

Monday morning quarterbacking...is the act of rethinking how things **SHOULD** have been ...or **COULD** have been done in a given situation.... once you have the benefit of seeing how things turned out..

“If we would have known that the defense was going to blitz on that play... or that they would be leaving our best receiver wide open on the right side.... we would have certainly done **THIS**.....”

It is particularly easy to do this when observing others... lives... but I venture to say... you probably do it quite a bit with your own life as well...

Main problem with Monday morning quarterbacking..... (whether it be on talk radio... or in the break room at work).... is that it never changes ANYTHING.

You and I have quite a **different** situation....

Because GOD has already told us (in advance) exactly how things are going to turn out....with every type of play we choose to run in our lives.....

He has done that (here in His Word) and He has done that so that we can wisely **craft** our decisions accordingly...

So that we can **MANAGE** the **CLOCK** of our lives..... in a way that lines up with what we know the final outcome of this game is going to be....

This morning.... we want to talk **Redeeming** what time you have left.... Buying it back from Satan.... who is out to have you **waste** the rest of your life on things that will **ROB** you of eternal rewards in the KOG.

The **LAST** thing you will want on your deathbed... is to look back on how much of your **life went down the drain**..... in self-exultation..... in slothfulness.... or worse.... in debauchery.....

The message today is an exhortation on how to **LIVE** for maximum profit...and infinite enjoyment..

How to **RESCUE** the time.....God has apportioned to us.

By **TRADING** in...worthless pursuits for what is eternal.

It is a message I need to hear as much as anyone in the room...

### **Ephesians 5:15-20**

"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. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing

and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

If you are a Christian.... it means.... you have been already been **rescued**... from what you rightfully deserve.... which is to REMAIN under the wrath of God forever and ever in hell...

Instead... God has shown mercy on you.... and by letting you hear the good news that He loves you so much He SENT His only Son to die that death FOR you... in your place.... so that if you will BELIEVE on the Son... you will not perish but HAVE everlasting Life....

As a Christian... God has bought you back from destruction... you are Redeemed.

But He has given you the responsibility to BUY BACK the days you have left on earth... so that you can enjoy the fruit of your life in heaven forever....

### **Redeem Your Time**

#### 1. Realize that Life is Intentionally **Hard**.

One of the "nicest" (and yet most deceptive) lies floating around today..... is the philosophy that **Life is Good**.

That is nothing short of whitewash over a tomb.

**GOD** is good.....but these days we live in are EVIL.

When God declared His creation, and people made in His image.. to be very good..... back in Gen....LIFE **was** good!

Life was GOOD... because... there was **no sin** in the world.... consequently there was **no death**... no **cancer**..... no war.....no divorce..... no abuse..... no addictions..... no perversion...

no poverty.... no hunger.... no **loneliness**....no **depression**..... no anxieties....

There was only **complete liberty** to enjoy the wonderful creation of God ...under His loving rule....forever...

**That world is** going to be restored one day.....and it will be even better than the original....because the risen Christ will be dwelling in our midst.... and His own light will illumine us day and night....

But for now.... (even though God gives us many undeserved blessings in the midst of our afflictions.....which we should be thankful for....

Blessings like relationships and food, shelter...even laughter, and some measure of creature comforts...)... THANK GOD for them... they are good and pleasant gifts from His hand...

On the macro scale.....all things considered.....(until Jesus comes back)....Life is **NOT** good.... and (the Bible teaches).....that is by design.

As a human race....We are afflicted by God..... because of sin..... in **hopes** that we would REALIZE how empty and painful trying to exist without God really is...

Even after you **come to know** Christ..... your life here on earth (by design) does not become one big **rose** garden.....

Because... you are at **war** ..... you are still fighting sin... (both within and without)....

That truth... is a **necessary backdrop**.... a CONTEXT for hearing the exhortation from our text to Redeem Your Time....

### **Ephesians 5:15**

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

Paul is pulling this truth straight from **Psalm 90**..... a prayer of MOSES.... as He led Israel through the wilderness.... (just like we are going through this wilderness here in our lives) on our way to God's Promised Land....

We need (once again) to **pan out** from the Vanity Fair of the shopping malls.... and the beautifully decorated homes.....and the plastic smiles on holiday faces....

and admit... it is all a **band aid**... a mask.... covering up a very diseased world...

The Days **are Evil**..... Life is **INTENTIONALLY** hard.....

