

SERMON: "The Stewardship Of Our Time" by E A Terry Delivered 2-23-20

Ephesians 5:15 – 20; Romans 13:8 – 14; Matthew 25: 14 – 30; **Psalm 90:12(Sermon)**

One of the areas of stewardship that is overlooked by most Christians is the stewardship of our time.

Remember a steward is a servant that has been given the responsibility of managing another person's property.

We are all The Lord's stewards and we are to invest and manage the time that God has given to us.

Time is important to all of us.

Job 14:5 says that God numbered the days on earth before we were born and Psalm 90:10 tells us that the length of our days on this earth is 70 to 80 years.

Even with the gifts of modern medicine man has not been able to extend the average life span beyond what God declared thousands of years ago.

As we study Jesus' life we see that Jesus never seemed to be in a hurry although Jesus was doing the most important job in history, which was redeeming the world.

Although Jesus knew He only had a few years to do it, we do not find that Jesus ever hurried or ran.

Jesus didn't wear a Rolex or even a Timex.

But Jesus had time to consider the flowers and the birds and Jesus had time for little children.

We find that time was Jesus' friend.

The Bible gives us some great insight into how time can become our friend rather than our enemy.

God exists in a realm that is not bound by time or space.

God is the creator of time.

So, if we are serious about making time our friend and making the most of our time we need to turn to the creator of time and the one who gives us time.

This morning I want to focus on Psalm 90:12; ***“Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”***

I am going to use the four letters in the word ***TIME*** to help us to learn the importance of time and to ***“gain a heart of wisdom.”***

The first letter in the word time is “T” and “T” stands for ***TREASURE***.

God says we should treasure time as a valuable commodity.

Most of us number our years although some of you have quit counting.

Time is a gift from God so every day is precious.

We should treasure every moment of each day that we have!

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift.

That's why it is called the "*present!*"

We should treasure time as the most valuable asset we have been given in this world because everything we do takes time.

We cannot buy more time, we cannot save time, and we cannot really find more time.

We speak of making time and saving time, but that is impossible too.

We all have 24 hours per day; no more – no less.

The next letter in the word time is "I" and "I" is for **INVEST**.

In The Parable of The Stewards we saw that God gave us time to invest.

How we invest the time that God has given us reveals what is most important to us.

We should never forget that God designed our time on earth as a time to prepare for eternity.

It is a time to get to know God, to love Him, to enjoy Him, to obey Him, and to serve Him.

God also created each of us for a specific purpose.

God put you here at this specific time in history, at this specific place, to do a specific job for Him.

We are resisting God's plan for our life if we are not investing our time in accomplishing God's plan for our life.

There are 168 hours in each week.

I have been told that the average person will spend about 56 of those hours sleeping, about 24 of those hours in eating and on personal hygiene, and about 50 of those hours working or traveling to work.

That means there are only about 35 hours a week of discretionary" time left over.

That is 5 hours per day.

If we are to treasure our time and if we are to invest our time we need to ask ourselves *"where am I investing those discretionary hours each day?"*

You see the most important things on earth are our relationships; our relationship with our Lord, our relationship with our families, and our relationship with other people.

We all need to ask ourselves' *How much of that discretionary time am I devoting to my Lord?*

How much time am I investing in building The Kingdom?

How much time am I investing in my family?

How much time am I investing in helping other people?

The next letter in TIME is “M” and “M” stands for **MANAGE**.

Again in The Parable of The Stewards we see that all of the money, all the possessions, and all the talents that we have belong to God.

They were entrusted to us to manage and to be used in building His kingdom.

The same is true about time.

Our responsibility is to manage the time God has given to us.

God expects us to manage our time wisely.

There is an entire field of study called *“time management.”*

In almost every business in America, consultants are hired to teach busy executives how to better manage their time.

In Stephen Covey book, *“Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”*, he wrote; *“Time management is a misleading concept. You can’t really manage time. You can’t delay it, speed it up, save it, or lose it. No matter what you do time keeps moving forward at the same rate. The challenge is not to manage time, but rather the challenge is for us to manage ourselves.”*

Ephesians 5:15 – 16 warns; ***“Be careful how we live – not as unwise but wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.”***

When an opportunity passes, that opportunity cannot be reclaimed, that opportunity is gone forever.

We are not to waste our time but rather The Apostle Paul tells use to us every opportunity that is put before us to live for our Lord!

If we don't manage the way we use our time; someone or something will manage it for us.

The truth is you can not save time, or even waste time—you are going to spend it somewhere and / or invest it in someone.

If we do not manage the way we spend our time, time will slip away from us.

