

SIGNS OF A MATURE CHURCH Having the Time of Your Life

TEXT: Ephesians 5:15-17

Key Word: Time

Key Thought: Using Our Time in the Best Way Possible

Many years ago I heard the expression,

"Time is of the Essence"

I didn't know what it meant. It sounded to me like a new perfume. Since then I've increasingly learned that time is a very important part of our lives. I even studied and taught a course on "time management." I now understand that we are not to manage our time in order to fill up our calendar more. It is simply to direct the way we use this vital part of our lives.

There is a sign that I read recently that said,

"Each moment is a meeting place of two eternities."

"I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it.
Forced upon me - can't refuse it.
But it's up to me to use it.
I must suffer if I lose it.
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute,
But eternity is in it."

Anonymous
12,000 Religious Quotations
p. 442

*** According to a press dispatch, there were two men by the names of William Bell and Jacob Rosenwasser, who were sentenced to die at Ossining, New York. It was spring time and the jail officials were about to turn their clocks ahead one hour. These inmates valued an hour of life so much that they requested the standard time to be used instead of the daylight-saving time for their appointed hour of death. How precious even an hour may seem under certain circumstances. ***

Time is of the essence for the church of Jesus Christ. I've asked Christians all over Canada if they believe, Jesus (our Groom) could return for His Bride at any moment. Mostly everyone I speak with says, "Yes," without blinking an eye.

Just before Paul speaks about the relationship of a husband and wife, including the thought of the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:26,27), he speaks on how the Church should consider its time.

I. BE VERY CAREFUL ON HOW YOU LIVE (Ephesians 5:15)

II. MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY (Ephesians 5:16)

III. UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S WILL (Ephesians 5:17)

I. BE VERY CAREFUL ON HOW YOU LIVE (Ephesians 5:15)

Our lives are often the only Bibles that people will read. The Edmonton Journal carried an article (March 1992) stating that people were losing their respect for the clergy. We cannot blame the public for that problem. When a person is slothful in their lifestyle, they open the door to all kinds of evil.

Read: Luke 12:35-48

Q: "Why are there so few men with whiskers in heaven?"

A: Because most men get in by a close shave."

Bob Phillips

"The World's Greatest Collection of Clean Jokes"

p. 36

God requires more from His Church than He does from the world. We are to be the light of the world. THE CHURCH SHOULD BE SETTING THE STANDARD FOR THE WORLD - not the world setting the standard for the Church.

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

16. By their fruit you will recognize them."

Matthew 7:15,16

It will take more than man's wisdom to unveil these deceptions from hell. Many things are not as they appear. The devil has his fallen angels are working all over our country and they are totally deceiving people about what is truth.

I. BE VERY CAREFUL ON HOW YOU LIVE (Ephesians 5:15)(Contd.)

"The Spirit clearly says that in the later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

2. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron."

I Timothy 4:1,2

The Church of God for the most part in North America is following the **doctrine of appeasement** that has been described as . . .

"Not the road to peace, but surrender on the installment plan."

Christians have given up many of their rights to ungodly lobby groups. **Most of these groups represent a minority of the voice of Canada but they defeat us by their persistent arrogance.**

The Church in Canada is trying to find its proper place in all of this. One of the concerning developments decades ago was the **"seeker's club."** The message of the Gospel was portrayed in contemporary terms and styles to appeal to the unsaved without requiring of them to change their ways.

One church boasted of a 50% in attendance since they began using Country & Western music. I remember being told years ago that if you play Country and Western music backwards you get your home, your spouse, your children and your dog back! Isn't it better to follow how the Holy Spirit taught us to reach the lost? The Bible tells that God doesn't change. It was the preaching of the pure gospel, with signs and wonders following that impacted the world at the time of the apostles.

We must *"be very careful and very wise in what we do."*

II. MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY (Ephesians 5:16)

The enemy has used "our lack of time" as a weapon against the church to keep us inactive in our society. Have you ever said . . . "I don't have the time to get involved?"

What we are probably trying to say in a shrouded way is, "I'm not willing to (or I cannot) readjust my priorities." Have you ever wondered why evil seems to prosper?

"The only thing needed for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing."

II. MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY (Ephesians 5:16)(Contd.)

We have a municipal election coming up that will decide who will be our Mayor and counselors as well as our School Board Trustees. I encourage you to search out their platforms? Don't let them just tell what needs to be improved in our city - Find out how they expect to improve it. Whom will they involve getting the work done? Who will they be a voice for? Whom will they NOT speak out for?

What about serving in the Church? Are you satisfied to attend week after week but not inquire about where you can serve with your gifts and talents? Have you ever thought about giving God a tithe of your time? Test yourself on how much time you watch TV compared with how much time you give to God. **Is there a need for adjusting some priorities?**

The KJV says,

"Redeeming the time."

Ephesians 5:16

The word "**redeem**" means to "**buy up**" or "**to rescue from loss.**"

"Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity." (redeeming the time - KJV)

Colossians 4:5

We should be allowing God to direct the time of our day in a way that will be profitable in reaching the "**outsiders.**" In doing so, you'll need to be aware of your manner of speech to these people.

The Scriptures go on to say,

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Colossians 4:6

Remember, that people can swallow things much easier when it is sprinkled with a rich topping of words stemming from the grace of God.

III. UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S WILL (Ephesians 5:17)

The word that is used for "**will**" is simply following the direction that God has determined for our lives.

*"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord;
and he delighteth in his way."*

Psalm 37:23 (KJV)

When we surrender our will to the Lord, it is a sign of our spiritual relationship (maturity) to God.

Jesus said,

*"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister
and mother."*

Mark 3:35

*"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who
sent me and to finish his work."*

John 4:34

"I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."

John 5:30

Paul testified about when King David was given the throne from King Saul saying,

*"I have found David son of Jesse a man after my
own heart; he will do everything I want him to do."*

Acts 13:22

One question that I've been asked over the years is . . .

"How can I know God's will for my life?"

These people are very sincere. They want to know what God has determined for their lives. What if God requires a radical step of faith on your part? It may be easy to shove it off by saying, "that can't be God leading me in such a direction."

III. UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S WILL (Ephesians 5:17)(Contd.)

I believe that God's will has never changed for His Church. We are to use our time effectively to reach the unsaved and get them grounded in their new faith.

"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of them that he has given me, but raise them up at that last day.

40. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:39,40

7359 Not Anxious to Return to Africa

*** Not long ago a missionary had come home from Africa to bring three of her children that they might go to school in America. After she had found homes for them, through the help of our Woman's Missionary Union, and all arrangements had been made for their care, she made her reservations to return to Africa.

The evening before she left, a group of fine Christian people gave her a farewell reception. One of them said to her, *"I am sure you are anxious to get back to your mission field."*

For a moment there was a frown on the missionary's face and then very solemnly she answered, *"No, I am not anxious to get back. The place of which I am going is dirty. There are no electric lights, there are no modern conveniences whatsoever. There is no pure water, and I will be cooking on my wood stove, and while I cook I will be weeping because my children are so far away.*

*I will be desperately lonesome for them and wondering if any of them are sick. When I remember that it will be three years before I see them again, I will be tempted to tell the Lord that I can't stand it and am going home. **No, I'm not anxious to get back, but I am more anxious to do the Lord's will than to do anything else.** I would be more miserable here than there."****

C. Roy Angell

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Date: Oct 23/22

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: When I Look into Your Holiness - G

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Colossians 4:5; Colossians 4:6

III. UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S WILL (Ephesians 5:17)

Psalms 37:23 (KJV); Mark 3:35; John 4:34; John 5:30; Acts 13:22; John 6:39,40