time? Are we redeeming our time in preparing ourselves for our Heavenly Father's Kingdom and for Jesus' return? Are we studying? Are we praying? Are we becoming more Godlike in our thoughts, in our words and in our actions and deeds? Is that our goal each day?

Jesus showed a sense of urgency in His ministry. Jesus did not procrastinate with the mission that His Father had given to Him.

John 9:4 *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (KJV)*

Jesus knew that He only had a relatively short time to perform His ministry. But Jesus knew the exact date of His future death. He knew years in advance when He would have to die for the sins of mankind -- Passover of 31 AD.

All of us have an expiration date. All of us will die. We just don't know when, we don't know where, and we don't know how. Knowing this should give us a sense of urgency, not complacency. But do we still procrastinate, thinking that we have all the time in the world.

In Luke 12 we read a story about a man who thought he had all the time in the world.

Luke 12:16 *Then He [Jesus] told them a story: "A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops.
17) He said to himself, 'What should I do? I don't have room for all my crops.'
18) Then he said, 'I know! I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I'll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods.*

19) *And I'll sit back and say to myself, "My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!"*

20) *"But God [God Our Father] said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?'*

21) *"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God." (KJV)*

The rich man thought he had all the time in the world. He was going to expand his wealth. He was going to enjoy his riches. He was going to eat, drink, be merry, and enjoy life. Little did he know that he would die that night.

Let's not procrastinate any longer. We do not know just how much time we have left in this life. Let's not be like the five foolish virgins who procrastinated in preparing themselves until it was too late. Let's not be like the rich man who had all the comforts and ease in life just to find that his life was cut short.

In today's sermon, we have explored redeeming the time that we have left through five questions, which are:

- 1) **Are we becoming weary in well doing?** Do we find ourselves growing tired of the constant daily battles to remain vigilant against sin, to do what is good, to always take the correct and righteous fork in the road, to always show love and kindness to others, to always please our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, and to always draw closer and closer to Them?
- 2) **Are we asleep?** Do we find ourselves growing desensitized and numb to the evils of the world? Are we allowing the cares of the world to take our focus off of our Heavenly Father and His work in us? Are we starting to drift away, sleeping at the wheel as we travel toward the Kingdom?
- 3) **Are we comparing ourselves to the world and to others?** It is dangerous spiritually to compare ourselves to the world and to compare ourselves among ourselves. Our only true measuring yardstick is our Heavenly Father and Jesus, His Son. Measuring ourselves against Them will always leave us way short. There is no pride when we measure ourselves against Them.
- 4) **Are we overcoming our sins?** Have we been examining ourselves to see where exactly we are in our spiritual growth? Have we made progress in that area of our lives? Are we developing the inner desire to follow our Heavenly Father and to cease the sins that beset us?
- 5) **Are we procrastinating?** Do we find ourselves putting off until another time (some undefined time in the future) when we'll get around to deepening our relationship with our Heavenly Father and with Jesus and when we'll get around to preparing ourselves for the Kingdom? Now is the day, not tomorrow, not next week, not next month, not next year.

Are we truly redeeming the time that God Our Father has given to us that we have left in our lives to develop a close relationship with Him? Are we making the most of the opportunities that He has given to us? One of my favorite sayings which puts all this into perspective is:

If it is important to you, you will always find a way. If it is not important to you, you will always find an excuse.

Brethren, are we finding a way to resolutely overcome our sins and to deepen our relationship with our Heavenly Father, or are we finding an excuse to procrastinate in doing these things?

If we were told we only had a few days, or a few weeks or a few months to live, what would we do? Getting closer to our Heavenly Father and preparing ourselves spiritually would take on new meaning in our lives. We would have an overwhelming sense of urgency in our lives.

So, let's renew our efforts to redeem the time that our Heavenly Father has given in our lives. Let's focus on truly preparing ourselves to be valuable instruments in His Hands, to do His will in all we do, to be in His Kingdom, to be His very sons and daughters, to love one another and show kindness to one another, and to live our lives as Jesus lived His.

Brethren, are you redeeming the time?