

Know the Times

Lord, we thank You for this time today. We praise You; we worship You. Lord, You are our living hope. Lord, we exalt You, we magnify You. In this time, help me, Lord, to speak Your word. I am unworthy in Your presence, Lord. May You enable me. Give me the help of the Holy Spirit to utter Your word, Lord. We commit everything into Your hands and ask this prayer in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduction

Today, I would like to speak about, "Know the Times." What times are we living in? At the same time, we want to utilize this time to be prepared to meet our Lord, the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, I think this will be helpful to you.

I have three topics, but the preparation is the same. I want to break it into small separate topics. The first part is the topic of salvation. In the next part, we focus on identifying our spiritual boundaries. We explore the importance of holiness, keeping higher thoughts for ourselves, and being a blessing to others. Lastly, we need to redeem the time to prepare to meet the Lord, and for the marriage of the Lamb.

Salvation

The first one is salvation. God says in II Corinthians 6:2: "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

Our God is a loving God; He does not want anyone to perish; He wants to save us. God was angry; His wrath was upon the people because of their sin. However, man cannot do anything to save himself from his sin. Because of sin, God cannot accept man; therefore, God has to do everything for us. He paved the way for salvation. Thus, the process is completed today; today is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time. Because God has done all things for us, He brought salvation to mankind. He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. God was in Jesus Christ, and through Him, He reconciled man to Himself. How? God has done all things through Jesus Christ. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to this world and laid the punishment of sin on His body. Through His blood, we received the forgiveness of sin and salvation. Sin is very dangerous. We can see the gravity of sin in Genesis 6:5: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

By Nature, Man is Sinful

You know a lemon is sour; we cannot change its taste; it is sour. And no matter how many times we wash the skin of a rat it does not change its color. It is the same with the spots on a leopard; they cannot change themselves. The neem tree is bitter, and we cannot change its taste to sweet. Why? Because it is its nature.

By nature, man is sinful. David said, "I was a sinner from my birth when my mother conceived me in her womb," So, it is by nature we get these sinful thoughts and do evil activities. We cannot

save ourselves from sin. That is why we are helpless. And the wages of sin is death, and nobody can save us from sin.

God Did All the Work to Save Sinners

So, that is why God had to come down Himself and do all the work for us. Because of Himself, God turned His anger away from us. Isaiah 12:1-2 says: "And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

So, our Lord has become our salvation today through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Today, we can say, "Behold, my God is my salvation."

He made this salvation so simple. The salvation of man could not be achieved without the atonement of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Not only that, but He also made it easy to receive the forgiveness of sins by just praying in His name this little prayer: "Lord, save me; lead me to salvation." He made salvation so simple.

Call Upon Him While He May be Found

Why are we discussing this? Because the door of salvation does not stay opened forever; there is a time limit.

In Acts 17:26-27, we see the determined times before it was appointed. The door of salvation is going to be closed soon. So, there is a determined time for salvation and the grace of God on this earth.

Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near." Today is the day of salvation; know the time we are living in. Today is the day of salvation, and today is the appointed day because tomorrow is not guaranteed. There is no guarantee.

Ecclesiastes 9:12: "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

We do not know when the evil net will fall upon us suddenly, and we will be trapped. Then we cannot find any deliverance from sin, or from this world. So, this is the last chance; it is a warning or a signal of alert to receive salvation. How can we neglect such a great salvation, and how can we escape?

The Spiritual Boundaries

The next topic is, "The Spiritual Boundaries." In Hebrews 10:25, it says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is approaching very, very fast, and it is the day of our deliverance. These are the signs of the end days. We hear a lot of news these days: World

War III, this problem, this thing, that thing. So, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent. That is why God's Word exhorts us to assemble together as the day is approaching. What are those things we see here?

Remember Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." These are the four important pillars for a believer. We have territories, spiritual boundaries, the doctrines of God's Word, fellowship, assembling together, breaking of bread, and praying. When we buy any land or property, we have boundaries, and we ensure that those boundaries are intact. If we miss one pillar, one cornerstone, there is a chance that another person may occupy that space. Therefore, we must first make sure our boundaries are fixed because spiritual boundaries are God's Word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. These are important in our spiritual life. In these end days, we have to fix these boundaries.

The Word of God (Doctrine)

Let us look at God's Word in Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

So, there should be a vision to have eternal life. We can say vision is our communication from God, and it can be considered as divine revelations. We know that God's word is a light unto our path, and God's Word sets our spiritual path in the right direction. Back in our country, in the villages there are no lights on the roads. When we walk, there might be a snake or something else that may be on the road. If we carry a lamp, we can see, and we will not step on it and escape from danger. God's Word is like that. We can use light for shorter distances. We can have short-distance plans. At the same time, when we are driving on a highway, we want to see distant things, we can use high-beam lights so we can see greater distances. God's Word is like that. We can see things which are in the future through God's Word. It protects us; it guides us. We can plan for a future through God's Word. So, this is "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

This means that God's Word has no expiration date. God's Word never fails; we can see. God's Word is true and is a living Word forever.