So Number your days accordingly.....

**Arrange your schedule**..... accordingly....

Redeem Your Time

## 2. Capitalize on Every Opportunity

The reason that free market capitalism is (in my view) the very best economic system in existence.... is that God designed us with minds geared towards looking for opportunities... and gaining maximum advantage out of those opportunities in order to yield a profit....

That is what farming was....back in Biblical Days.... looking for the best plots of land to sow in.... fertilizing it..... cultivating it.... in hopes of yielding a profitable crop...

That is what entrepreneurs do today..... look for an unmet need.... provide a product or service at a profit... and thereby experience economic GAIN.

Hopefully... so they can have something with which to reflect God's generosity to others...who are in NEED.

Here in our text... Paul is urging you to look at your DAYS....as full of God ordained **OPPORTUNITIES**.... that he does not want you to let slip by..... but to capitalize on them for His glory and your good.

### **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."

Look **around** you! (Lit. see things **ACCURATELY**).... See them as God sees them!

Don't just slip slide through life.... entertaining yourself to death....that's what a FOOL does....

That is for people who know **not** GOD. That is to be expected for them...

- But **you**.. have been given **God's eternal viewpoint**.... here in His Word.... made alive to you by His Holy Spirit...

Strive to see every event of your life... **accurately**... looking at them through the lens of God's wisdom (here in the Word)...

"**Making the best use of**" - is a translation of a commercial word that literally means Redeem... or "**buy back**"....

**Time** (kairos) – gives the idea (in other places it is used) of an appointed time... i.e. a divine OPPORTUNITY...

for instance.... When Jesus told his disciples..... my "time" has not yet come..... (using this word) He was saying... this is not **yet** my Divinely appointed Opportunity...

As a follower of Christ... God likewise is giving you (everyday) **divinely appointed** opportunities....

Opportunities to serve... Opportunities to **wait**.... Opportunities to **speak**....

Opportunities to show **mercy**..... Opportunities to be **kind**.... to someone being mean to you....

Opportunities to **forgive**.... Opportunities to **worship**.... to **study**...

and almost every minute... Opportunities to **TRUST** in the Lord... instead of leaning on your own understanding....

So... **in the MIDST** of whatever affliction you are going through right now..... in the midst of your pain... of your economic hardship..... of your fears of the future.....

In the midst of your miserable relationship..... (or your lack of relationship).....

In the MIDST of **all that evil**..... God has OPPORTUNITY for you!!.....

Not just one.... but all around you!

**Look** for them..... capitalize on them.... because the world is **against you** doing so....

And God has set you in the midst of evil... in order to show off His wisdom.... through you.

### **Ephesians 5:17**

"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Next is the most enjoyable and most pleasing way to ...

### **Redeem Your Time**

#### 3. Cultivate Your Life in the Spirit

The apostle John... when he was exiled on the isle of Patmos for his faith... **KNEW full well** that the days were evil...

There on that lonely.... desolate island.... John was Redeeming the Time....

He had spent many days close to Jesus when he was in the flesh.... and now He spent time cultivating Life with Him in the Holy Spirit.

That is how (as the scene in Rev. zooms in on the narrative of his life....he could say....

### **Revelation 1:10**

"I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet"

Certainly...John knew better than any of us.....that He had been baptized into Christ through the Holy Spirit at his conversion....

And that the means of Jesus fulfilling His promise to **never** leave him or forsake Him was by His abiding presence **in** the Holy Spirit....

But he describes what was happening here... as especially being **IN** the Spirit....

That is another way of Him saying.... (on this Lord's Day) I was filled with the Holy Spirit.....

As Paul instructs us on how to Redeem our Time.....through cultivating our life IN the Spirit...

He starts out.... by showing us the polar opposite of being filled with the Holy Spirit....

That is to be under the control of **another** type of spirit.....

### **Ephesians 5:18**

"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,"

The REASON not to get drunk with wine.... (Paul says) it amounts to...**Debauchery**

**Debauchery** = "unrestrained **self indulgent** , immoral behavior."

So...if you want to make SURE you break God's Law... on any given night (on multiple levels)... go get drunk.

- That doesn't mean that people who **don't** get drunk are automatically filled with the Spirit.... the self-righteous pride of exalting yourself is just as **grievous**....to God.

But more than once in Scripture.... being filled with the Holy Spirit is **contrasted** with being drunk with alcohol.....

