

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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July 16, 2023

Volume 43, # 29

Teach Us to Number Our Days

"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalms 90:12).

An item's value is increased when it is in limited supply. The Bible tells us our days are numbered. When we realize this, we have made the first step to gaining a heart of wisdom. This wisdom tells us we must make the most of our days, knowing that they will someday come to an end.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). To redeem means to buy back. We can do this with objects, but we can't do this with time. Once time is experienced, it is gone forever. Nonetheless, we are commanded to redeem the time. This is done by spending the time we have left in our lives doing the will of God. What are some things we should be spending our days doing?

1. *Seeking first the kingdom of God.* "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Our priorities reflect our values. When we spend our time pursuing worldly pleasures, we are sowing a harvest of destruction to be reaped on the Last Day. However, when we pursue things pertaining to God's kingdom (prayer, attending worship services, studying our Bibles) we are "redeeming the time."

2. *Do good to all men.* "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). As we have opportunity, we are to do what we can to help others. This work is as simple as sending cards and calls of encouragement, helping with cleaning, laundry, and yard work, giving someone a ride, etc. As Paul wrote, we are to redeem the time because "the days are evil." The proper way to respond to evil is by purposely doing good.

This good service comes with a promise from God: "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10).

3. *Glorify God.* "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This should be a guiding principle in our lives. Does the way we choose to spend our days bring glory to God? Do we pursue things that identify us as His servants, or do we involve ourselves in things that bring reproach upon the cause of Christ?

4. *Spread the Gospel.* "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). There is no better way to spend our time than to help a soul secure their salvation. That is an investment with eternal dividends and a victory that will be enjoyed forever.

5. *Be Saved from Our Sins.* "For He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). It is of little value for us to save the souls of others if our own soul is lost eternally. The best thing that one who is lost can do with "today" is to become a Christian.

Our days are numbered; therefore they are valuable. Let us be determined to live them with a purpose, "redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

- Heath Rogers

Share a Quote ...

I would rather have thousands to say to me at the Judgment, "We heard you preach and You hurt our feelings," than to have just one lost soul to say, "I heard you preach, but you did not tell me the truth."

- John T. Lewis

Bless the Lord at All Times (Psalm 34:1)

According to its title, David wrote Psalm 34 during the time he was fleeing from Saul. Seeking refuge, he fled to Gath. When discovered there, David faked insanity to avoid harm. He then escaped to the cave of Adullam. Although his family and 400 loyalists would eventually join him, he would have been there alone for a time, which is perhaps the background of this writing. In verse 1, he says, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." David was facing so much adversity. If we are correct with the time frame of events, he is a fugitive, isolated, and living in a cave. The possibility of receiving help from the Philistines has fallen through. Yet, despite his circumstances, he would continuously ("at all times") praise God. Adversity did not stop his desire to worship. Elsewhere, in Psalm 146:2, the Psalmist says, "While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being."

David also says he would praise him with his mouth (1b). He did not just silently praise God in his heart — he would express his praise in such a way so others might hear him. Psalm 92:1-2 says, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night."

Today, like David, we should praise God at all times — no matter what happens. We should bless Him when prosperous or poor, happy or sad, healthy or sick, both publicly and privately.

- Mike Johnson

All Are Accountable To God!

John wrote in his gospel account, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14). The unique identification term, "Word," certainly suggests a medium of communication, and to the Christian and Bible student, the great power associated with God's being is not overlooked. When God spoke, His purpose was definitely accomplished: "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." (Genesis 1:3). "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host." (Psalms 33:6). "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalms 33:9).

The "Word" became flesh: the complete and final Revelator of the mind of God (the will and thought) became flesh and blood when conceived by the Holy Spirit in the body of Mary (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:21). As a man, dwelling among men, He was subjected to temptations (Matthew 4:1-10), "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15). The fact that He did not sin demonstrates to all observers that the body of flesh can be restrained and controlled. If it could not (because of the way he was made or what he inherited), the apostle Paul would never have described his determination in the way that he did: "I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:27). Yes, the flesh can be brought into subjection by exercising discipline.

The life of Christ in His earthly ministry demonstrated that man has the potential and responsibility to live without committing sin. Jesus, our example, did (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). But man fails in his attempts to reach sinless perfection (1 John 1:8, 10). Some translate man's inability to attain sinless perfection as a "born with" or "inherited" weakness that makes man sin (he "must"). Doves of people like to refer to their desires to sin as an "innate depravity" rather than resulting from negligence or wrong choices of their own. John's epistle makes it clear that man has a choice to sin or not to sin: "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin." (1 John 2:1a). Who controls whether or not I sin? I do.

The Bible is clear that man cannot truthfully deny that he sins. In view of this fact, man is responsible and accountable when he chooses to sin. The gospel of Christ provides the solution, and man can be forgiven only in Christ. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7); "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14).

For those in Christ who sin, John declares: "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:1b-2).

If you have never become a believer in Christ, hence alienated from God because of your sins, you need His forgiveness, graciously offered to you through belief and obedience to His gospel (John 3:36; Mark 16:16; etc.). If you have sinned as a Christian, confess such to God as you pray for forgiveness (1 John 1:9). The point is this: All are accountable to God! Solomon wrote, "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). May we assist you?

- Gary Smalley

- * "When we examine God's Word, we realize that His Word examines us!"
 - * "Don't worry about knowing people, just make yourself worth knowing!"
 - * "Good people are not guaranteed heaven, forgiven people are!"
 - * "God does not ask your ability or your inability. He asks only your availability!"
 - * "The kind of pride that kept Saul from appreciating David is still a threat to the unity of God's people (Philippians 2:3-4)!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)