

Redeeming The Time

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[0 : 0 0] Well if we could for a short while this morning if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5 and if we consider the words of verse 15 down to the verse mark 17. Ephesians 5 and verse 15 where Paul says look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. But particularly the words of verse 16 where it says make the best use of the time or redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Well over the past few weeks as we've been living in lockdown and coping with COVID-19 and even dealing with distancing many of us have been unable to go to work or even leave our home and it's left us with time on our hands which in many ways it hasn't been a bad thing because time is probably one thing we were all struggling to find because prior to this crisis our lives were non-stop they were 24-7 they were just going super fast and the result was that we were so we were so busy that we didn't have time for anything or even anyone and you know it's so sad because we were all rushing around we were all busying ourselves filling our lives with everything else but you know whether we want to admit it or not the Lord has slowed us right down and the Lord has given us this opportunity to consider how we've been using our time because this God-given period of lockdown it has given us time it's given us time to do things that we maybe didn't do before time to spend with our family time to eat together it's given us time to spend with one another it's given us time to maybe contact friends that we haven't spoken to in a while time to relax time to read time to rest but more than that God has given us this period of time to stop time to think time to take stock time to reflect time to pray and even time to consider what the Lord is saying to us and you know my friend what the Lord is saying to us is what we've just read in his word this morning because the Lord is speaking to us through his word this morning and he's reminding us that our most precious commodity in life is time our most precious commodity in life is time and this coronavirus pandemic it has repeatedly reaffirmed that message to us not only in the fact that our lives have slowed right down but also in the reality that lives have been lost because you know while homes and families in our nation many of them have been reminded of the preciousness of time but there are other homes and families that have been reminded of the shortness of time my friend at this time in our lives the Lord is speaking to us the Lord is speaking to us and he's speaking to us loudly and clearly but the question is are we listening are we listening to what the Lord is saying because this morning the Lord is reminding us through his servant Paul that we need to be wise with our time and we need to make the best use of our time because time is precious and time is short time is precious and time is short and you know with that I just want us to see that Paul draws our attention to three things about time the boundaries of time the barriers of time and the buying of time the boundaries of time the barriers of time and the buying of time so we look first of all at the boundaries of time the boundaries of time Paul says in verse 15 look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil do you know when Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus he wrote it not to challenge or confront any particular

heresy or division within the church but rather Paul wrote this letter in order to encourage and exhort the church to live like Jesus and to love like Jesus in the time that they've been given in this world and in these verses Paul calls us to be wise with our time and to make the best use of our time because the days are evil the days are evil he says of course that doesn't mean that the first century in which Paul lived was more evil than any other period in history rather Paul was affirming that the days are evil and they've been evil since the day Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden because since the fall since that first moment when sin entered into our world and into the heart of mankind since then we've had to be wise with our time and make the best use of our time because there are boundaries now on our time you know it was after the fall that God said to Adam and all his descendants after him that from the dust you came and to the dust you shall return my friend it was because of that evil day when sin entered in that the wages of sin became death and in that moment there were boundaries of time put upon all of us and because of the wages of sin Adam was told there are men in the Garden it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment and since then time has become precious because time is short time is limited and the Bible calls us to be wise with our time and to make the best use of our time because of the boundaries the boundaries of time and you know that's what Solomon taught in his sermon called

Ecclesiastus the book of Ecclesiastus is Solomon's sermon and in that sermon Solomon is emphasizing that because of the wages of sin we are all going to our long home which is the grave and Solomon says that there are many things which will take place in our lifetime but they will all take place within the boundaries of our time to be born and our time to die Solomon says in those well-known words to everything there is a season a time for every purpose under heaven a time to be born and a time to die but you know this is something we're prone to forgetting isn't it and yet our circumstances of life and even the scriptures relevance for us in our lives is that these things have been repeatedly emphasized to us that we're only going to live within the boundaries of our appointed time we're only going to live within the boundaries of our appointed time that's what Job confessed in Job 14 that his days are determined and the number of his months it's with God because God has set his time limit and he cannot pass them despite all the sicknesses the sufferings and the sorrows which Job experienced in his life Job acknowledged that God has determined the boundaries of his time and that he would not live one day more or one day less than his appointed time in this world and you know you see David expressing the same sentiments in Psalm 139 a beautiful Psalm and which David acknowledges that before he was even formed in his mother's womb before he had even taken his first breath in this world every single day of his life had been written and accounted for in God's book you know my friend it's no wonder

