



Worship – Part 26
Acts of Worship – Part 14
Worshipping God with Our Time
GCSP – 11/03/2007

At one time or another most of you have probably heard or read the following illustration, but it is very fitting for the topic God has for us today. If you have heard it before, let its truth sink in anew. If this is the first time you have heard it, ponder the implications it may have on your life.

Imagine an outrageously wealthy man choosing to give you the gift of a lifetime. Imagine that he has set up a bank account in your name and has promised to fill that bank account with \$86,400 every day. That's \$31,536,000 a year. Do you think you could get by on that? Ah, but there is a catch. As a matter of fact, there are two catches.

The first catch is that at the stroke of midnight the account would be emptied of whatever was not used. Meaning, you have to forfeit whatever portion of the \$86,400 you did not take advantage of using on that particular day. You could not borrow money from a future day to use on another and you could not go back and retrieve what you did not use from days gone by.

The second catch is you would have to give an account every day of what you did with the money. If you did not use all \$86,400 in a given day you would have to give an account of why you wasted it away.

I would imagine that most of us would initially take full advantage of the \$86,400. We could probably use up every dime for a week or two, or possibly several months, or maybe even a year or more. But eventually, we would grow weary of the burden. Eventually we would have bought everything we ever imagined we could possibly want and the thought of having to spend another \$86,400 today would become drudgery (I know some of you are saying to yourself right now, "Try me" but you would eventually reach this state).

The wealthy man would come and knock on your door every morning looking for an explanation. It starts to weigh on your mind at night. You don't sleep. You dread hearing that knock. You hide. You don't answer the door. You busy yourself with other things to avoid giving an account.

And then it dawns on you; I could start giving the money away. I could make the best use of what I have been given. I don't have to be miserable because of my selfishness but instead I could put this money to all manner of good uses that don't involve me hoarding it all to myself.

You would then look forward to the daily visits. You would enjoy the conversations as they lingered for hours on end.

I am sure some of you have already caught on to the meaning of this story. For each of have been given this same gift; only it is not a gift of \$86,400 every day, but 86,400

seconds every day. We each have a bank account of time that is filled each day with 86,400 seconds. We have full control over how those seconds are used, we can't borrow from the future and we can't go back and use what has previously been wasted, and we will give an account to the One who has provided us this time.

We are again going to be looking at several passages of Scripture this evening, but let's begin by turning with me in your Bibles to **Ephesians 5**.

Ephesians 5:15-16

Let's pray.

The first message I ever preached for Grace Church was based on this very passage. I used the King James rendering of **verse 16**, which said, "**Redeeming the time.**" The word redeeming just seems to add to the depth of meaning. Making the most of your time is good too, but redeeming your time seems to imply more of a sense of value to the time you have.

So you don't get the wrong impression, redeeming your time does not mean packing your day with constant activity to make sure you use up all 86,400 seconds. This is not a message to affirm type "A" personalities and multi-taskers, but it is also not meant to affirm those who are overly reflective and sedentary.

Tonight as we consider how to best worship God with our time, we need to take a balanced approach so we do not end up thinking we are in line with God's purposes when we are not. We must not allow our minds and our hearts to deceive us when it comes to this important aspect of worshipping God with our time.

If you are more of a type "A" personality you are going to gravitate to an attitude of, "There are only so many hours in a day so I had better hit the ground running" – and you won't stop until the day is done or your body breaks down.

If you are more of a reflective, deep-thinker type, you will most likely spend an inordinate amount of time sitting on your hind quarters while the world passes you by. You will miss many golden opportunities God presents to you because you want to sit down and plan every step out before taking any action.

The balance we need to discover will only come as we are more and more in tune with the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives. That only comes by a deep and intimate knowledge of God through the reading and study of His Word.

So we are going to turn to our supreme example tonight and study how Jesus spent His 86,400 seconds on a particular day. And hopefully by taking a look at how He spent His day, we will be able to see a pattern that can be instituted into our lives; or at least be able to pick out some areas in our lives that need some attention and consideration.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Mark 1**.

