

"REDEEMING THE TIME"

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:16.

This text stands at the end of a series of moral counsels and warnings, which are very urgent and solemn. A better rendering would be, "buying up the opportunity, because the times are hard." Paul pictures a man seeing an opportunity, seizing it, and making it his own. Thus he defines the Christian attitude toward time. Life is a succession of opportunities. It is a mark of wisdom to rightly use our opportunities.

If you saw a man throwing money into the ocean, you would say he is insane. Our Lord daily observes many doing something just as crazy. He sees them throwing away minutes, hours, weeks and years. And these are possessions of greater worth than many coins and gems.

In the mints where money is made, the sweepings of the floor are gathered up and passed through the fire. By this method much gold is saved. What vast values could be saved if there were some way of gathering up the fragments of the days, and the golden dust of time which people let drop amid the wastes!

Time must be given to eating, drinking, physical exercise, sleep, home fellowships, friendships, religious services, reading, study and work. Time thus used is not wasted or lost. Through reading good literature people continually add to the quality of their lives, enrich their characters, and prepare themselves for larger usefulness and greater influence. Time is well spent in which we get a beautiful thought, an important fact, or a suggestion of a lesson into our minds. It is splendid to know how to redeem the minutes from waste and to make them bearers of blessing, of cheer, of encouragement, and of good to others.

Much reading is not worth while. One can go through many pages and not get one enriching thought, one helpful inspiration, one suggestion of beauty, or one impulse toward a better life. On the other hand, there are many great books which teach splendid lessons, reveal magnificent character and noble conduct, and inspire their readers to truer and better living.

I. The Wrong Way To Use Our Time.

1. In a life of idleness.
2. In trifling amusements.
3. In useless conversation.
4. In undue devotion to secondary things.
5. In positive wickedness.

II. The Right Way To Use Our Time.

1. In guarding against the loss of time.
2. In gaining useful knowledge.
3. In gaining an honest livelihood.
4. In walking circumspectly.
5. In helpful recreation.
6. In habitually doing good to others.
7. In seeking to do the will of God.

III. The Reasons For Using Our Time Rightly.

1. Our time is short.
Every day tells us that time is short. How quickly a day passes. One goes forth in the morning, and after a few hours of work he lies down again to rest. Sickness,

weakness and life tell us that our time is short. Yet, most of us live as if we expected to abide here always. Seneca said, "We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them." "All men count all men mortal except themselves."

2. Much of our short time has elapsed.
3. We do not know how much time yet remains to us.
4. Time is very precious.
It is too short to trifle with, to quarrel, to fret about little things, to squander upon unprofitable amusements, to waste in senseless talk or idle gossip.
5. We have much to do.
Our time should be used in:
 - (1) Self-improvement--physical, intellectual, spiritual.
 - (2) Service to society.
 - (3) Worship of God.
 - (4) Service for God.
6. The work to be done is so important.
 - (1) Preparing for eternity.
 - (2) Helping each other.
 - (3) Working for Christ.
7. Time misspent can never be recalled.
8. We shall have to account for the way we use time.
To use time wisely and well is to gain:
 - (1) The approval of conscience.
 - (2) The plaudits of society.
 - (3) The approbation of God.
9. The days are evil.
 - (1) They are uncertain in their number.
 - (2) They are days of temptation and sin.
 - (3) They are liable to be interrupted by sickness, etc.
 - (4) They leave many opportunities unimproved.
 - (5) They bring many opportunities of their own.
10. Momentous consequences depend upon the way we use time. For some, it will mean an eternity of bliss; for others, an eternity of woe. Every Christian should help make the world a happier and a better one. There is always something within our reach which we should do and could do, if we would.

The chief lesson in this text is that we should use every opportunity and use it thoroughly while we have it.