Whereas the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and ?? **SELF-CONTROL**...

Being drunk automatically yields a **LACK** of self-control... it yields **unrestrained**, self-indulgent – **im**moral behavior....

This is not ONLY a Biblical truth... but also a medical fact.

MLJ – a medical Dr. (from the 20<sup>th</sup> century) that God called into the ministry later in his life....said this:

"Drink is not a stimulus, it is **depressant**. It depresses first and foremost the highest centers of all in the brain. They are the very first to be influenced and affected by drink. They control everything that gives a man self-control, wisdom, understanding, discrimination, judgment, balance, the power to assess everything..... Drink is something which immediately gets rid of control; that indeed is the **first thing** it does."

The JOY of the Holy Spirit is a **stimulant**!!!!

He empowers you with boldness... and He makes you **HAPPY** in union with the ONE who is Himself...love and joy and peace!

He gives you **HOPE**... to **see past** your current afflictions.....to the Reward that awaits the children of God....

He gives you POWER in your inner being... to resist temptation and keep on trusting in GOD...

**THAT** is how Paul can say....with certainty.....

### **Galatians 5:16**

" But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you **will not** gratify the desires of the flesh."

How can he say that? Because he knew (both from God's Word and from experience) that your soul has NO DESIRE for bane substitutes when you are being controlled by and filled with the **REAL THING!**

The question that naturally arises is:.....

" I see the COMMAND here.... I **understand** that this is not optional...

I understand that Paul is talking here to EVERY Christian....

He is not addressing some **elite**.... super spiritual class of Christian....

This prescription is for **ME**..... "

But how does that happen?

How can I be filled with and controlled by the Spirit?

1) You have to **hate** the things that grieve HIM and put them all away.

This is the reason most Christians (who **have** the Spirit of God) who were baptized with the Spirit **into** Jesus Christ at their conversion.... do **not** regularly **walk** filled with the Spirit....

Simply put.... you love your sin.

Whether that be the **pride of life**.....the love of self-sufficiency..... or the love of money..... or the cheap thrills we talked about last week....

You think you can keep your "religion" **compartment** sealed off over here.... while walking in the flesh the rest of the time...

The design of that plane may seem good to you.... but its **not** going to fly in God's Air Force.

**James 4:5-8**

"Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns **jealously** over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But, he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. ...**"

Putting away your sin....your pride.... and drawing NEAR to God.... is an indication you **WANT** to be filled with Him.....

He promises... if you do that.... He **WILL** draw near to you.

**2) Engage in the MEANS of Participation in the Life of God**

**Intentionally** and **freely** take part in these activities (listed here) ...which are a **MEANS** of enjoying the Truth of God in fellowship with the Holy Spirit...

**Ephesians 5:19**

"addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with **all** your heart,"

See the **connection** between loving the Lord with ALL your heart, mind, soul and strength... and making melody **TO Him** with **ALL** your heart....

- True Worship in song... is merely the OVERFLOW of a heart that is in love with Jesus.

As you **SING**.... **pray**. As you pray...SING.

Be intentional about expressing JOY to Him....in a way that BLESSES others....Commune with God through the truth of His Word.

**The Psalms** are all about sharing your deepest fears / hopes and joys WITH the Lord in living relationship....

That is why (if you were able to hear Linda P. last week reciting the poem to music from the Gospel Primer...it was so powerful.... It was coming from her living communion with God through the gospel!

That's WORSHIP! That is the fruit of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Hymn's** – (like three of the songs we sung this morning) are lyrical compositions of doctrine and gospel truth that are designed to **STICK** in your mind.... and **SHAPE** your thinking....(and actions) long after you close this book...

**Spiritual Songs** – Are different from hymns in that they can either be spontaneous musical expressions of God’s truth....(putting His Word to music on your own...) that is probably what Scripture means...-> sing a NEW song....

Also be (like the songs) refrains that we repeat more than once.... to exult in a **particular truth**.... like the chorus : Hallelujah... ALL I have is Christ... Hallelujah... Jesus IS my life.

- Do you know what my FAVORITE activity in **all** the world is?

It is watching genuine believers ENJOY the presence of the LORD....in worship! It encourages the socks off of me.... it **invigorates** me to see OTHERS (who I know are well taught) enjoying the Lord.

But before you write that off as just a MERE preference.....