David confessed in Sam 31 my times are in your hands my times are in your hands but you know I think there was no one who witnessed the boundaries of time more than Moses because the disobedience of the children of Israel it meant that a generation of Israelites were going to die in the wilderness therefore over that 40-year period of going from Egypt to the promised land out of the 2.2 million Israelites who came out of Egypt you could say that at least one million of them never made it to the promised land they had to be buried in the wilderness and you know that's why Moses wrote those words in Sam 90 when he said our life is like a tale that is told our life is so short and it passes so quickly it doesn't take us long to reach 70 or 80 or even a lot of barrier of our time and you know that's why Moses prayed over three and a half thousand years ago he prayed the most relevant prayer in every generation teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom and you know that's what Paul is saying here be wise with your time make the best use of your time because time is short and time is precious my friend this morning your days are numbered and God has set a determined boundary on your life God has set a limit to your time in this world and the clock is ticking I need not remind you of that fact the clock is ticking and the time is coming when you love no more time and you'll one day step out of the scene of time into the great eternity and you'll either be in heaven or in hell forever you know that's why the gospel message is so urgent because every moment in time is precious every day of your life my friend is a gift from God where his mercies they are new each morning because greatest his faithfulness my friend this is the day this day this is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it and you know I hope and pray that there will be rejoicing in heaven today over the fact that you have come to faith and repentance in Jesus Christ because you know the third of May 2020 it will never happen again so don't waste it don't waste your time don't waste your gospel opportunities don't waste your life no seek the Lord while you have time call upon him while you have time come to him while you have time because now is the accepted time today is the day of salvation now is the accepted time today is the day of salvation and so Paul he's drawing our attention to three things about time the first thing is the boundaries of time and then secondly he speaks about the barriers of time the barriers of time he says look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil you know we don't need to go far to be reminded of

[13:18] the barriers of time because we're reminded of them almost every day we have daily news reports giving us an account of how many people in our nation have died of the coronavirus in the past 24 hours and with that there's no way of us escaping this reminder that there are boundaries to our time in this world but you know when it comes to the barriers of time these things are a little more subtle because as you know there are many barriers which cause us to waste our precious time and to squander our short time in this world and that's why Paul calls us to look carefully how we walk because we're to be wise in the way that we live and we're to be wise with our time he says look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise then he goes on in verse 17 do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is and you know Paul's challenge to us as to how we use our time and how we spend our time he said this is this is relevant for us this is relevant for us and you know it's actually relevant relevant for us this particular time in our lives because as we said some of us have more time on our hands than others but the question that arises is how are we spending our time are we making the best use of our time are we being wise with our time or are we being foolish with our time and if we're being foolish with our time then we're wasting our time and if we're wasting our time we're wasting our life because my friend our life our chief end is not to gratify and enjoy ourselves for our short lives and fritter away our time no my friend our life your precious life your chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever we're to live life my friend with an eternal perspective because we've only one life and soon it will be passed and only what's done for Christ will last my friend we need to live life with an eternal perspective because there are so many barriers of time which waste our time and squander our time in this world I'm sure we're familiar with the phrase that the devil makes work for idle hands but you know it was C.S. Lewis who wrote in his *Scrutae Bletters* which is a brilliant book about a senior devil who instructs a junior devil called Wormwood teaching him how to succeed in the art of temptation and C.S. Lewis he wrote that the safest road to hell is a gradual one the gentle slope soft underfoot without sudden turnings without milestones without signposts and you know it was in relation to that that C.S. Lewis he gave the illustration of this of three demon apprentices who were trained by the devil on how they might be able to populate hell and one demon said we can tell people that there's no God but the devil said no that won't work people know better then the next demon he said we can tell them there's no hell again the devil said that won't work people know better so the last apprentice demon he said I know we can tell him that there's no hurry and the devil said that's it exactly tell him that there's no hurry and you know that has been the devil's ploy since the beginning of time