In Matthew 7:24-25, Jesus Christ says: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."

So, faith comes from hearing God's Word. Faith and obedience go together; we cannot separate them. When there is weak faith, it means there is disobedience to God's Word. Faith comes from hearing God's Word, which is the Word of Jesus Christ.

Psalms 119:89-91 says: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances for all are thy servants."

Our God created heaven and earth through His Word. Through His Word He created all the universes; therefore, God's Word is in the universe. All the planets abide to God's Word. They are stable; they are unmoved. They obey God's Word. Creation obeys God's Word.

In Psalm 103:20 we see that angels obey God's Word. The creation obeys, the planets obey God's Word, and angels also obey God's Word. So, who is the problem? Man. Where there is disobedience, there is weak faith which is shaken. The problem is with man. Because of his disobedience, his faith is shaken; he is not stable and is easily moved.

We see the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how He lived by faith. When there was a storm, Jesus Christ was not afraid. He was tired and He was resting. The disciples were afraid because they were weak in faith, not like Jesus Christ, whose faith was in His Father. That is why He was resting. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith which shows obedience. Having strong faith is an amazing experience in a believer's life. We see that this is the experience of Mount Zion.

In Psalm 125:1: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever."

A mountain is so strong; it cannot be moved. This is an experience of having strong faith. This experience brings us to Mount Zion, which is immovable, unshakeable faith.

Hebrews 12:22: "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."

This is the experience of strong faith. We come to that place, and we are not shaken in our faith. There may be a testing of our faith to test how strong we are. We are not shaken when we are at Mount Zion even if something like a storm, a tsunami, or an earthquake, occurs. We know what times we are living in, and we are not shaken because we are on Mount Zion.

We will talk a little bit more on faith for a few minutes. Faith is like a toothbrush; it is personal. You cannot share it with others. You cannot say you have faith of your father or mother or grandfather. Your faith alone will save you. Therefore, you should have your own faith in Jesus Christ.

When a soccer ball is filled with air, it goes fast. When you kick it, it jumps up and down. You can play with it, but a small needle can deflate it. A soccer ball filled with air is like having a strong faith. A soccer ball without air is like having weak faith. Where is our faith? Are we trusting silver, gold, or our property? Where is our faith? Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion and are not shaken. Why is man shaken now? Why is his faith shaken? Because his trust is not in the Lord, therefore, he has not reached Mount Zion. He does not have that experience.

Fellowship

We will now go to the second topic in the four spiritual boundaries, which is fellowship. In Ecclesiastes, we read in chapter 4:9-12: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth."

So, assembling together, coming together helps us; it gives us spiritual warmth. One may fall, but the other lifts him up. One is weak, and the other supports him. Fellowship is very important.

“And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” This is very, very important.

Breaking of Bread

The other one is the breaking of bread. The Lord says, “This is My body, broken for you.” That means when we are taking part in the bread, we are saying, “We are also broken in our body.” As the Lord’s body was crushed and broken, when we take part in the bread, we say, “This is also my experience. I am also crushed and broken in my body. I am dead to sin, and His life is in me.” This is my experience.

Prayers

And prayer is to have a desire for the will of the Lord and come into His presence to ask for its fulfillment.

What happens when we meet and pray together? We kneel and pray before God so we can stand before the enemy. We can overcome all difficult situations when we pray together.

Walk on the Highway of Holiness

The next one is to walk on the highway. Isaiah 35:8 says: “And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

We can see that the highway is a path of holiness. Those who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, those who are in the Lord Jesus Christ, receive the holiness and righteousness of God. To walk on this highway is the path of holiness. Even fools can walk on this highway. They receive the counsel, wisdom from God. And they can walk without stumbling. They are made righteous when they believe in Jesus Christ. And we can see that Jesus was again a role model for us in holiness. Jesus was holy.

Hebrews 7:26: “For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

Jesus was separated from sinners and was not defiled while He was on this earth. To become holy, we do not have to go out of this world. We see some saints, some monks who want to be holy and they go to the mountaintop or some hill stations, and they live outside of this world. I am not saying to be like that. Jesus Christ was among sinners, and He hated sin, but He loved righteousness, and He was separated from sinners. He was not defiled at any point in time.

