

## Sermon Outlines

### Redeeming The Time

While the anti-Christian agenda is all around us, no one can deny that the days are growing evil. With a greater openness to immorality within institutions of education, beginning right down at elementary level, this rising generation will all the more seek to do what is right in their own eyes. Christians, therefore, will face tough times in which to live and witness for the Lord.

It is with such times in mind that the apostle Paul exhorted Christians that they should redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). By this, he meant that we are to improve our opportunities to live according to holiness. Christians are to be alert to live godly in Christ Jesus. In this brief article, we will ponder a few ways we may redeem the time.

1. To redeem the time, we must prove what is acceptable to God. The picture or parable suggested by the text is of one standing in the marketplace looking for an opportunity to make a profit. The wise trader uses all his gifts and talents to take advantage of the market. In like manner, the Christian should search out those things that are profitable to holiness. The apostle showed that we need to be, “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:9).
2. We can only redeem the time when we are in the very center of God’s will. A day, or even an hour, out of God’s will is to live as a prodigal wasting our resources and ruining our testimony. It will lead to grief, as it did to Christian in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, when he had to return to the arbor, to find the scroll which he had left behind at the place where he had fallen asleep. Afterward, he lamented that out of carelessness he had to travel over the same ground three times. We will also lament those times when we allow the flesh to lead us out of God’s will. To be in the centre of God’s will, therefore, is exceedingly important to the believer.

Commenting on the practice of “redeeming the time,” a writer stated:

*“What is this commodity which we are asked to purchase? The text says it is “time.” But the term used signifies more than the mere duration of anything or the measure of motion’ it may be taken for opportunity, or the favourable moment for doing anything, which, if lost, can never be recovered. This is well brought out by the preacher in Ecclesiastes, ‘A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment’—that is, he knows both what he out to do and the fittest season in which to do it (Ecc. 8:5).”*

3. To redeem the time, we must live in the Spirit. The Lord taught, “It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing...” (Jn. 6:63), and the apostle Paul’s famous antidote to fleshly living is to be “filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). We will not make use of our opportunities if we allow the flesh to control us. We need to be constantly abiding in prayerful communion with the Lord to know His indwelling spirit stirring us and empowering us to discern and to do his will.
4. We must recognize our tendency to slacken our zeal for God’s glory, but it is the Spirit’s work to revive us making us effective in his worship and service. Times of public worship and fellowship with God’s people are also our opportunities that need to be bought up. Such opportunities are the Christian’s market-days. We must not let them pass or we impoverish our souls and weaken our ability to live for God in these evil days.
5. To redeem the time, we must live a life of thanksgiving to God. With good purpose, after the apostle called God’s people to be filled with the Spirit, he showed what it means to live out the Spirit-filled life. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:19-20).
6. As man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, we must be a thankful people, showing forth the praises of the Lord, and do so in every situation of life. This was the mark of New Testament Christians. When Paul and Silas sang praises to the Lord in the prison cell they were redeeming the time. This is part of “giving thanks always for all things”. Even when God sends us seeming reverses and personal trials, we must buy up our opportunities to show our submission to God’s will and our trust in His all-wise providence.

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7. The marvel is that when we do show forth His praises He ministers grace to us. The duty becomes our liberty. The Lord pours into our hearts new strength to live more and more for Him. For the Christian, life is filled with opportunities to live godly in fellowship with Christ. We must use them or lose them. Those who rise up to profit from them will redeem the time and be kept in God's will, even when the days are evil.

. . . . *Ian Goligher*