

Christ Community Covenant Church
Stewardship of Time: Saved, Spent, Managed, Wasted – or Redeemed?
Pastor Dave Scherrer - October 14, 2012

Today we take off into some specifics on the idea of life stewardship. We talked last week as we kicked off this series and the Faith Moving Forward Stewardship effort about how God has a claim to all that he has created. All the created cosmos is His, but some of creation has fallen, some of creation has turned its face and heart from God. Genesis 3 records humanities' fall and it also tells us of the curse that falls upon us, including the curse of death. And that includes every one of us. And so the first responsibility for us as life stewards is to give back to God our very lives and all that goes with that. Have you made that decision? Have you stopped the madness and given to God what is His, your life and will?

Through a simple life yielding prayer, we can deal with our death earning sin once and for all by surrendering to Christ - but it is still a battle day by day to yield the small things to God. This morning we are going to chat about how we spend our time. Life Stewardship as it applies to how we spend our time. Our ability and our decision to find time for the most important things in life is part of honoring God and us. And yet, this may be the hardest discipline of all in our fast paced performance based culture.

'Time' is a tough one to master. There are so many claims on our time, and actually so many important claims. A thousand decisions a day impact how we spend or don't spend our time. There are hundreds of time saving devices, like the microwave and the cell phone but it doesn't seem like we have more time.

Illustration-Time spent in a lifetime: We spend an average of 6 years, 10 months eating; 5.5 years in a car (6 months at red lights!); 13 – 15 years in the bathroom; 9 years watching TV...

Time is ever ticking and the Bible has lots to say about it.

Let me begin with a disclaimer of sorts. I am not saying I have everything figured out in these stewardship issues. I don't. And this subject of 'Time' may be my least effective discipline. I will chat a bit more about that. But together we have to address these important issues of life stewardship. I was going to try to find an expert in time stewardship to share this morning but I ran out of time. So we will just have to face this together. It's important, I think that sometimes we lose track of where we spend our time.

What do we know about time? Discussion

I agree with you on these things. Let's review a couple of these things:

First, we all have the same amount of time in a day.

We can't save time, put it in the bank so to speak and use it later. We can't really blame time though sometime we try. Time is just doing what it does. It passes, never to come by again. Have you noticed how some people seem to get so much done? How some people seem to be wise beyond their years? How do some people seem to be enjoying the fruit of the spirit and I seem to not get victory over anger and jealousy and wanting things and approval?

"Where do they find the time?" we ask. I honestly think that some people have mastered where and how they spend their time. They have ordered their private world and in doing so it has changed their lives.

Next as we talked about as a group we all have to give an account of our time:

Second, we will all have to give an account of our time

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Matthew 12:35-37

The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people *will give account for every careless word they speak*, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

We can waste, spend, invest, manage our time but we cannot replenish it

James 4:13-14

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Romans 13:11-14

Besides this, you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.]

We know this but we try to cheat time don't we. Somehow we think that I can make up for yesterday by doing twice as much tomorrow. We even translate that into our spiritual lives: we might say to ourselves, “I can get to that God after I enjoy myself for a while. God says he will forgive me.” Maybe. One thing for sure is that when you finally and fully come to God you will remember those days as wasted days. Let's press on, we're running out of time.

The 'Tyranny of the Urgent' problem

Have you heard that statement “the tyranny of the urgent?” The urgent things press out the important things. The urgent things are not necessarily the bad things, they just come up and they are urgent. They must be done right now. Usually they are something important that we should attend to – the proverbial “squeaky wheel.”

By not dealing with the important things, they become urgent and push out other truly important things. It is quickly becoming important to blow out our sprinklers and to make sure the exposed water pipes around our houses are winter-proofed. Around here this is important. But this issue could soon become urgent when a water pipe breaks and your basement is flooding. Then the other important things you wanted to get done that day won't get done because you will be up to your ankles in ice cold water.

You know what the crux of the matter is. There are two things really. First we must come to terms with what are the truly important things in life, and then employ the self-discipline to set aside the time you need to get them done. Here is a word of advice. “Often good is the enemy of best.” And maybe it is even harder for Christians than for those who do not know God like we do:

With respect to time, Christians are a good deal worse off than many. This is especially the case if they live in a large city, belong to the middle-class, have managerial or professional positions, or combine outside employment with substantial household responsibilities. Christians and people raised in a Christian setting tend to take their work more seriously than others. They also place a high value on family obligations. And they are often in the forefront of community and charitable associations. The upshot of this commitment to work, community and family is, as my eldest son commented: ‘Christians are like trains—always on the move, always in a rush, and always late. *Robert Banks*

There is 'time' and then there is 'time'

Kronos: time in general, a period of time.

Kairos: a moment in time...the emphasis being upon the uniqueness of that particular moment.

Let's look again at our verse from Romans we looked at a moment ago:

And do this because we know the time ... 'In this case Paul uses the word Kairos to refer to a fixed time. Kairos may refer to a season of time, a time of opportunity, a fruitful time, the fullness of time or times, a welcomed time, a time of salvation, or a difficult time. As Christians we understand that with the coming of Jesus, a unique *kairos* has dawned, one by which all other time is qualified. And someday there will be an end of Kairos, an end of time as eternity and timelessness become the norm. So until then:

Ephesians 5:15-16

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Just a quick commentary, we have seen how evil the days are. Jessica Ridgeway's death, the deaths of the teens at Columbine, the senseless tragedies that include a homeless man freezing to death on the streets of Denver just this month, these are evil. We cannot live indifferently to these evils and not feel challenged to make the most of our time. The test is on that we walk in a manner worthy, that we participate in being salt and light in a dark world.