We can see the example of an electrical wire. We see copper wire inside the electrical insulation. Electricity passes through the wire, but it does not impact the outer covering of the wire. When we touch it, we are not electrocuted. We are like that in this world, but we are separated from sinners. We are set apart. We want to save souls, the lost souls.

If we go outside the world, there is no benefit. When we receive the holiness, the graph of holiness, it should be increasing until we reach the point of the day when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. The Lord says, "I am holy; you also be holy." Sometimes during special conferences, the holiness increases too much. Our holiness goes high, high, then suddenly it drops, down, down, down. And then sometimes during weekdays it may go below zero, then again it goes up on Sundays. The holiness graph should be increasing day by day. And that should be our experience.

Maintain High Thoughts

The next one is always to maintain high thoughts. In Isaiah 55:9 the Lord says, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

The Lord has higher thoughts for us, greater plans for us. As a father I tell my children, "If you study this, you will become good at it, you will become great at it." Their choice is they want to study easy and not work hard. As a father, we have bigger plans for our children, but children do not have that much capability to think about bigger things. Our Lord also has great plans for us, but we are thinking about what to eat, what to drink, what to wear, where to go. The Lord is saying, "I have bigger plans for you, and those plans nobody has ever seen or heard. And their inheritance is never perishable, it never spoils, and it never fades. This inheritance is kept for us in heaven, and this is very precious.

I will give you a small story about the rich man. The rich man had a dream, and in his dream, he went to heaven and was standing before the gate of heaven. But he wanted to go inside heaven. Then an angel came and asked him, "What do you want?" He said, "I want to go inside heaven." "Your name is not in this book; sorry, you are denied." "No, no, no; I am a rich man; I have a lot of money. I am very popular." "No, I am sorry, you cannot enter heaven." Then he started pleading with the angel. "Please, please, allow me to go inside. At least allow me to be a doorkeeper in heaven." Then the angel said, "Sorry, we do not have those positions. They are already done by angels who have earned that job. We have only kings and priests positions open. So, your name is not there. I cannot allow you inside." You see, the Lord has given us that privilege as the children of God, as a holy nation. He made us kings and priests in Jesus Christ.

In these end days, we have to make our time more profitable. Redeem the time because time is precious. We can recover things that we have lost in this world, but not time, once gone means gone, time and tide waits for no one. Time is very important, but we cannot restore it back. So, time is precious, and we want to convert this time into treasure. It is like our investment in heaven. Spend more time for the Lord, investing in our future in heaven. So, make use of time, talent, and treasure because this will be added to you like a bank account as treasure in heaven. And we receive a reward from our Lord when we meet Him.

The other day in the open sharing time, we heard how to redeem the time. It is kind of like sellers, and how they make use of time. When there is a strike, they close all the shops, and they are not allowed to sell anything. But sellers in India open the shutters a little bit, and then they start selling from the back door. They want to earn more money, so they try to sell more secretly.

That is how they redeem the time. The worldly people, the Gentiles, they are so clever in that way. How cleverer a believer should be to make use of his time.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was in Samaria, He was speaking to the Samaritan woman and sharing the gospel. Then the disciples came to Him and gave Him food to eat. “Lord, eat this food, we brought it for You.” He said, “This is not My food. My food is to do the will of My Father and to see that the work is done, finished. You say, ‘We still have four more months for harvest.’ Open Your eyes and see, the harvest is ready. You go and bring the harvest. My food is not this; my food is still in the fields. The harvest is ready, not after four months; it is ready now.” How much hard work had they have done for that harvest? They had to plow the fields, sow the seeds, water them, and protect them. This is already done for you. The generation before us already done this. Now the crop is ready. Which one is harder? Plow the fields, sow the seeds, water them, and wait for the crop. Is it hard? Or just go cut the harvest crop and bring it in? We are entering into that labor. We do not have to work very hard; it is already done. But the great thing is that we also get the same wages. They also get the same wages; we also get the same wages. The salary is the same. Go and bring in the crop as the harvest is ready.

Being a Blessing to Others

The next one is being a blessing to others. Believers are like a signpost that you see on the highways. They give directions: take right, take left, go straight. After following these directions for one hundred miles, you will reach your destination. As believers, we are also like a signpost. We have to guide people like this, direct them to the right path so they reach their destination on time and safely. Be a blessing to others. Some signposts are broken, some signposts have fallen down, so make them straight. And all signposts are not the same, they do not serve the same purpose; they are different. Each one has its own purpose. Jacob was a blessing to Laban when he was with him; Laban became prosperous because of Jacob. Jacob brought blessings to his father-in-law Laban.

