

EXCELSIOR NEWSLETTER

Excelsior Classical Covenantal Community

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“Wise Use of Time” by Kathy Strevel

I will borrow from Elisabeth Elliott's thoughts and words from her book, *Discipline, the Glad Surrender*, in our time today. If I say anything that sounds "well-put" it probably came from her and not from me.

Lover of All, I hold me fast by Thee,
Ruler of time, King of Eternity
There is no great with Thee, there is no small,
For Thou art all, and fillest all in all.

The newborn world swings forth at Thy
Command,
The falling dewdrops fall into Thy hand.
God of the firmament's mysterious powers
I see Thee thread the minutes of my
hours.

Amy Carmichael

"I hold me fast by Thee, Ruler of time, King of Eternity" (I'm going to stay close to You), is the expression of faith that my state of temporariness is understood only in the infinite context of eternity. Not even the tiny dewdrop lacks the care and attention of the Lover of all. Shall I think then of any detail of my earthly life--even so little a thing as a minute of one of my hours, as without meaning? How will I answer to my Master for my time?

I lived for 35 years with one who thought it was a sin to be late. To cause others to wait for you was equal to stealing from them one of their most precious commodities--time. Time is a created thing--and a gift. We cannot make any more of it. We can only receive it and be faithful stewards in the use of it.

"I don't have time" is possibly a lie we tell ourselves covering, "I don't want to." We have time--24 hours a day, seven days a week. All of us have the same portion. One mother told her teenage son, "If the President can run the country on 24 hours a day you ought to be able to get your room cleaned." Demands on our time are different, of course, and it is here that we as disciples must look to our Master and ask, "What do You want me to do, Lord?" There

Please Note:

There will be no more Theology class this semester.

Shakespeare Days

“Hamlet”

Tuesday, January 20th

Students who will be participating need to plan to come to Lit. class that day, 2-3pm.

Then we will all migrate to the Moeller's house and settle in for some fun, some food, and a movie. If you expect your students will participate, please reply to Rachel Green as soon as possible.



will be time, depend on it, for everything God wants us to do. Both sobering and encouraging words come from the oft-quoted passage in Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven."

There is always enough time to do the will of God. For this we can never say, "I don't have time." When we find ourselves frantic and frustrated and harried (that was a favorite word of Mike's to use on me when he saw I was "Out of control"--taking on more than any human could possibly do and neglecting what was truly needful.) This has been a problem in my life--a besetting sin, actually. When we find ourselves thus, it is a sign that we are running on our own schedule and not on God's.

Someone recently sent me a quote from a Greek theologian, Zodhiates, having to do with our perceived lack of ability but I think we can apply it correctly to this subject: "No one can know what is small and what is great in this life, in which every cause starts consequences that reach into eternity." How often do we think of the long-term ramifications of our puny everyday choices--of whether we get out of bed at a reasonable hour, habitually spend time with God, are good stewards of what God gives us by keeping our possessions picked up and put away (so we can find them when we need them and they won't be stepped on and broken), do the laundry with regularity so all will have proper clothes for each day's activities (without the distress that comes from, "I don't have clean underwear" or "Will you iron a shirt for me quickly?") Do we ever consider that those in our family are learning from us, are developing habits based on our habits--whether it's always running late--a terrible way to live--or needing to stay up late-late in order to get things done--another bad habit. I have chosen these two because they are what I have struggled with so much in my life. Your habits may be different--inability to get out of bed before 8am or a lack of desire to be hospitable--to open your home and share yourself with others. Whatever choices we make there are consequences and these consequences reach into eternity. We read last week in Romans that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." And Pastor John's sermon on Sunday pointed us to this truth with sobering force: "We will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give account"--This is the "big picture" of consequences that reach into eternity.

We are given the present within which to choose Whom we will serve, knowing that this moment affects the next and we are accountable for it.

From Elizabeth Elliott:

"My times are in Thy hands. Quite often they seem to be in other people's hands. When I wish for solitude and no interruptions, the phone rings, people

come, mail or the UPS man arrives. Do I imagine that the interruptions come as a surprise to the Lord? Are thy not, just as much as the planned things, a part of the pattern of things that work together for good?

Flying in a small plane over vast farm country one spring evening, I was fascinated by the beauty of the patterns created by the contour plowing. There were stripes in varied shades of earth and greenness, circles and swaths and curves for miles and miles on every side. But the most beautiful designs grew out of the interruptions--a tree here, a pond there, a hill, a rock, a river. The plowman had had to bend the line each time he passed one.

'Lord, when there are interruptions, it seems that the disposal of the time I had planned so well has slipped out of my hands. Help me then to remember that it has not slipped out of Yours. In Your hands, these unexpected things will be fashioned into an unexpectedly beautiful design.'