Complaining that we do not have enough time is a flimsy excuse because all have the exact same amount of time each day as everyone else does.

The main reason we do not complete a job is because we did not manage our time wisely.

We all need to ask ourselves; ***am I managing the way I use my time wisely.***

Am I investing my time in The Kingdom of Heaven?

Are the tasks that I did yesterday going to make a difference in eternity?

The final letter in the word TIME is “E” and “E” stands for ***ENJOY***.

If you think about it, the most enjoyable times that we have are the times we spend with people that we love and those who love us.

When we don't make relationships a priority and make time for each other, our relationships suffer.

The truth is relationships take time.

We need to take the time talk, to listen, to comfort, encourage, and to enjoy one another.

We all need to strengthen our relationship with The Lord and with our family.

The first question in the Westminster Catechism is *"What is the chief end of man"* and the answer is *"To love God and to enjoy Him forever."*

If we do not enjoy our time with The Lord that is a tell tale sign that we do not have a good relationship with The Lord.

The time we spend with our Lord and our families should be enjoyable.

These times should be the best times in our lives.

If we have a heart of wisdom we will agree that everything is a by-product of our relationship with God.

That's why Jesus said; ***"seek first The Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*** (Matthew 6:33)

That's why the Greatest Commandment is "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength*".

Martin Luther said, "*I have so much to do that I cannot get along without spending three hours daily in prayer.*"

Our minds rebel against an idea like that; saying: "I don't have three hours to pray" or "I can't afford to take three hours for prayer every day."

But that is Satan messing with your mind.

Luther says: I cannot afford not to take three hours every day for prayer.

The point is this; without God's daily guidance and Godly wisdom, there is no way we can possibly accomplish all the tasks that The Lord has set before us.

Can you honestly say with the Psalmist "*I was glad when they said let us go into the house of the Lord*"?
(Psalm 122:1)

Can you honestly sing "*Sweet Hour of Prayer*"?

It all comes down to priorities.

The truth is we always find time for what is important to us.

We all need to learn to say, “**NO**” to some of the things that take us away from investing our time with our Lord and with our families.

There will always be something else to do.

There will always be somewhere else you can be.

We need to invest our time in things that will make a difference throughout eternity.

A thousand years from now, what is going to be more important, a good relationship with your boss at work or a good relationship with Jesus?

What is going to be more important spending time with your family, or watching some television show?

I have never heard anybody on their deathbed saying; *“I wish I had spent more time playing computer games or looking at pictures on Facebook.”*

We all need to invest more time in building relationships.

We all need to be on guard so that the urgent things do not crowd out the most important thing on earth – Our relationship with Jesus.

In our lesson from Romans the Apostle Paul confronts us with the proper use of time.

He challenges us to stop and to think how we are spending our time.

The first thing Paul reminds us is that our time is short.

When Paul says that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed, he is referring to the time when Jesus returns to earth.

Remember, the first century Church lived with the expectation that Jesus would return at any time.

We all should have that same expectation.

We should live every minute of our lives in such a way that we would not be embarrassed if Jesus came back today.

What do you want to be doing when Jesus comes back?

Then in verses 12 & 13 Paul tells us that it is time for a change.

We all need to evaluate how we are spending our time.

Then we may have to make some changes.

Then in verse 14 Paul says *"Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ."*

Paul is saying; it is time to put Jesus in control of our time.

We all need to learn from Jesus' example because Jesus was able to accomplish everything God had given Him to do.

If we are to accomplish all of the task that The Lord has given us to do we need to prioritize our time so we can spend more time with our Lord.

We need to set aside time for praying, listening as well as speaking.

We need to schedule time for studying our Bibles so we can know God more intimately and in strengthening our relationship with Him.

And we all need to invest our time in worshiping God.

Not just at 11:00 am on Sunday morning but using everything that we do as an opportunity to worship The Lord.

We all need to always give God our very best

Secondly we all need to prioritize our time so we can spend more time with other people – showing the love of Christ them, telling them the difference that Jesus makes in our lives, and ministering to their needs.

The greatest gift we can give to God or to anyone else is our time.

God's Word challenges all of us to pray for The Lord to ***“teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”***

We are to **Treasure** the time God has given us,

We are to **Invest** the time God has given us in building God's Kingdom,

We are accountable to God for the way we **Manage** the time He has given us, and

We are **Enjoy** the time God has given us by spending more quality time with Jesus in building a closer personal relationship with Him and our relationships with other people.

God's Word to us today challenges all of us to ask ourselves; *“Why am I so busy” and “What needs to change on my calendar”?*

“How many of the 86,400 seconds that I have everyday am I willing to commit to living for Jesus”?

AMEN