

THE

HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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WHEN TIME SLIPS AWAY.

The strongest men in the world cannot stop this thing we call Time. No matter how hard they try, their best efforts fall short. They cannot even slow down the hands of the clock -- which man invented himself (ironic, isn't it?). Tick, tick, and Time marches to a steady beat and then it is lost forever. It's gone and we can't get it back! How sad then when we spend precious time doing nothing worthwhile. We just lie there and watch the minutes turn into hours and we accomplish nothing for our Lord. How very dismal when we let time slip away!

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What happens when we let this precious time slip away into darkness? What is so terrible when we delay the decision to serve God? What is wrong with waiting until the last minute concerning spiritual things? with procrastinating over life's duties? The scriptures reveal that when we let time slip away we essentially waste God's gift, we neglect spiritual matters, we lose important opportunities, and we disappoint our Heavenly Father. Let us look a little closer at each of these items.

In all honesty, time is a gift of God. The fact that we are alive at this very moment is a gift from our Creator. On the average many of us will live to reach 70 years (Psa. 90:10). Some will live longer, some will live considerably less. But when we compare our life span to eternity, then our life is brief indeed (Psa. 39:4,5). *"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* (Jas. 4:14) Thus we do not have very long to live on this earth and we certainly cannot afford to waste the precious minutes given to us from God.

Friends, we must use our time wisely. We must be prepared for when Christ comes again. We must be like the five wise virgins who had oil in their lamps and were ready when the bridegroom appeared (Matt. 25:1-13). We must learn from the five foolish girls who let their time slip away and who at the last minute thought they could make preparations but

they failed. A friend once told me, "May today be well spent for the Lord because I have traded a day of MY life for it!" What a sobering thought. *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Psa. 90:12).

If we let enough time slip away, we soon neglect spiritual matters. We become indifferent about religion. We figure that if it has slipped this long, then who will care if it slips another day. Idle time is a dangerous weapon for the devil. He knows how prone we are toward becoming apathetic, lazy, negligent, uncaring, forgetful and ignorant. These are the qualities that make for a negative spiritual life. This is exactly what Satan wants us to do: let time slip away!

How often have we looked back at the time we foolishly wasted and wished we could have done things differently. Perhaps this explains the urgency that Solomon conveyed in Eccl. 12:1 when he wrote: *"Remember NOW the Creator in the days of thy youth ..."* For all of us today, and especially the young people, it is very easy to get caught up in the affairs of this world with all its carnal allurements of sex, drugs, money, popularity, etc. Engaging in these items only make us neglect the spiritual matters of life.

When we let time slip away, we also lose valuable opportunities. Good deeds and kind words and other chances to exemplify the Christian life go undone. We use the procrastinator's motto: "I'll do it later". We let **today** slip by for

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tomorrow's unfulfilled promises. Like the Rich Fool, we believe that tomorrow will always be there, so why not rest now (Lk. 12). Then before we know it, the time has flown away and it is too late. The opportunity is gone!

How often have we been guilty of sin and we knew we needed to repent but we convince ourselves, "I'll change tomorrow"? But we let the time continue to tick away and suddenly we find we cannot change. Our heart has become "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"(Heb. 3:13). Friends, please don't let the time slip away when we have the chance to: help another who is in need, to nurture a child, to edify the congregation, to visit the sick, and most importantly, to obey the gospel. There will be no more convenient season than now (Acts 24:25).

Finally, we greatly disappoint God when we let time slip away. He has a mission for each one us: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"(Eccl. 12:13). When we waste time on trivial pursuits, it means we are not keeping God's commandments and therefore,

not doing as God would like for us to do. This makes our Father very unhappy (Isa. 59:12-15). When we let time slip away, it means we are not preaching the Gospel to others nor studying God's Word nor living a righteous life.

Today's world is filled with evil times and that is why we must make good use of every second God gives us. *"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* (Eph. 5:15-16) Please do not let any more time slip away!

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Two men killed the king of Israel and brought his head to David. What did David do with the head?
2. Where does the Lord prepare a table in Psalms 23?
3. What kind of sacrifice are believers urged to offer continually, according to Hebrews?
4. To which church did the book of Revelation record, *"I know thy works, and thy charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience"*?
5. What did Jephthah give to the Lord for allowing him to defeat the sons of Ammon?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Payday for a hired man working for an Israelite was supposed to come how often?
EVERYDAY (Lev. 19:13)
2. Who is seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places? CHRIST (Eph. 1:20)
3. For what did the disciples ask that caused Christ to give the Lord's prayer?
TO BE TAUGHT HOW TO PRAY (Luke 11:1)
4. What book of the Bible records the birth of Isaac? GENESIS (Gen. 21:3)
5. What did Hilkiah, the priest, find in the rubble of the temple being restored?
THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF MOSES (2 Chr. 34:14)

A PICTURE OF PEACE

What exactly is "peace"? Is it to be in a place where there is absolutely no noise nor trouble nor hard work? Can we find such a place in the world today? Perhaps real "peace" means something different.

The story is told (by Catherine Marshall) of how once there was a king who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures. But there were only two he really liked, and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of peace.

The other picture had mountains, too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky, from which rain fell and in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all.

But when the king looked closely, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest -- in perfect peace.

Which picture do you think won the prize? The king chose the second picture. Do you know why?

"Because," explained the king, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Similarly, true peace means that despite living in today's cruel world, we still have comfort in our hearts because of the presence of God in our lives! RAY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
July 6 - 11	Valley, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 11 - 13 (Fr-Su)	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL 7:00pm Fri & Sat 10:30am & 5:00pm Sun	D. Burnham (Fri) Curtis Smith (Sat) J.D. Nash (Sun) Chad Prince (Sun)
July 11 - 13	Lake City Church near Atlanta, GA 7:30pm E.S.T.	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 13 - 16	Oak Grove Church Herrick, IL	Jim Pritchard (Shawnee, OK)
July 13 - 18	Temple Hill Church Smithdale, MS	Bill Yarbrough (Sierra Vista, AZ)
July 20 - 25 (Su-Fr)	Oak Grove Church Woodland, AL 7:00 week nights	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 21 - 25	Becton, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 25 - 27	Freefield Church State Line, MS	Bill Yarbrough (Sierra Vista, AZ)
July 27- Aug. 1 (Su-Fr)	Napolean Church Woodland, AL 7:00 week nights	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)

