

Live Like Time is Short
1 Corinthians 7:29-40

Good Morning.

Last week we said worship is, “Our response to who He is and all He’s done for us; which results in an expression of worship that engages all that is within me to bless His Holy Name!

Levi Lusko said “*Potential is perishable*” “*Potential has a short shelf life, an expiration date that is approaching.*

Your calling is not a Twinkie. Like milk or produce, your calling won’t keep forever.

The works God wants to do in your life; if you don’t seize them, they can pass you by.

You have a limited amount of time to act on the plans God has for your life before they are out of reach.

There are things you can do on earth that will be impossible one minute after you die.

Bringing comfort to the discouraged, feeding the hungry, sharing the Gospel-these are all things that will be impossible to do in heaven but we can do right now.”

Please open your Bibles to ***1 Corinthians 7*** as we continue.

Last time in ***1 Corinthians***, Paul taught on remaining where we were called until we are 100% convinced the Lord is moving us!

Christians are to obey the Lord, but leave the results up to Him!

No matter if you are married, single, divorced, widowed, or remarried; the Lord can work in your life.

This doesn't mean a person cannot desire other things in life; but, this is speaking of contentment and serving the Lord where you are at the time of salvation until the Lord **moves** you.

Today, we will hear Paul's heart about Christians need to live as if the Lord's return is imminent. Paul just finished speaking on remaining where the Lord called you until He moves you...

I. This world is passing away.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:29-31*

The *time is short* for Jesus to return, so all Christians should anticipate His return.

Jason Allen said, "*Jesus' second coming is not an abstract doctrine with no bearing on the Christian life.*

The most pressing consideration for believers is how we should live in light of his impending return."

As Christ followers, we are to live expectantly, and not run away and hide. We are to live like Jesus can return any moment.

As the day approaches, we are to wait and be about our Father's business. Living in light of Christ's return we can enjoy fellowship with Him and watch Him **fulfill** His plan and purpose

If you are not sure if you are ready to meet the Lord, what a great opportunity He is giving you to receive His free gift and by receiving you can know you are going to heaven; He loves you.

But, *Mark 13* tells us *no man knows the hour* of Christ's return.

1 Thessalonians 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. NKJV

Just as a thief does not normally warn his victims he is coming to break into their home; no one knows the **exact time** the Lord will return.

A lot of people will be caught off guard when Jesus returns to judge the Christ-rejecting world.

Stay awake spiritually and live like time is short; because physical death is not the end of the story for those in Christ!

John Trapp, "*The ancient Greek word for **short** is "sustello," meaning "contracted and rolled up, as sails used to be by the mariners, when the ship draws nigh to the harbor."*

Time is short means the harbor is near and the sails are shortened to get the ship **ready** for harbor!

If we truly believe time is short, the things of earth and the flesh will begin to matter less and less.

Notice Paul says, *“The form of this world is passing away”*

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. NKJV

“Heavens” = the vaulted expanse of the sky = atmosphere;

According to Strong’s the words *“a great noise”* in the King James Version means, *“With a hissing and a crackling sound.”*

Wiersbe said, *“When the atomic bomb was tested in the Nevada desert, more than one reporter said that the explosion gave forth “a whirring sound,” or a “crackling sound.”*

The word, *“melt”* in *2 Peter 3:10* means *“to disintegrate, to be dissolved”; to break something down into its basic elements, and that is what happens when atomic energy is released.”*

Leon Morris said, *“There is nothing solid and lasting in this world system; it is its nature to pass away. It is folly for believers to act as though its values were permanent.”* (Morris)

Because we know time is short, we don’t plant deep roots here on earth; rather we grow deep in Christ and serving Him

II. Serve the Lord without distraction.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:32-35*

He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord. Like last time, Remaining single has advantages

Re-read *1 Corinthians 7:33*

Warren Wiersbe said, “*The word “care” means “to be anxious, or to be pulled in different directions.”* (Wiersbe)

Paul is not condemning the married person; Paul is simply saying when you are a married person, a lot of your focus goes to your spouse and family.

The first ministry of a married man is to care for his wife and the first ministry for a woman is to care for her husband.

A single person, who is called in service to the Lord, will have fewer distractions than a married person.

Paul is not saying it is impossible for a married person to serve the Lord; but the married Christ follower’s first ministry is to their spouse and this could be a distraction, if we are not careful.

