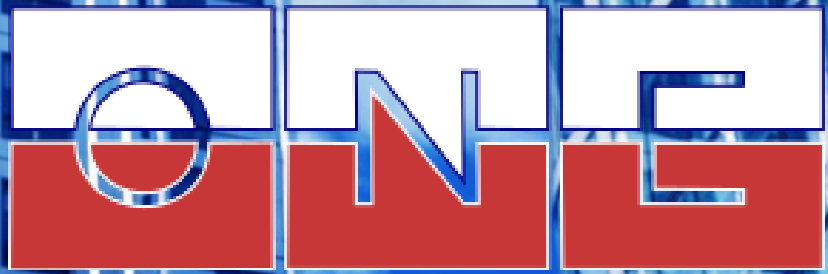


INSIDE:

+ **Time from a Biblical perspective**



A Publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance
March 2023



**“SEE, NOW IS THE
ACCEPTABLE TIME;
SEE, NOW IS THE
DAY OF SALVATION!”
- 2 COR. 6:2B**



Ellis County Ministerial Alliance

ONE is the official publication of the Ellis County Ministerial Alliance (ECMA) which guides its mission, content, and theme. The ECMA encourage submissions from ECMA congregations. Photographs, stories, testimonies, and other submissions should be directed toward your church leaders or sent via email to

one@ourecma.com.

Advisory Board

Kurt Beyers
Dr. Joel Hamme
Anna Towns

Editor

Linn Ann Huntington
lhunting@fhsu.edu

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Editor's Note:

Daylight Saving Time begins on March 12, which means we will move our clocks ahead one hour, losing an hour of time. We asked our writers to take a look at time from a biblical perspective. We appreciate you taking the "time" to read their perspectives.

The Things Jesus Did with His Time on This Earth

Written by:

Ben Houchen

For all the talk of ending these time disruptions, it seems we are going to lose an hour yet again on March 12. Daylight Saving Time--one more hour lost. We want to live our lives with intentionality, but there are only so many hours in a day, and any time remaining is so precious. It can feel like quite the loss to let go of even one of those hours.

Jesus had a curious relationship with time. Like us, He seemed to take His time very seriously. He certainly talked about time enough, but what really interests me is the way He used his time.

For being a young influencer and general man-about-town, Jesus just didn't

seem to use His time well to properly build His brand and increase His followers. Yet somehow, He seemed to be the first real influencer to have solid cultural crossover appeal. But the question is, as big as His branding has gotten over the years, and as much time and money as we have invested into that branding, does it really stay true to His message?

Obviously I'm being a bit facetious here. Jesus wasn't a social media influencer trying to make or sell a brand. He was a teacher, trying to communicate an old truth in a new way. That being said, God had become a sort of brand when Jesus arrived on the scene, and many of the religious elite were trying to use that brand to tell people exactly how they ought to use their time and money.

Jesus enters this scene with a new approach to time. The Bible talks about him spending huge amounts of time alone, the 40 days in the wilderness being a big chunk of that. But He also spent time alone even in his day-to-day life. The disciples would turn around, and He would be gone; they'd get up in the morning, and they couldn't find Him.

The Bible refers to him going off to pray in lonely places "as he was accustomed" (Luke 22:39). He did this a lot. But this wasn't the only way He used His time in an odd way. He also hung out with women, kids, foreigners, addicts, crooks, even Roman soldiers--people that even Jesus disciples often thought to be a waste of time. People on the outside. People on the

The Things Jesus Did with His Time on This Earth (Continued)

fringes. Jesus seemed to spend most of His time there.

The disciples following Jesus struggled with this. They wanted to shoo the children away, they wanted Him to spend more time with them, or with his mom, and less time alone, or in the houses of the unreputable. Jesus never did this, though.

His sense of time was flipped upside down. Just like His sense of money, His sense of social structure, family, religion. It was all flipped on end from what was happening around Him. His followers wanted Him to use His time to take power, seize authority, assume control. Jesus wanted to use His time to heal, comfort, and encourage. It's true that when pressed, Jesus could pull out some authority and clear a temple or two. But even that

use of time was well measured and deliberate. (If you have the time to make a whip, you've had time to think through how you're going to address the problem.)

Unfortunately, I think far too much of Christianity now reflects the religious elite, and while I was joking before, it does seem like our faith has actually become a brand. Multi-million-dollar Superbowl commercials. YouTube Channels promising peace in exchange for money. Being constantly told that joining just one more Bible study, service project, or social club will bring us the peace we're so desperate for. Hustle culture taking over what should be reflective culture. Sales pitches taking over what should be good news. Investing time when we

ought to be sharing it.

And now we're going to lose another hour to Daylight Saving Time. I'm sure if Jesus were here with us now, He would still be talking about time. But given the thousands of hours I've lost to bad investments and manipulative influencers, I don't think losing this hour would be the time that Jesus would notice in my life.