Mark 1:21-39

On this particular day:

- Jesus was in His place on the appointed day that the people gathered for worship – showing us the importance of our attendance at the appointed times of gathering together.
- He taught others about the kingdom – showing us the importance of transferring the godly knowledge and wisdom we have been given to others.
- He cast out a demon and thus released a man who was in spiritual bondage – showing us the importance of helping those who are outside the kingdom.
- He healed a woman and allowed her to fulfill her ministry of service to others – showing us the importance of helping others get back on their feet to regain their dignity and purpose in life.
- He enjoyed the fellowship of His companions over a meal – showing us the importance of breaking away from the busyness of the day, the importance of relaxing and connecting with others, and the importance of physical nourishment.
- He ministered to strangers – showing us the importance of having compassion on those who are less fortunate than we and the importance to view all mankind without partiality.
- He went to sleep – showing us the importance of physical rest.
- He arose early the next morning to commune with God – showing us the importance of recharging our spiritual lives.

Now that was a full day. I would have to say by the looks of it, every one of His 86,400 seconds were put to good use.

With this day in the life of our Lord as an outline, let's see what we can learn in respect to how we use our time and how this relates to worship.

1. Church Attendance – (**v. 21a**)

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Hebrews 10**.

Hebrews 10:19-25

I spent a whole sermon on this topic not too many weeks ago, so I won't belabor the point, but far too many Christians allow far too many things to keep them from attending church. It doesn't even cross their minds the damage they inflict on themselves and on the rest of the church body by their nonchalant attitudes.

The writer of Hebrews lays out eight reasons that church attendance should be a priority in your life.

First, because of the blood and body of Jesus Christ (**v. 19-20**); second, because Jesus is our high priest (**v. 21**); third, because have assurance of our faith (**v. 22a**); fourth, because we have had our hearts and our bodies sprinkled clean and washed from the evil conscience we had before salvation (**v. 22b**); fifth, because we are susceptible to seeing our faith waver (**v. 23**); sixth, because our attendance stimulates others in the church to Christian love and good deeds (**v. 24**); seventh, because our attendance is an encouragement to the entire church (**v. 25a**); and eighth, because the return of our

Lord and Savior could happen at any moment and we do not want to be ashamed by the appearing of our Lord on that day (**v. 25b**).

It is an act of worship to honor God with your time by attending church.

2. *Teaching* – (**v. 21b-22**)

Turn with me in your Bibles to **1 Timothy 4**.

1 Timothy 4:11; 13; 16

Do you see a pattern here? Paul is commanding Timothy to teach. As you learn the truths of God's Word you now become responsible to teach those truths to others. We must take every opportunity to teach sound doctrine. We must always be ready to teach the truth of God's Word.

Turn with now in your Bibles to **2 Timothy 4**.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

We have to teach the principles of God's Word at every opportunity because the time will come when no one will listen.

In the Old Testament Book of Amos, the prophet speaks of a severe famine.

Amos 8:11-12, says, "**Behold, days are coming,**" declares the Lord God, "**When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the LORD. People will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, but they will not find it**" (NASB).

Amos prophesies that there will come a time when there will be a famine of teaching from God's Word. We aren't totally there yet, but I believe we are seeing this prophesied famine beginning to spread across our country today. There are pockets of fertile land scattered here and there, but it is not as easy as you would think to find churches that teach and preach the Word of God faithfully in our land today. The once fertile soil that had received the seed of God's Word is now cracked and dry and hardened.

Jesus gives us the example of worshipping God with our time by teaching His Word at every opportunity.

3. *Releasing Those Who are in Bondage* – (**v. 23-28**)

Jesus came to this earth to deliver us from the bondage of sin and that is never so vividly displayed than when we see Him cast demons out of the lives of men, women, and children. Just as these people were in bondage to the evil spirits, so we were in bondage to sin. And just as the demon possessed could do nothing in their own power to free themselves from this kind of bondage, neither could we do anything in our own power to free ourselves from sin's bondage.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Romans 10**.