Principles from the life of Christ

Our relationship with the Father demands priority

Jesus got away to a lonely place.

Luke 5:16

But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

What does that mean to us? It means that even Christ could not get by without spending time - regular, solitary devoted time with His Father in quietness. That is our model. Snatching time on the run with God is good. But remember, sometimes good is the enemy of best. And of course Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing. That is done not by abandoning all other things, but by making all other things prayerful and carrying them in Kingdom manner. Begin today. Find for yourself regular moments to be alone with God. Take time with the most important relationship in the universe. Devoted, regular, quiet, separate time. With practice you will get better.

Ministry opportunity: At 10:30 Cindy Oury teaches a class for women that is an outgrowth of her daily retreat ministry. You can find help with this discipline here, and call Mike or me and we will find the time to chat with you about this.

The fact is there will always be more to do than we can ever accomplish whether we are talking about needs, work, leisure, travel, or you name it. ***The need, however, does not constitute the call.***

Need does not necessitate the call

The Lord Jesus, who only had about three years of ministry on earth, could have been totally frustrated, but He never appeared to be in a dither over time and tasks. When I study the Savior's life I see that while He was tremendously busy and often exhausted at the end of the day, His life was never feverish or rushed. He always seemed to have time to love and minister to people, sometimes spending an extended time with just one person like the woman at the well or giving up a good night sleep for a conversation with Nicodemus. He would accept interruptions in His schedule as God's opportunities. A case in point is found in the story of the feeding of the five thousand. The plan was to get away to a secluded place to rest awhile, but when He saw the people who followed, He was filled with compassion because they were

like sheep without a shepherd. He used the situation as an opportunity to both teach them and give an object lesson to His disciples (Mark 6:30-44).

Yet, consider this about the Savior's ministry. He cared deeply about people and their hurts. He was full of compassion. Yet for every hundred he healed, there were thousands He did not heal or minister to. Was it because He did not care? Of course not. It was because He knew *the need did not constitute the call*. He constantly walked in dependence upon the Father and His time and ministry were regulated by the Father's direction or will. Perhaps the most obvious illustration of this is found in the gospel of Mark:

Mark 1:32-39

When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered by the door. So he healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. Then Jesus got up early in the morning when it was still very dark, departed, and went out to a deserted place, and there he spent time in prayer. Simon and his companions searched for him. When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." He replied, "Let us go elsewhere, into the surrounding villages, so that I can preach there too. For that is what I came out here to do." So he went into all of Galilee preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

That there was tremendous need with the people clamoring for His ministry is obvious in this passage. Peter tells us that everyone was looking for Him, but He was never driven simply by the needs or by His own compassion or abilities or sense of importance, though He was the very Son of God Himself. Instead, He prioritized His life: He put first things first. He took time to get alone with the Father (vs. 35), sought the Father's will and enablement from the standpoint of His humanity, and did the Father's will. Simon's behavior in this passage is so typical of people and gives us a good example of our problem. While Simon would never have thought of the Lord as uncaring, the implication is that Simon saw the Lord's absence or time alone in prayer as unproductive, perhaps even as a sign of wrong priorities when in reality it was just the opposite. Simon looked only at the needs. Jesus saw the needs, but He saw them through the Father's will. Simon was impressed by a sense of their importance with so many flocking after the Lord and His disciples. After all, it was at the home of his wife's mother, but the Lord was not so impressed. Simon was perhaps driven by a desire for obvious results, numbers of people healed, but not the Lord.

Sin is always a waste of time

Being good stewards of time does not mean we cannot enjoy the many good things God gives us in this life. Indeed, 1 Timothy 6:17 teaches us God "richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment."

1 Timothy 6:17

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

But we must also realize that in our enjoyment, we are not to fix our hope on the fleeting uncertainties of this world whether comforts or pleasure or power or position or wealth, but on God alone (1 Tim. 6:17; Ps. 62:1-12). To fix our eyes on things of this world is sin and a terrible waste of our limited time.

Let me give you one practical hint; an admonition really about rest. Sabbath rest.

Sabbath rest is God's design to replenish ourselves by devoting time to rest and re-creation so that we can return to the other 6 days with a renewed heart and mind of the Kingdom tasks ahead of us. Here is my take away for you.

Use your Sabbath to be renewed with God and concentrating on simply being with Him. Come here to be with Him. Do the tasks of this day with Him. Enjoy the people you meet on this Sabbath day as though

they were gifts from Him for your enjoyment. This will give you and the King joy and you will find that the rest of your week falls better into place.

Our perspective is everything – have a Kingdom mindset!

Jesus' perspective is one of the things that set Him apart, His relentless Kingdom commitment. He was attentive to His Father and Jesus only did the will of the Father.

John 8:28

So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me.

Though the world was still full of people with needs, at the close of His earthly ministry, just before the cross, He could pray, "I glorified you on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). God had given Him enough time to do what He had called Him to do and that was what mattered. There were no boxcars laden down with unfinished tasks over the shoulder of Jesus.