

How has the month of December been for you. Hectic, I would guess – running here, running there, gulping meals, pulling hair. Has time become a cruel master of our lives? What is more important to us, saving time or saving our lives?

Think of how many manufactured items are advertized as “time savers.” Think of how many people work at a feverish pace to “beat the clock” – gathering as much as they can as quickly as they can so that they can enjoy an early retirement and a life of leisure. But what happens so often? Human beings become so wound up that they suffer heart attacks! People lose their lives every day on the nation’s highways because they have been trying to “save” a few minutes of “their” time.

What’s wrong with us? Don’t we realize that life is more than time? If God does not teach us the real purpose of time, it will never serve us well for life.

LIFE IS ABOUT TIME –

I.

Not ours, but God’s. When God breathed the breath of life into man at creation, He had already created time to serve His living creatures on earth. Before man fell into sin there was no thought of time running out. But then, when mankind became slaves of sin and Satan, all people were seized with the gripping sense that their time and life would come to an end.

Yet, even as the wages of sin were working spiritual and physical death in man, God promised to work a work in time that would restore life to mankind. Paul writes that God performed this work **“when the fulness of the time had come.”** What do we know about the “fulness of time”?

For centuries the world had been divided into thousands of independent nations and states, isolated by different languages, cultures, laws, and religions. But during the last 400 years before Christ, the great empires of the Greeks and then the Romans brought

civilization to a large area of the world. Communication improved as the various conquered nations began to share common languages – mainly Greek and Latin.

Especially after the Romans conquered the world, as prophesied in Daniel 7 (7-23), a large area of the world was given order and security, allowing people to move about and share news and thoughts with greater ease than ever before. Into this politically stable period of world history God sent His Son and the life-saving message of His Gospel.

What about the moral condition of the world at the time God sent His Son? Of course, the law and order of Roman rule did nothing to stop the corruption of the human heart. All the wisdom of the Greek and Roman philosophers and worldly-wise of the previous 300 years had failed completely. The Roman world was filled with moral filthiness and sins which were shameful even to many of the heathen writers of the day.

The Epicureans had given their time to the pursuit of pleasure. The Stoics had given their time to abstaining from material things, as if evil lay in things. The Athenians were “too superstitious” as Paul declared. The Romans worshiped the state or the emperor of the moment. In short, the Roman world had denied the Creator and worshiped various creatures instead.

Man had fallen to the low-level Paul described in the Scripture lesson you heard earlier. Having denied God, many searched in the darkness of the times for life and found nothing but despair. Even the Jews, who had been given the testimony of the prophets concerning the promised Seed of the woman, had fallen victim to a superstitious and materialistic world. Few of them hoped for the promised Savior.

II.

But thanks be to God! For, while He is the One who lends us time, the time, remains His to bring LIFE to the dead and dying souls of sinners! At just the right time – HIS TIME – God sent His Son to us with life in Himself to give to us! The poet T.S. Eliot put it this way:

“Then came, at a predetermined moment,
A moment IN time and OF time,
A moment not OUT OF TIME but IN TIME,
In what we call history; tearing,
Bisecting the world of time,
A moment in time, but not like
A moment in time,
A moment in time, but time was made
Through that moment: for without the
Meaning there is no time,
And that moment of time gave the meaning.”

(from “The Tyranny of Time” by R. Banks)

In other words, without the momentous life of God’s Son, planned in eternity, there would have been NO TIME AT ALL after man’s fall into sin. For it was not possible that the holy God should permit sinful man to live, unless satisfaction could be made for his wickedness. Out of His abundant love and mercy God commissioned His only Son to be the payment for our sins!

Christ was sent and came to be **“under the law”** with us. He came to earth as true God, yet true man **“coming out of” a woman** by the miracle of the Virgin Birth! As true God and true man, Christ lived under the law and kept it perfectly FOR US – in our places! As a sacrificial Lamb He bore the sins of the whole world on the cross, shedding His own holy, precious blood and suffering all the punishment we deserved. He paid the ransom price for our souls, so that we who were far from Him and without LIFE, might be **“adopted as sons,”** and possess spiritual and eternal LIFE through faith in Him.

We are now living nearly 2,000 years after the coming of the world’s Savior; but we are still living in the fulness of God’s time. The truth is that, even though the world does not know it, created time continues only so that God may continue to bring LIFE to those who are still dead in their sins. For the believing child of God, his earthly moments and days will end. But the LIFE we have been given

through Christ will never end.

God has given us time on this earth only so that we may find LIFE and obtain LIFE ETERNAL through a living faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. LIFE is the master of time. We need to define and think of time in terms of the LIFE we are being offered now and forever in Jesus Christ.

If the Light of Life in Christ has dawned upon our hearts through faith, then let us strive by God's grace to arrange the time God has loaned to us, so that we may grow in His grace, rest in His peace, and serve Him in love unto LIFE everlasting! Amen.