tell him that there's no hurry tell him that there's plenty of time tell him that there's no urgency tell him that there's always tomorrow tell him that they can come another time at a more convenient time in their life tell them that there's tomorrow you can read your Bible tomorrow you can spend time with God tomorrow you can pray tomorrow you can come to Christ tomorrow and yet the word of God says you do not know what tomorrow will bring what is your life your but a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes what is your life my friend what is your life but as you know we can't blame the devil for everything because even though the devil makes work for idle hands procrastination is the thief of time and it's so true isn't it because we can waste our precious time and squander our precious time by our idleness or by being consumed by what has been described as binge-worthy TV or by scrolling through social media or shopping for hours on end now there's nothing wrong with any of these things in and in and off their proper place but when they cause us to waste our time procrastination then becomes the thief of our precious time and you know one thing that always challenges me about my time is that I don't know about you but I get a weekly report of my screen time usage on my mobile phone I get it every week where each week my phone tells me how many minutes a day I have spent looking at the screen on my phone and you know I often think to myself if my Bible had that function of telling me how long I've spent reading it or or praying through passages or studying what the scriptures are saying would my Bible time would my screen time of my

Bible be more than the time I spend on my phone but it's not really the distractions of the devil and the procrastinations of precious time that are barriers in our in our life there's also worry was it not Jesus who said which one of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life therefore do not be anxious is Jesus but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness my friend even our worries can cause us to waste our precious time and to squander our short time that we have in our lives and I know worrying is something we all do but the Bible repeatedly exhorts and encourages us not to worry and not to be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication to make a request made known unto God why because we're to cast all our cares on him because he cares for us he cares for us my friend we need to be wise and we need to be wise and careful with the barriers of time because they can cause us to waste our time and squander our short time in this world and so Paul is throwing her attention to three things about time the boundaries of time the barriers of time and then lastly the buying of time the buying of time well read our text again look carefully then how you walk not as unwise but as wise making the best use of the time because the days are evil therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is you know as Paul calls us to be wise with our time and to make the best use of our time he says that we must redeem the time although it's translated as make the best use of the time it's translated there as that in the ESV the word that Paul actually uses is the word redeem and as you know the word redeem means to buy back it's the image of a slave being bought and a slave being released from slavery it's the language of redemption the language that the Bible often uses to describe our salvation that we're redeemed we're bought back and we've been released from our slavery to sin not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but by the precious blood of Christ we're redeemed but how can we redeem time how can we buy back our time because no one can buy time whether with money or with blood that's why time is the most precious commodity that we have because no one can buy it back and you know Sam 40 49 affirms that to us we'll be singing it in a moment because Sam 49 it's the most solemn Sam in the Psalter because it calls us to consider our life and Sam 49 it reminds us that death comes to all of us whether we're rich or poor young or old and the Samus says no one can buy time no one can redeem time the Samus says yet none of these his brother can redeem by any way nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay in other words no one can buy time no one can redeem time so so what does Paul mean then when he says redeem the time because the days are evil if we can't buy time as the word suggests and there are boundaries and barriers to our time how

are we to redeem time well of course we've redeemed time or we make the best use of our time when we use our time for the glory of God and the furtherance of his kingdom my friend if we're going to be wise with our time the time that we've been given then we must work within the time that we've been given if we're going to be wise with the time that we've been given then we must work within the time that we've been given so now what Jesus said to his disciples we must work the works of him who sent me while it is day for the night is coming when no one can work we must work we must work it's a must of necessity it's an imperative for the church and for the Christian because as long as we're in this world Jesus says we must work we may retire from our day job we may hang up our hat we may leave our desk but whilst we're here we have our work to do and we have to put our hand to the plow and invest our time and give our all in serving the Lord for his glory and for the extension of his kingdom my friend we must be about our father's business because as Jesus says the night is coming the night is coming when no one can work in other words we have an appointed number of days in which we must work we've been given a lot and a lot of time to spend and be spent for the Lord we've been given this time and time is short and eternity is long therefore we must work and we must work in our congregation we must work in our community we must work for the glory of

