

## **Sermon: It's About Time**

Calvary is on the verge of doing some new things. As you have seen in the summary of the community interviews, Enumclaw's culture has changed over the last five years. This in turn creates some potential opportunities for us to be of service to our community. This led me to consider a different aspect of stewardship; that of how we will choose to spend our time. As we look into our perspective on time, it was quite an "eye opener" to see just how much we let time dominate our lives. Think about how often we make reference to time. We may say to a family member, "It's about time you came home." We say to one another, "I can't believe it is November already." Or we are in such a rush, "I am running out of time." The irony is that we all have the same amount of time in a day, whether we are feeling hectic or relaxed. It seems that time can become a tyranny to which we often succumb. If we are honest with ourselves, most of us are slaves to time. Let me ask you a question: how many times do average Americans check their cell phones? (80) Cell phones have become more of a time piece than a watch. I came across this statement about how we see time differently as we get older. Middle age is when you're faced with two temptations and you choose the one that will get you home by nine.

One of the consequences of being so engrossed in time and all that we have to get done is that we lose our perspective. Think about it: all that we have is the present moment. What is especially important is how we spend that time. We can use it to ponder the past or plan for the future. But staying in the moment is important if we want to reach our full potential or do the most good for ourselves and others. We can get ourselves into a time trap by focusing too much on our past events and likewise over planning our future. We become so engrossed in our "to do" lists that we forget the things that really matter. We need to take care not to lose the connection over the very thing we have in front of us: NOW. Considering our time is God-given, we should think about time as part of God's Presence.

In Genesis, the very first passage is about the creation of the first day and the first night. “Evening passed and the morning came. This was the first day.” It is almost hard to imagine the passage of time as only being the change from daytime to evening. Or as in primitive times when we measured time by the passing of the seasons. No clocks, no calendars, no cell phones. However, there was one exception. Long before social media, Moses had the first tablet that could connect to the cloud.

In the James passage, life is compared to a mist. It is visible for a short time but then goes away. Sometimes when I am driving in the fog, there is the sensation of just passing through something that is almost unreal. You can see it, but as you pass through it seems to disappear. It is easy for us to get caught up in the “fog” of our lives. But James goes on to say that we should say “if the Lord wants, we will live or do this or that.” Again, keep the Lord at the center of our lives and the use of our time. So, given that we all have the same amount of time at our disposal, how do we make the most of it? I think the main point is acknowledging that time is not mine, not yours, not a commodity. Instead it is a gift from God.

What is the point of elaborating on time in a message? I think it has to do with changing our perspective. I saw an interesting drawing showing a human eye with a lot of detail drawn in the cornea. It was a clock. And the article was about perspectives on time. Just from curiosity, I looked in Google Images to see if others had created similar designs. I was startled to see so many images of the same nature. You can see one of those images in the bulletin. I found these images startling.

Perspectives on time have come into focus for the session and that is the reason for having focused this message on time management. As I mentioned earlier, the session recently embarked upon a study to see how much our community perspective may have changed over the last 3-5 years. The session has completed a series of interviews with many members of our Enumclaw community. The summary of the findings have been made available. There were some definite trends related to the shortage of affordable housing, the increase in mental health issues in children and teens and the lack of relationships because of the over use of social media. Another need was related to the isolation some seniors experience. In addition, Pastor Lynell

has had informative conversations with the principal of Kibler Elementary School and she identified some that the children have. Whether in young adults or in children, the need for mentoring seems to be a theme.

What we do with the results of the interviews is the next step for each of us. Are there projects that we may choose to take on with and for the members of our community? This hopefully, will become part of our goals, our vision for the next stage in Calvary's development. Take mentoring as an example. As children make transitions from elementary school to junior high or from junior high to high school, they could benefit from a "buddy" as these transitions are sometimes difficult. At Kibler, the principal also identified ways for "mentors" to join the kids at lunch time.

As we move into our Stewardship focus, we are being asked not only to pledge our monetary resources but that we pledge our time. What I am suggesting is that each of us pledges to spend say, two hours a week doing some project either at Calvary or out in the community. That is the purpose of the pledge card dedicating our time in the same way we sign a pledge card for our financial commitments.

To help us make a decision about what kind of time pledge to make, we have to get to know what our gifts or strengths may be. Ask yourself: what are some of the gifts you have been given that could benefit others? The next step would be to ask, where is my passion related to my gifts? What really gets me going? Then the final and most important step is to pair up our gifts and passions with current needs both within Calvary and in the community.

God has put us here on earth for a purpose. I believe He has imbedded within us the talents and abilities that are to be put to good use. There is a correlation between feeling satisfaction and being in sync with the Presence of God that dwells within. I would suggest that each of us take time to pause and reflect upon what we may be called to do. The very fact that we are to pause to reflect forces us to slow down and not let time be the boss. And when we make good use of our time, we are responding to Christ who dwells within us.