The sum of our job here on earth is to glorify God. This is also what Jesus came to do. How did He do it? Shortly before He was crucified He said to His Father, "I have glorified Thee on earth by completing the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

There were endless demands on Jesus' time. People pressed on Him with their needs so that He and His disciples had not time to eat, and He would go away into the hills to pray and be alone. There must have been everywhere He went, those who wanted to be healed who could not get to Him because of the crowds, or who learned too late that Jesus was passing by, or who had no one to carry them to Him or sent to ask Him to come to them. How many "if only's" He must have left behind, how much more that he 'could have' done. There must have been things Jesus himself would have liked to do during those three packed years of His public ministry, but He was a man, with a man's time and space. yet he took time to rest, withdrawing to the hills to pray alone and sometimes taking His disciples to lonely places where they were free of the crowds. Still He was able to make that amazing statement, "I have finished the work You gave me to do." He made no claim to have done what He wanted to do. The claim was that He had done what he had been given.

This is an important clue for us. The work of God is appointed. What was given to the Son to do was the will of the Father. What is given to us to do is also His will. "My burden is light," Jesus said. It is the addition of burdens God never meant us to carry that weighs us down. Learn to say no. Frustration is not the will of God. Of that we can be

quite sure. There is time to do anything and everything that God wants us to do. Obedience fits smoothly into His given framework. One thing that will not fit into it is worry. Worry is refusing the given. Today's care, not tomorrow's, is the responsibility given to us, apportioned in the wisdom of God. Often we neglect the thing assigned for the moment because we are preoccupied with something that is not our business just now. How easy it is to go give only half our attention to someone who needs us--friend, little child or husband--because the other half is focused on a future worry.

"My times are in Thy hands" has become a part of my life. When the Lord has left me in an agony of waiting over some decision, these words have given me rest. His timing is always perfect, though it seldom seems so to me, for my temperament longs for previews of coming attractions."

There have been times in my life when waiting was indeed agony--but when the Spirit of God spoke peace to me through His Holy Word. I remember when we were waiting for the results of Mike's liver biopsy and how the whole process that should have only taken a couple of days stretched on into a couple of weeks with a second biopsy being required. Fear mixed with frustration hovered perilously near the surface of my being but God's kindness to me overruled through the love of the family of God and our daily Bible and devotional readings--always pointing us to the One Who held our times in His hand.

Read Ephesians 5:1,8-16

"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

See then that you walk circumspectly--accurately or precisely with great care; not as fools, but as wise--To live morally is to live wisely. Biblically, a fool is not so named because of intellectual limits, but because of unbelief and the consequent abominable deeds. He lives apart from God and against God's law and cannot understand the truth or his own condition. Certainly we are to avoid living like a fool; redeeming the time--the Greek word for time denotes a fixed, allocated season, likely refers to one's lifetime as a believer. We are to make the most of our time on this earth

fulfilling God's purposes. We should be aware of the shortness of life.

In Mr. Simeon's commentary on this verse he says there is nothing wherein circumspection is more needful, than in the improvement of our time--"It is lamentable to think how much time is lost for want of a real desire to 'redeem' it. Even in relation to earthly concerns, there are very few who are good economists of their time. But, in reference to their eternal interests, men let ten thousand opportunities pass them unheeded and unimproved. Many have passed through half their lives, and not yet begun to seek the salvation of their souls. And of those who have not been altogether so careless, how many are there whose spiritual interests are at a very low ebb! They have not sufficiently watched the lapse of time, or been duly impressed with a sense of its value."

We should therefore set ourselves instantly to 'redeem the time.' What is it that has robbed us of our precious hours? Let us guard particularly against it. Has pleasure allured us by its charms? We should give up its gratifications as far as they interfere with spiritual welfare. Has business too much occupied our time? We should give to it what is necessary in our situations but not allow it to come before our spiritual exercises. And if the duties of our jobs only leave a small space for reading and prayer, we should be the more earnest in setting aside the whole of the Lord's day to such. Visiting and company are found in general to be among the chief destroyers of our time: against these we should resolutely set ourselves. From sleep too we should redeem all that has been given to mere indulgence. Our whole time is little enough for the concerns of our souls; and we should allow as little of it as possible to run to waste or to pass off in unproductive channels.

No greater folly can be conceived than for persons to give little regard to their eternal state and to trifle away that time which they ought to be using in the concerns of their souls. Let those who know not the value of the soul condemn a careful, a circumspect walk and improvement of time. To walk with the greatest possible care and exactness is to "walk, not as fools, but as wise:" for "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

This article was a talk that Kathy Strevel gave last summer.

Preparing for January...

January Clean-Up

January 9th - Duley family

January 16th - Smith family

January 23rd - Snyder family

January 30th - Strevel family

January Headmasters

January 9th - Anthony Mathenia

January 16th - Steve Crampton

January 23rd - Robert Green

January 30th - Denvil Crowe

January 9th - **Chick-fil-A**

January 16th -

Backyard Burger

January 23rd - **Pizza**

January 30th - **Pepper's**

Lunch:

