

St Martins C3 – August 27, 2023

Permeate (Mission Month) – Prioritise Time Biblically

Sermon Notes:

In this Mission Month, we have been considering how we can let a Mission Mindedness permeate all of our lives. We have learned humbly from the work of Bluebird in Indonesia and saw how we can prepare diligently and pursue opportunities strategically. Today, we are looking at one of the major barriers to doing mission: our busyness.

The most limited resource for many modern people is not money. It is time. We don't have much of it and we are cautious about the way we use it. Yet, if we care about doing the mission that God calls us to then we will need to give the resource of time.

Nehemiah

Read Nehemiah 1-2:5, 16-18; 3:20; 5:1-14; 6:15

Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the King. Being the cupbearer meant that he was a trusted member of the king's inner circle. Since a king would be concerned about plots to poison him, he would have a trusted person serve (and maybe even taste) his drinks.

It was a prestigious position for a slave. Nehemiah had a good career, he had a title, and he was comfortable. Yet, all it took for him to give it up was one news report.

Nehemiah knew that when the mission of God compels you, you need to make changes in your life to see it come to pass.

Think of the people of Nehemiah's time. It wasn't just him who gave up his position to do the work. They all gave up what they were doing to be involved as well, and it was only when they worked together that they saw progress happen.

Us

If you were to evaluate your time would you find that you are a busy person or that you have plenty of margin in your life? The reason we find it so hard to be invested in mission activities, or the relationships around us, is that we have not made enough space to be involved.

If this is the case (and it is not unavoidable) then we need to stop and ask: why am I so busy? Many times we will find that we are using our busyness for selfish ends or as the basis of our identity. When we have done that we have turned work into an idol.

Read James 4:13-17

If we care about the mission that God calls us to do then we will make changes to our lifestyle to make space and energy to do it.

Rather than burning us out this will allow us to have a better work-life balance. It will also give us the time to invest in relationships and, at times, programmes that bring God's Kingdom. Life is an opportunity for us to take part in what God is doing. We need to take that opportunity.

Questions for Connect Groups:

What stood out to you from today's message?

What things prevent people from doing more mission?

In what ways is time our most valuable resource?

Where do you think you spend most of your time?

How busy are you? Why are you that busy?

How does your time usage align with your priorities in life?

What is the social and spiritual transformation you long to see? How much of your time is devoted to seeing it happen?

How can you ensure you don't replace life activity with church activity?

What have you given up so that you can devote more time to health, relationships and mission?

What do you take from the story of Nehemiah?

What would it look like to devote 10% more time to mission?

What will you change as a result of this series?

Songs from Today:

Fresh Start, See the Light, He Toka, A Thousand Hallelujahs, That's the Power

Monday's Devotion – Time is Ticking Away

Read Proverbs 6:6-11; Colossians 4:5-6; Galatians 6:7-9

How we use time is very important. This week we are going to look at some of what Scripture has to say about time that might help us prioritize the moments we have.

The first is to make the most of our time. It's so easy to get into a pattern of lethargy. Have you ever been so tired that you can't find the energy to go to bed?

You finish that episode on Netflix and think to yourself "I should really go to bed now." Then it comes up with its "The next episode will start in 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ...1". You know you should stop the autoplay, but you can't seem to make your mind tell your hand to click the button and so you keep on watching.

The example used in Proverbs is of the ants, one of the smallest creatures we regularly see. They have got it figured out. They labour hard all summer, gathering food for winter. They don't waste time or energy, but they use it wisely.

We need to work hard to make something out of our life. However, we also need to use our time to make an eternal impact on others. This might be through the paid job we do, but it is also through making time to build relationships with others and speak God's love and truth into their life.

Prayerfully evaluate today whether you are using your time for God's Kingdom as wisely as you could. Don't grow weary of doing good for you will see the harvest of your work.

Tuesday's Devotion – The God Moment

Read Mark 1:9-15

Two keywords in Greek talk about time. The first is *chronos*, which refers to sequential time and the second is *kairos* which means an event or moment in time that is the right time for things to change. It is a moment when “God breaks into your circumstances.”