Ben Houchen is a husband and father of four. He has been a pastor for more than 15 years and has a degree in Biblical Studies, as well as an MA in Family Leadership. He is the Administrator in charge of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Hays. He also owns his own contracting business and teaches various courses in theology and leadership around the country.

It's About Time for Us to Consider God's Time

Written by:

Rev. Jon Anderson

"Time like an ever rolling stream, bears all our years away; they fly forgotten, as a dream, dies at the opening day" (Verse 5, "O God our Help in Ages Past," from "Evangelical Lutheran

Worship," #632).

Second Corinthians 6:2b says, "See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!"

There are two words translated as "time" in the New Testament. One is *chronos*, from which we get

our word "chronological"--in other words, "clock time." This sort of time tells us where we are in the day, how many hours we've used, how many hours we have left.

However, it tells us nothing about how that time should be used. Years ago

It's About Time for Us to Consider God's Time (Continued)

there was a movie called "The Gods Must be Crazy" that made fun of the way we use the clock to tell us not only what time it is, but what we should be doing with that time. The narrator of the movie said things like, "When the clock says twelve-o-o, it's time to eat," implying that we eat because the clock says it's lunchtime, not necessarily because we're hungry.

Now it's true that clock time is useful, and that some things need to be done at certain times or by certain times, no matter how we might feel about the task. The clock tells us that a deadline is approaching, and we must be ready. I remember the producer of "Saturday Night Live," Lorne Michaels, once said, "We don't go on because we're ready--we go on because it's 11:30." The same could be said for preachers who must have their sermons ready when it's time for worship, no matter how much tinkering they think the sermon may still need.

But often, the Scriptures remind us that there are tasks that need to be done regardless of what the clock might say. The word translated "time" in the verse

from Second Corinthians (above) is the other word for time in the New Testament, the word *chairios*. *Chairios* time isn't clock time. It tells us that no matter what the clock says, the time to act is now.

Paul, the author of Second Corinthians, was convinced that Jesus would return very soon, and so the time to proclaim the Gospel is right now. Often people came to Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, which was to be set aside as a day of rest. According to *chronos* time, that was the wrong day--people should come on another day to be healed. But for Jesus, the time to heal was whenever anyone came to Him for healing, even on the Sabbath. The time to care for a human need is when it is presented, not at some set time on the clock.

The late Walter Wangerin, one of the greatest pastors and storytellers of our era, learned this the hard way. For years he served a congregation in the South, and one Sunday a stranger showed up at church. In the Lutheran church we normally follow a set liturgy, with prescribed times to say and do everything.

The visitor had never been to a Lutheran church

before, and he listened to the sermon with rapt attention. At the end of the sermon, Pastor Wangerin was about to continue the service, when suddenly this man stood up and shouted, "I'm gonna pray!" And pray he did, loudly and enthusiastically, while the congregation sat stunned--until Pastor Wangerin walked up to him and said, "It's not time to pray now."

The visitor got quiet and said, "I didn't know there was a time to pray." And he walked out of the church, putting some money in the collection plate, and he never returned. To sum it up, *chronos* time is clock time, useful in its place--but *chairios* time is God's time, the time to do good to those around us, no matter what it might say on the clock. May God keep us alert to what time it is on God's clock, and may God's peace be with us.



Rev. Jon Anderson serves Prairie Faith Shared Ministry, a group of four Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA)

congregations in Western Kansas. These include St. John in rural Ellis, Bethlehem in WaKeeney, Emanuel in rural Ogallah, and Our Redeemer in Ness City.

What Will You Do with the Time God Gives You?

Written by:

Cheryl Glassman

Time. The concept of time sure seems to change as we age, doesn't it? I remember as a child, the day couldn't go fast enough. Now, the morning turns to night almost before I can think about it. The definition of time is "the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present and future, regarded as a whole."

Many songs have been written about time. The ones that come to mind are "Yesterday" by the Beatles, "If I Could Turn Back Time" by Cher, "Does Anyone Really Know What Time It Is?" by Chicago, "Time" by Pink Floyd, "Cats In The Cradle" by Harry Chapin, "Time After Time" by Cyndi Lauper, and "Time In A Bottle" by Jim Croce. Interesting how when I started thinking about them how quickly my memory produced songs about time.

One of my favorite lines is the title of the song about time by Chicago. We all think we know about time, but time is not a tangible thing. We cannot grasp it, hold it, or stop it. But, some people live in the past; some live for now, in the moment; and still others focus on the future. In essence, we as humans try to control who we are through

the events of time. An example would be someone who lives in the past due to a tragic event.

We cannot, however, control or stop the days or the time we spend on earth. Sure, we can do things to help prolong our stay, such as exercising, eating right, etc., but even those things cannot stop the passage of time.