God and the extension of his kingdom there's a work to do my friend and every one of us can do something you know we can't be distant disciples we can't be motionless members we can't be lazy learners no our Lord says we must work because the night is coming when no one can work and you know my friend if we're going to redeem the time if we're going to be wise with the time that we've been given even at this time this time that we've been given if we're going to be wise with this time that we've been given then we must work within the time that we've been given we must work within the time that we've been given you know it was Jonathan Edwards he was a great preacher and theologian in the 18th century and he was even used by God during the Great Awakening but at the age of 18 Jonathan Edwards he wrote down 70 resolutions 70 resolutions in which he promised he would read all these resolutions and live by them all the days of his life he read them every week and in fact he did do that he read these resolutions every week and he lived according to these resolutions and you know you can read them for yourself you'll find them online Jonathan said Jonathan Edwards 70 resolutions but I draw your attention to them because I love resolution number five where Jonathan Edwards he writes resolved never lose one moment of time but seize the time to use it in the most profitable way

[27 : 24] I possibly can and you know what a resolution to have because that's how we're to live that's what the Word of God is calling us to do this morning never lose one moment of time but seize the time to use it in the most profitable way I possibly can my friend if we're going to be wise with our time and make the best use of our time then we will be conscious of the boundaries of time we'll be concerned about the barriers of time and we'll be committed to the buying of time if we're going to be wise with our time and make the best use of our time then we'll be conscious of the barriers of time we'll be concerned with the barriers of time and committed to the buying of time but you know with all this talk about time the shortness of time the preciousness of time the limits of time the use of our time all this talk about time you're I can't get out of my head that 19th century him by Charles Mason it was a him about the shortness of time and the length of eternity and I'm sure I've told it to you before but it you know it sums up everything this passage is saying to us this morning about time now Charles Mason he wrote life at best as very brief like the falling of a leaf like the binding of a sheaf be in time be in time fleeting days are telling fast that the die will soon be cast and the fatal line be passed be in time be in time if in sin you longer wait you may find no open gate and your cry be just too late be in time be in time fairest flower soon decay youth and beauty pass away oh you have not long to stay be in time be in time while God's spirit bids you come sinner do not longer roam lest you seal your hopeless doom be in time be in time time is gliding swiftly by death and judgment draw a knife to the arms of Jesus fly be in time be in time oh I pray you count the cost air the fatal line be crossed and your soul in hell be lost be in time be in time sinner heed the warning voice look make the Lord your final choice then all heaven will rejoice be in time be in time come from darkness into light come let Jesus make you right come and receive his life tonight be in time be in time be in time my friend if you're going to be wise with your time and make the best use of your time then you'll be conscious of the boundaries of time you'll be concerned about the barriers of time and you'll be committed to the buying of time time is short so be in time be in time may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray together all our gracious God we give thanks to the for even the encouragements and the exhortations of scripture we thank the

Lord that our God who not only warms to us but a God who also warrants us and a God who reminds us that our time is short that we have barriers and boundaries in this life and Lord we pray that we would take heed to them that we would be aware of them and that we would seek to redeem the time for the days of evil that we would realize that our time in this world is short and that eternity is long and that therefore we would seek the Lord while he's to be found and call upon him while he is near for Lord thy word reminds us so solemnly that that we are only passing through that our life is but a vapor that for over it the wind of pass and it away is gone and off the place where once it was it shall no more be known all Lord hear us then we pray forgive us we ask and Lord we pray that there would be rejoicing in heaven today over sinners repenting cleanses we plead for Jesus sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Sam 49 Sam 49 in the Scottish

Psalter and we're singing from verse 7 verse 6 down to the verse Mark 9 as we mentioned earlier Sam 49 it's it's a very solemn Sam in the Psalter where the Sam is just calling us to listen he's calling us to give ear to what he's saying and what he's reminding us is that it doesn't matter who we are or what we have in this life our life will come to an end and not one of us can buy our time back that's what he says he says Sam 49 of verse 6 who are who are they be so whoever they are who are they be that in their wealth their confidence to pitch and boast themselves because they are become exceeding rich yet none of these his brother can redeem by any way nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay their souls redemption precious is and it can never be that still he should forever live and not corruption see so we're saying Sam 49 from verse 6 down to the verse mark 9 to God's praise anyway nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay their souls redemption precious is and it can never be that still he should forever live and not corruption see