



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 3, 2017

It is time, it is God's Time ---

Matthew 16:21-26

It is to the gift of worship time we have gathered on this Lord's Day. A month of Sundays have passed since I have Presided at worship. In that time, you have heard some of the best Gospel proclaimers in our area. And they gave me time, us time for rest time, reset time, vacation time and time to resettle our daughter Alyssa from the East Coast to what she calls the "Best Coast." Thank you for that time!

1. **PASSING OF TIME:** "Time." Think for a moment about time, the courtesy of time which often drives our lives. Let's begin with a moment of silent time...to focus, to take that deep breath of space, that our Sabbath time might truly be "Holy Spirit" time...(30 seconds)...how did that go for you?

Some might suggest that was a waste of time...we only have so much time...especially since we are now past summertime...and it is back to work time...and commute time is a mess...and it is hard to be on time...and I wish it was vacation time one more time...because it is a long time until next time...when I hope I have more time...and on this three day weekend time, I am not sure I have enough time to do the things I want to have done before...it is autumn time...get the picture? Time can sometime take your breath away and leave you anxious, fearful, and distressed ALL THE TIME! And the Postlude is rag-TIME.

Abram was 75 years old; likely ready to slow his nomadic life; chill with Sarai for the end of his days. A time to just "be." Until he heard and listened to the voice of the LORD...not a whisper, but more like a confident trumpet call to a new way of time. No longer time for the Passing of Time.

2. **STEWARDSHIP OF TIME:** "Time." The call of the LORD changed time for Abram and his clan forever. His life had been versed by sunrise and sunset time! "The LORD said...'Go.' 'I will show you.' 'I will bless you [and those who bless you {value added, call it grace!}] 'All the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

For Abram (aka Abraham) time became the gift to manage under and with the call of the LORD who promised an old crock (only 75!) LAND and (Hold your breath!) OFFSPRING. Both of which would call for stewardship in time to be managed and to manage the blessings of the LORD, blessed to BE a blessing!

It was so for those who first responded to the voice of Jesus when he called disciples to a time of learning and change with the seemingly simple words "Follow me."

Those first called had spent their time as most of us do; with work, family, friends...doing the days that they had been given by God, but we know that Jesus set them in a whole new plan, a mission in which their lives would set the seeds of the God into the world through the One who died, is risen, and lives for an in and through us today.

The Gospel portion shared was a decisional moment to "keep on" their pathway to renewal. Here is the setting: they had been with Jesus, teachings and miracles, conflicted moments within and without their team; they had learned that to be in Jesus path of service would mean renewed commitment to share and serve, especially in the face of His words that Jerusalem would mean betrayal, suffering, death, "and on the third day be raised." It seems that Peter had determined himself leader of the flock.

At the boundary, Peter marked his confession that Jesus was MESSIAH, the one and only. Note the reading..."From that time on..." Time changed as they moved towards the holy city...Peter became a guardian for Jesus and took Jesus aside one on one---literal translation---"God is merciful to you, Lord, this will never happen to you." It is as if Peter who had named Jesus "Messiah" is relying on God's grace to not let this happen!

The exchange is a reset, a recall. The words are very much like the first that he heard from Jesus at his place of work on the shore---"Get back behind me, do not be 'deceived.'" For the temptation of the disciples, even "Rock," is to recall that the disciples' place is FOLLOWING Jesus, OBEYING Jesus, not correcting the one we confess to be Savior and Lord!

Then, Jesus calls His disciples, and each one of us today who hear the call and the word of the Lord into...

3. "Karios, God's Time." The call seems strange since they are already disciples, but the call is to remain, to grow, to stay with, discipleFIT is the time for all who are called into mission, ministry, and to build the Body of Christ, the Church in the world.

To live together in God's time is our shared ministry in this place. Self-denial is not the image of a good life in the culture we share. Much of the media challenges us is to use time, stay in touch time, never be still time, avoid quiet time, reflective time for fear of missing out (FOMO).

Today, we must hear the words "The one who walks behind me, (learners of Jesus' way, like you and like me) must turn away from oneself, take up one's cross, and live a life following me." And it is a call to faith-filled response as we GATHER, TO BE ENCOURAGED AND EQUIPPED, TO BE SENT IN TO THE PATHWAYS TO RENEWAL.

Beloved in Christ, today is Sabbath-Time...to pause at Font, around the Table in the Word. Your Fall Packet is a map for engagement in Christ with one another. Find your place to be challenged, to step up, to live into the opportunities to "take up one's cross" and to go public in witness to Jesus and His love, to work as one in being a refuge for the weary where time is God's time, grace time, renewal time knowing that all will be well.

To live in God's time seems a bit like Paul's word. Within the Pathways to Renewal is to LET LOVE BE REAL, HOLDING FAST TO WHAT IS GOOD, ACTIVE IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD AS WE REJOICE IN HOPE, PATIENT, PERSEVERING, GOOD STEWARDS OF WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN, HOSPITABLE, BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING TO ALL, LIVING PEACEABLY!

Sounds a good bit like our faith community! Never to rest on our laurels, past IS past, but humbly being about the work of the Spirit.

May this time of new beginning mark us as those who know It is time, it is God's Time."

And the Hymn of Promise we are about to sing marks us well as those who know that...

IN OUR END IS OUR BEGINNING; IN OUR TIME INFINITY;
IN OUR DOUBT THERE IS BELIEVING; IN OUR LIFE ETERNITY.
IN OUR DEATH, A RESURRECTION; AT THE LAST, A VICTORY,
UNREVEALED UNTIL ITS SEASON, SOMETHING GOD ALONE CAN SEE.

We walk as one in the grace of God, in Jesus' name it shall be. Amen.