In Mark 1, we read a summary of the moments leading up to Jesus' ministry. Finally, it came to the Kairos moment when Jesus recognised that His ministry had begun. He knew it was the right time to preach the Kingdom and draw people to repentance and belief.

We too have Kairos moments – they happen all the time. Some of them come in our journey of growth. They are opportunities to stop and realize that God is moving. As we listen to the voice of the Spirit, He brings something into our consciousness. As we reflect on what He is saying we can move past issues and into new places in Him.

We also have Kairos moments as we minister to others. I have had moments where I realize the time has come for me to share or to act in a way that brings God's Kingdom and draws people to repentance. As we respond to these moments, we can see people move closer to God.

Reflect on your last week and see if there was a Kairos moment for you. Spend some time reflecting on that moment and asking God for wisdom to help you respond even better the next time that moment comes.

Wednesday's Devotion – A Time and A Season

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

To everything (Turn! Turn! Turn!)
There is a season (Turn! Turn! Turn!)
And a time to every purpose, under heaven

So goes the 1965 Number 1 song by The Byrds. The song was written as an anti-war song focusing its final line on it being a time for peace.

I love the sentiment; however, the original Biblical text is not so hopeful. It focuses on the good and bad in equal measure. If I were to rewrite the text, I would find a way to diminish the difficulty and pain and focus on peace and productivity.

If we had the choice we would want all of our time to be filled with health, building, love and reaping rather than killing, tearing down, hating and sowing. Yet there is a part of me that is glad these verses made it into Scripture without being softened. It helps me to see that the good and bad times are both known to God – He is not absent when things are going wrong.

He has made everything beautiful for its own time and planted eternity in the human heart, which fills us with frustration but allows us to enjoy the moments that are in front of us.

Whatever you are going through today, know that God is in it. He can bring beauty and purpose even out of the most difficult of times. As you seek to use your time for others look for the way you can show them God's purpose in their lives.

Thursday's Devotion – A Time to Rest

Read Genesis 2:2; Psalm 127:1-2; Mark 6:31; Matthew 11:28-30

One of the toughest parts of writing this week's message was finding balance:

- I wanted to move people to see that God's mission is the most important thing in life, but I didn't want to diminish the inherent value of paid work.
- I wanted to exhort the church to prioritise their time rightly but I don't want to put a heavy burden on people to think they are only acceptable to God if they are always doing.

We have a great mission in front of us, we want to see God move in power in the lives of people around us bringing transformation and seeing His Kingdom advance. However, we need to recognise that mission is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to ensure we are working from a place of rest.

In the beginning, God set the pattern for us to follow. That is to take the time to rest and remember Him amidst all our activities. Jesus showed that to follow Him meant taking times of rest and that His way was not the way of striving but resting in His grace.

As you think through the way you use your time, make sure that you have factored in a good amount of rest time. Time to relax and unwind, time to exercise, time to connect with God and with the people you love. Today, spend some time in His presence drawing your strength from the love He has for you and the riches of His grace.

Friday Devotion – A Time To Act

Read Esther 4:13-17; John 9:4; Ephesians 5:15-17

It must be one of the most powerful moments in a Biblical story. There is Esther, the slave who became a Queen and she has a choice to make. Does she try and avoid the coming genocide on her people, or does she stand up and speak even though it might mean her death?

She chooses to act.

She is reminded that maybe God brought her to this position for such a time as this.

Moments come for each of us when we are also faced with a decision. Will we choose to speak out for God or stay silent? Will we see the opportunity to bring God's way of life to the world or will we keep our head down and go with the flow?

As Jesus said, this is the daytime, the time for action. Now is the time for us to shine, to live wisely making the most of every opportunity that is in front of us.

Your day is bursting full of opportunities – Kairos moments where God is asking you to step forward and make a difference in the world.

Pray today that God would open your eyes to the little moments and big moments where you can take the chance that is presented and bring God's love and life to the world around you.