Notice here (in your text)... that while our PRAISE is **towards** GOD...(vertical)...we are likewise responsible for a horizontal dimension.....

That starts with....

“addressing (speaking to) **ONE ANOTHER** – in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs...

It almost as if He is picturing for us a horizontal UNITING of our hearts in praise....(uniting us verbally in celebrating the truth)....

And that offering....wafts UPWARDS to God as one corporate, fragrant aroma.....

Learn what is PLEASING to God!

He wants the **river of life**...He has placed inside of you... to overflow into others’ lives..... **as** you praise Him.

By so doing His life giving Spirit **WATERS** the dry and thirsty..... He comforts the depressed.... He awakens those that have been lulled to sleep... through YOUR worship!

Look in your Bible.... do you SEE that this is **your** responsibility?

**Flock of God**.... We are improving in MANY areas.....we are sharing the gospel more ....we are praying together more.....we are loving one another in practical ways MORE... than I can ever remember....

I thank GOD for that!! I celebrate God’s goodness in granting us growth in those areas...

- But (on the whole) we are **not** doing a good job in **this** area....

it grieves me.... I believe it grieves God.

If God is convicting you that you are guilty in this area.... I want you to know...there is

Only **one of two** reasons you would not make every effort to obey this command....

### 1) **You don't worship during the week.**

Music is (by design) supposed to be echoing God's truth and glory and love in your head all the day.....So that like a **cow chewing its cud**..... God's holy Word will ALWAYS be available to nourish and wash your soul. THAT is why He created music in the first place...!

Some of you need to **CULTIVATE** the garden of your soul...

by stirring up your mind with Living Truth.... by calling to MIND the glories of your Redemption... and the Living Reality of your Redeemer.;...and then INTENTIONALLY **expressing that** to God in song..... whether you feel like it or not!

The DEGREE to which you EXPRESS praise and adoration to God is directly proportionate to the degree to which you cultivate a love for the truth of His person day by day....

So...be **INTENTIONAL** about worshipping Him the car..... instead of whatever else you do....

And Rather than letting the Media tell your family **what to be happy about**...

You choose songs of worship on the CD player.....

Intentionally have a song of praise on your lips....in the presence of your family.....

This is a great time of year to just sing godly Christmas carols together....

**THAT** is redeeming the Time.... The DAYS are evil!

Cultivate Worship in your life and family....and your soul **will be FIT** and ready to sing and make melody with ALL your heart as we gather on Sunday morning.

Others of you don't currently have **that** problem..... You DO worship during the week....

both privately and with your family.... you are **TRYING** to love God with ALL your heart, mind and soul and strength... You **sing**... making melody to Him...

The reason your worship lacks much horizontal benefit.....

## 2) You are **Afraid** of the Opinions of Others....

Be **honest** before the Lord.... you value MORE HIGHLY the opinion of others than you do the building up of the church through what this verse says....

### Ephesians 5:19

"addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with **all** your heart,"

God is **NOT** subdued in His affection for you.... He doesn't love you out of a SENSE of **duty**.....

He has LAVISHED grace upon you.... in SPITE of who you are.....

(listen) **so THAT** He could delight in you as His child!

- How **DARE** we worship Him with less than a FULL heart?

So, **cultivate** that... PRAY that God will give you **increasing JOY** in worship... both for your benefit and for the building up of the church.

That we might help one another.... week by week... to **Redeem our Days...**

Perhaps the most CONSISTENT means of cultivating Life in the Spirit....

### Ephesians 5:20

"giving thanks **always** and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

Remember, Life is HARD.... but God is ALWAYS Good. And your good God does not want to waste your time.....

By focusing on how much better THINGS (here and now) **COULD** be.....

Instead we cultivate our life in the Holy Spirit....

We REDEEM every minute of our lives by **ALWAYS** thanking God.... (even out loud) for every little gift.....

Every good food..... every pleasant conversation..... every material blessing.....

is a means of COMMUNING with God!

and also.... (because He promises to work everything together for our good)

Thank him even for our trials.....

Tell Him (even now) something that is hard... it is evil....it is an affliction....

But thank Him that what they meant for evil.... He is going to work together for GOOD.

In EVERYTHING give thanks... to God the Father....

because through the Holy Spirit.... He has joined us **forever** to the LORD Jesus Christ.

TIME is running out.... lets Redeem whatever we have left.