Romans 10:9-17

The only hope for those who are in bondage is Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ is no longer walking the earth in human form. For whatever unknown reason, the Father's plan to deliver people from the bondage of sin; from the bondage of demons is through you and I proclaiming the gospel message. **"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."** And they cannot hear if we are not proclaiming.

When was the last time you told someone about Jesus? Can you recall the specific time and place when you shared the gospel message with a friend, or neighbor, or family member?

Jesus gives us the example of worshipping God with our time by delivering people from bondage; from the bondage of demon possession and by implication from the bondage of sin. And we do that by proclaiming the gospel message to all who will listen.

4. Healing – (v. 29-31a)

Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law after they enter this home. She had some sort of debilitating fever that was keeping her from being able to fulfill her responsibilities. In Bible times, the Jewish women did the housework, the cooking, the serving, etc. In modern America these duties are often shared by the men of the household, but we must understand the mindset in Bible times to capture some of the significance of this particular healing.

For a woman to be too sick to perform these functions when guests arrived was a horrific embarrassment from the woman's point of view. It is important to note that as soon as Jesus healed her she immediately got about the business of serving her guests. Jesus not only healed her sickness, He restored her dignity and sense of honor by making a way for her to do the things she was called to do.

Now not all of us have the God-given gift of healing at all times like Jesus had. Paul speaks to this in **1 Corinthians 12:27-31**. Paul speaks of the differing gifts that have been given to the church, of which healing is one, but he then goes on to emphasize that not all have this gift, just as not all have the gift of being an apostle, or a prophet, or a public teacher of God's Word, or a worker of miracles. And even though we all can participate in praying for the healings of our friends, family and loved ones, it is obvious that we do not manifest the same immediate and complete healing touch Jesus had or the Apostles and others had during their ministry in the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

Why we do not have the same manifestation of this healing power in the church today is a question that continues to be debated, and this is not the sermon to delve back into this as I did a few years ago when I presented all of the healings in the New Testament to try and find some common characteristics. The only common characteristic we found was it was the power of God that did the healing. Faith was not a common denominator, asking for healing was not, and neither was being a Christian or not being a Christian. The only common characteristic was the healings were accomplished by the power of God – the same power we have within us through the Holy Spirit.

So even though we will not always be able to exhibit or even witness the way Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, we can glean from this account that we are to be helping others to be restored to their purpose and function in this life. Worshipping God with our time includes restoring people to their lot in life – especially when someone requests our help. The passage says that Simon, Andrew, James and John spoke to Jesus about this woman's condition.

When Jesus was asked to help, He helped. I challenge you to find a verse where Jesus refused to help when someone was genuine in their request to solicit His help. It's not there. Jesus refused some of the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day, but only because He knew their evil motives and intentions.

Every time someone genuinely requested Jesus to help them, He did. We can worship God with our time by doing the same.

And beloved I fully understand that you cannot do everything that is asked of you. And I know that are situations and circumstances that prevent you from helping at times. And I know that there are instances where you will not be able to physically do what needs to be done – I'm not talking about that. But how often can you help and choose not to? How often is it your own comfort and your own schedule and your own preferences that cause you to refuse to help?

I invite you to pray the same prayer God has led me in over the last several years. "Father, in all of my planning and scheduling and agendas for this day, I invite you to interrupt me at any given moment to join you in your work with any person you see fit."

I'm not bragging on myself, because I have failed in following through with this on far too many occasions, but the intent and attitude of that prayer is what I see in Jesus in this passage. He was interrupted from what He was doing and asked to help someone; and He gladly dropped what He was doing and helped.

Well we got through half of the eight examples Jesus displayed for us in worshipping God with our time. The other half will need to wait until next time.

So before we go to prayer, grade yourself on the first four we covered tonight. Do you worship God with your time by making every effort to attend church each week? Do you worship God with your time by teaching others what has been taught to you from God's Word? Do you worship God with your time by proclaiming the gospel message and having a part in releasing them from the bondage of sin? And do you worship God with your time by helping others when your help is requested?

If not, what's holding you back?

Let's pray.