



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN
OF THE
OLSEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Redeeming the Time

By Kyle Pope

This week I turned sixty. That doesn't seem as old as it used to, but even so, it will take awhile to sink in. It will take some getting used to, to say "I'm sixty."

Moses, in the prayer recorded in Psalm 90, declared, **"The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away"** (Ps. 90:10, NKJV). He wasn't describing a hard and fast rule, but a general tendency. Moses himself lived to be one hundred and twenty and in good health—"his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deut. 34:7). This side of the flood, human life on earth does not last for centuries, but only about seventy years, or **"threescore years and ten"** (as the King James put it).

Moses's words bear an amazing correlation to modern conditions in America. Before Covid-19, from 1960-2020 the average life expectancy in the US rose steadily from 70 to 77. It hasn't always been that way. In 1860 it was 39! Nor is it the same everywhere. Today in Japan it's 84. In Great Britain it's 80.

So, "I'm sixty!" What does that mean for me? At twenty, it was easy to feel "ten feet tall and bulletproof," but at sixty it is burying one's head in the sand to imagine life on earth will continue indefinitely. David prayed, **"LORD, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am"** (Ps. 39:4).

We have no indication that David, like Hezekiah, was told in exact terms how long he had to live (cf. 2 Kings 20:1-6; Isa. 38:1-5). David is praying that he would not take his life for granted and presume to have more time than he really did.

James, through the Holy Spirit warned of this attitude. He wrote:

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead

you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that” (Jas. 4:13-15).

This is not teaching that we should live with a morbid fear that death is around every corner. Jesus has released the Christian from **“bondage”** to the **“fear of death”** (Heb. 2:14-15). Like David’s prayer, James is teaching disciples of Christ to live in recognition of God’s providential care and the brevity of our own lives.

Paul expressed this idea with a figure of speech he used in two different epistles in different contexts. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, he urged them to **“walk circumspectly,”** or **“carefully”** (ASV), not behaving as **“fools but as wise”** (Eph. 5:15, NKJV). He urged them not to **“be unwise but”** to **“understand what the will of the Lord is”** (Eph. 5:17). In the midst of this admonition he told them they should be **“redeeming the time, because the days are evil”** (Eph. 5:16). In a similar way, he urged the Colossians to consider their influence on non-Christians. He commanded them to, **“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside”** (Col. 4:5a). Part of this involved how they speak. He explained, **“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one”** (Col. 4:6). In the midst of this teaching, he told them also that they should live **“redeeming the time”** (Col. 4:5b).

Redemption involves the “regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt” (*New Oxford American Dictionary*). How does one redeem time? The Holy Spirit, through Paul, is teaching Christians that we have a debt,



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or an obligation when it comes to the use of the time entrusted to us. Whether our days are many or few the Lord has given them to us with the expectation that we will use them wisely. We must not waste our time. There is work to do in service, devotion, and obedience to Him. Using time wisely doesn't clear our debt to the Lord as it relates to sin, but the careful use of time in recognition that it is a trust bestowed upon us by God, Paul describes as **"redeeming the time."**

So, "I am sixty." How much time do I have to redeem? Only the Lord knows, but sometimes family trends can offer clues. My father lived to be seventy-seven. If I live as long as he did, I have seventeen years, or 204 months, 6,205 days, or 148,920 hours! That's quite a bit of time. Yet, one of my grandfathers died at sixty-two. That would leave me only two years, or twenty-four months, 730 days, or only 17,520 hours. That's not as much time to redeem, is it? Perhaps I have inherited some longevity from my great-grandparents. My father's grandpa lived to be eighty-eight. I met him once. If I lived that long, I have twenty-eight more years, or 336 months, 10,220 days, or 245,280 hours. Do I have that much time? My mother's grandma lived to be 100! I was with her on her last birthday. That would leave me forty more years, or 480 months, 14,600 days, or 350,400 hours. That's a lot of time! Do I have that much? Only the Lord knows.

What's clear is I have no time to waste! I need to redeem whatever time I have. Peter told his readers, **"For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries"** (1 Pet. 4:3). To apply this to myself, I have no time for crankiness, self-pity, or selfishness—I have **"spent enough"** time on those things. I must redeem my time! The Wise Man urged one to **"rejoice with the wife of your youth"** (Prov. 5:18b) and the psalmist declared, **"children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is**

a reward" (Ps. 127:3). I have no time to waste. I must show my love to my wife and family. I must work to influence their faith and encourage their love and service to the Lord. I must redeem my time! Paul told the saints in the church in Rome to **"Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves"** (Rom. 12:10, NIV). I have no time to waste. I have a commitment to serve the congregation with which I am identified. I have brothers and sisters who need my encouragement, edification, and love. I must redeem my time! Peter taught, **"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"** (1 Pet. 3:15, NKJV). I have no time to waste. I must stand ready to share my faith with those around me. I must redeem my time!

All of this assumes that **"all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation"** (2 Pet. 3:4b). We can't presume that. Peter warned, **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the**



archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

That means that at any moment the Lord could return, this life will come to an end, and each of us will be called to account for how well we have redeemed the time we have been given.

night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Paul told the Thesalonians, concerned that their loved ones who had already died had missed out on the blessings of the gospel, that at any moment:

. . . The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an

“I am sixty!” How will I redeem the time the Lord may give me? That isn’t a dark and gloomy thought to ponder. Paul wrote that we should live, **“knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed”** (Rom. 13:11). Whether the Lord grants me many days or few; whether the Lord returns before I see even another day, may I (and all children of God) recognize the blessing we have been given to have time in service to Him and live everyday **“redeeming the time.”**



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