Another question I often think about is, "What am I doing with the time I have?" No one really knows how much time they have on this earth. I see those whose lives have been devastated by earthquakes, tsunamis, tornadoes, war, famine, tragic accidents, illness.

I think about when my best friend was diagnosed with cancer. The first question she asked the doctor was, "How much time do I have." When my sister-in-law was fighting the effects of the cancer in her body, she wanted to do as much as possible with the time she had left. She once told me, "There will never be enough time to do everything I had planned." So, when I spend a day basically not doing much of anything, is that time I have wasted?

The season of Lent is upon us. It is a season dependent

on time. Lent is the time prior to Easter, and Easter Sunday always falls on the first Sunday on or after the spring equinox (first full moon of spring). Lent is a time for us to reflect, repent, and renew our lives. It is a true opportunity for us to deepen our relationship with God. It is a special "time," given to many Christians.

Lent is an opportunity to look back at the 40 days--the time--that Jesus spent in the desert. Lent, for some Christians, begins with Ash Wednesday. The ashes, which are burnt palms, help us to remember that the time we spend on earth is really a gift from God. The ashes placed on the foreheads of some Christians are a symbol of the fact that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. We are also reminded to repent and be mournful for the wrongs we have committed against God and one another.

What a wonderful gift Lent is! It is a reminder that we have been given the gift of time--time to spend moments with family; time to work to support our families; time to enjoy the gift of friends; time to care for those in need; time to pray, reflect, and return our hearts and lives to the God who does not need

What Will You Do with the Time God Gives You? (Continued)

time, but knows that we, in our humanness, do.

Jesus' three years of ministry were not a truly long period of time when you look at things, but what a difference He made for all of us. As Dan Schutte says in his song, "God's Perfect Time,"

"How far from our sight are the ways of the Lord, far beyond us the wisdom of God. The grace that's been given will be brought to the light in the fullness of God's perfect time." Our human time is not perfect, but God gives us a chance--if we turn to Him--to perfect it.

What will you do with the time you have been given?



Cheryl Glassman is the Director of Music at St. Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church in Hays.

The Lessons that Ecclesiastes Teaches Us About Time

Written by:

Dr. Joel Hamme

With Daylight Saving Time approaching on March 12, I am taking the opportunity to take a journey with you, dear reader, through the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible. The preacher, or assembly leader, which is the basic meaning of the Hebrew term translated as Ecclesiastes, has a lot of things to say about time.

Chapter 1 of Ecclesiastes depicts days, years and even generations passing by, but nothing really changes. Things from the past simply repeat themselves, and since there is no remembrance of former things, what seems new is simply repetitious.

*9 What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.*

*10 Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new"?
It has been already in the ages before us.*

*11 There is no remembrance of former things,
nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.*

A rather bleak perspective, to be sure, and perhaps one of the reasons why some interpreters believe that Ecclesiastes preaches nihilism, that life has no meaning. Along with

Craig Bartholomew and other interpreters, I would suggest that rather than the preacher saying that life is vain, he submits that life is enigmatic. God has made things beautiful or fitting in their time, but their meaning is often beyond mortal understanding.

Chapter 3 is probably familiar to many people.

*1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
2 a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

The Lessons that Ecclesiastes Teaches Us (Continued)

*4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

9 What gain has the worker from his toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. 12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good

as long as they live; 13 also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

The preacher says that because life is often hard to understand, the best thing for people to do with their lives is to enjoy what God has given them. Time is passing by, and what we are doing is not consequential enough to miss out on what we can understand. God has given us things to enjoy in a certain span of time, and that time is full of unanswerable questions, and it is short.

In addition to enjoying life, Ecclesiastes recommends that people worship God. Although it seems that people who don't worship God may even prolong their lives, even when they act wickedly, it will be better in the long run for those who do (Ecclesiastes 8:10-13). The Preacher concludes Chapter 8 by saying that no matter how hard the wise try, they cannot really grasp the workings of God. We are smart but not

that smart (Ecclesiastes 8:14-17). We are to enjoy our lives with a mind toward worshiping God while we have time to do so. Our time eventually comes to an end, and we are unsure how much time we have.

Ecclesiastes 12 depicts a person who has grown old enough for his or her physical faculties to give out—to the point that it is harder to enjoy life. But in reality we can die young, old, or somewhere in between. The preacher recommends we remember our Creator before that happens. Do not wait for life to pass into its waning years before realizing what life is—a gift from God to be lived in honor of the One who gave it.



Dr. Joel Hamme, Ph.D., of Hays is a professor in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Religion at a few different Bible colleges,

seminaries, and universities. He is also a part-time sales associate at Home Depot. He attends New Life Center Assembly of God Church in Hays.