Run the Spiritual Race

Now, our spiritual race is like a marathon. It is not a short-distance race. As we are approaching our day of redemption, we can see Romans 13:11: “Knowing the time; that now it is high time to awaken out of sin. For now, is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The day of salvation is approaching very fast. Because it is approaching fast, we also have to run the race very fast. Know the time; this is the time. Know the time to get prepared, to meet the Lord. It is not the time to sleep. Our salvation is nearer than we think.

Usually, in short races, the participants run fast and finish the race in a short period of time. They might complete the race in 50 to 100 seconds. However, in a marathon, they start slowly in the beginning because it is a long distance to run five kilometers, ten kilometers, or even 25 kilometers. As our spiritual race is like a marathon race, we should start slowly, and then run fast when it gets close to the destination. We need to get more energy accumulated, so we try to run faster to reach the finish line. But sometimes, what happens is they do not know this race is a marathon. They think it is like a short race, so they run very fast at the beginning—fast, fast, fast—and then collapse before they reach the finish line. They do not reach their destination because

they lose their energy. Therefore, we want to know the time. What time are we living in, and how are we running this race? We have to reach the destination, and we also have to focus on the prize we are receiving. Run until we receive the prize.

The Marriage of the Lamb is Come

Prepare to meet the Lord. In Revelation 19:6-7, we hear the voice of the multitude: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

This is now a trumpet sounding: "The Lord is coming, the marriage of the Lamb is coming soon, so get ready, be prepared; the Bridegroom is coming." The Lord Jesus is coming back the second time, and He is going to rapture His church. He is coming for His church; that is the plan. Soon He is coming. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back soon to take His church with Him; the rapture is going to happen. The bride should be ready because the Bridegroom is coming. We do not know the time of his coming, but He said, "I am coming like a thief." A thief will not give a notice or information before he comes or say, "I am coming on this date and this time." A thief will not say he will come when we are at home or away. As Jesus is coming in the same way, the bride has to be cautious, we have to be ready and awake.

In India, we see the bridegroom sitting in the chair on the stage, ready, waiting for the bride to come. The bridegroom has already come, but the bride is coming late, and the bridegroom is waiting for his bride. It happens like that because it takes time for the bride to get ready. There will be about 10 to 15 friends in the bride's room, making the bride ready for marriage. She has to be made up, and setting up everything takes time. But in spiritual life, nobody makes the bride (Church) ready. The bride herself should get ready; nobody helps us.

We do not know the time when the Bridegroom is coming. This is very important. We heard three trumpets. One is about our salvation which is the first trumpet in the wilderness. And now what we are hearing is the second trumpet which is in the church. The third one that is going to happen is the trumpet of the marriage of the Lamb which is going to come. If we neglect hearing the first two, we are lost and cannot hear the third. Then we have to face the consequences. The seven-year tribulation is going to come after that; during that time there will be no grace, and you have to face the consequences. They are very serious, so be ready now. The trumpet in the wilderness is about salvation; get ready for that. And the trumpet in the church is what God is speaking to us now. If we hear that, then we can hear the third trumpet sound.

Conclusion

The sons of Issachar in I Chronicles 12:32: "And the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."

They knew the times. The sons of Issachar understood the times. They knew what time they were living in and planned for the future. And told Israel what to do. They were a separate tribe.

They were the sons of Jacob born to Leah. So, they were ready; they understood the times. We have to be like that as believers. Be prepared to meet our Lord. Be prepared to meet the Lord.

One young schoolboy was going to school, and one day when he came back home, his father said, "I am going to another far country. So, wait for me until I come back." The son asked, "What is a sign that I can know when you are going to come back?" So, the father took him to the backyard and showed him a tree. "Now this tree has green leaves. When these leaves turn yellow, you will see that I will be coming back at that time." The boy remembered that, and the father had left for the other country. Every time the boy returned back from school, he went to the backyard and saw the color of the leaves. "Now is not the time for my father to come back." He was disappointed and went into his home and waited for him to come back. Every day he went to the backyard to see the color of the leaves. But one fine day, he saw the color of the leaves had changed to yellow, and you could see the happiness he had. He was very happy. "Oh, my father is coming back today." So, he threw the school bag, and he was running around the tree with happiness. You see the sign, the time of the season. Oh, our father is going to come back to receive us. We are not afraid of the situations, the circumstances, or the times we are living in because our time of deliverance is coming really fast. The creation is groaning to get rid of this pain; this is the travail pain. We will soon be delivered from that pain, and that is our joy and happiness. Our Lord is coming back soon.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, I praise You and thank You for this time; we praise You. Help us, Lord, to be prepared to meet You in the second coming. In Jesus' precious name, I pray. Amen.

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