Notice, “*This I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you...*”

Paul is speaking as a spiritual father saying, “*This is not a noose around anyone’s neck, but it is for their own good.*”

In order to fulfill the plans the Lord has for us and have Jesus on His rightful throne, we must seek first His kingdom.

Matthew 6:31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

Matthew 6:32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. NKJV

For Christ followers, as we place the Lord in His rightful place within our lives; He promises to take care of all of the provisions needed for tomorrow.

We put the Lord and His kingdom 1st in our lives;

...by making life-choices that enable us to have the freedom to give as much of our time, talents and treasures, as possible to the call He has placed on our lives.

An eternal perspective is needed by all Christians in order to not become **distracted** with the things of this world.

III. Arranged marriages.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:36-38*

This can be a confusing passage, but Paul is dealing with another question from the Corinthian Christians:

The question; *should I arrange a marriage for my daughter?*
Paul is speaking to a father of a young person of marrying age.
In that day, it was very normal for arranged marriages.

When Paul mentions, *behaving improperly*, he was saying this
father was denying his daughter or son the right to marry, even if
these “*virgins*” did not have the gift of celibacy.

Arrange marriages have been around since time began, think of
Adam and Eve; the Lord arranged that marriage.

Abraham wanted a suitable bride for his son Isaac. ***Genesis 24:1***
Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD
had blessed Abraham in all things.

Genesis 24:2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his
house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand
under my thigh,

Genesis 24:3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God
of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a
wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among
whom I dwell;

Genesis 24:4 but you shall go to my country and to my family,
and take a wife for my son Isaac." NKJV

The Israelites were forbidden to intermarry with the descendants
of Canaan because his descendants were considered cursed.

Intermarrying with the Canaanites would cause the Israelites to become unfaithful to the Lord God.

Most times Christians will be pulled down by folks who do not know the Lord instead of us pulling them up.

Paul said to this same church in *1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." NKJV*

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? NKJV

I am not an advocate of prearranged marriages, unless it is the Lord who does the arranging; however, a Christian will suffer the consequences if they are unequally yoked in marriage.

There will always be arguments over teaching of the Children, priority with time, talents, and giving to the ministry; because the non-believing spouse does not live for the Lord.

Then notice, *“The flower of her youth”*

Dr. Kenneth Wuest said when Paul mentioned *“The flower of her youth”* it means *“past the bloom of her youth.”*

Warren Wiersbe said, *“The danger, of course, is that she would rush into marriage just to avoid becoming a spinster, and she might make a mistake.”* (Wiersbe)

It is better to stay single than to marry the wrong person the Lord has not given you.

David Guzik said, *“For Paul, the choice between married and single was not the choice between good and bad, but between better and best.*

And for Paul, in light of the present circumstances, he regarded singleness as best.”

IV.Liberty for remarriage.

Read *1 Corinthians 7:39-40*

A Christian widow has the right to remarry after the death of their spouse; however, they are only **permitted** to marry someone who is a believer in Jesus Christ.

Like we said a while ago, a Christian will suffer the consequences if they are unequally yoked in marriage.

If the widow can remain unmarried, they will have a lot more time to serve the Lord.

If the person considers time is short to tell others about Jesus: *the choice between married and single was not the choice between good and bad, but between better and best.*

Similar to what we learned earlier in this letter, Paul says the gift of celibacy is good to exercise if the Lord has called you to it.

It is not because sex is evil (as some of the Corinthian Christians were saying), but the unmarried person will have more opportunity to serve the Lord than the married person will.

But again, the gift of celibacy is a gift that not everyone has.

Wiersbe said, *“Each person must ask himself or herself the following questions if marriage is being contemplated:*

- 1. What is my gift from God?*
- 2. Am I marrying a believer?*
- 3. Are the circumstances such that marriage is right?*
- 4. How will marriage affect my service for Christ?*
- 5. Am I prepared to enter into this union for life?”*

V. Practical application.

Other than marriage and remarriage, the most important topic Paul addresses here for Christians to live like time is short.

1 Corinthians 7:29 this I say, brethren, the time is short, NKJV

“Jesus’ second coming is not an abstract doctrine with no bearing on the Christian life.

The most pressing consideration for believers is how we should live in light of his impending return.”

As Christ followers, we are to live expectantly, not run away and hide. Live in light of the fact Jesus can return any moment.

Christians need to become the followers of Christ the world needs to see as we live in light of Christ's imminent return.

Why is it so important to believe that Christ could come at any moment? Because the hope of Christ's **imminent** return should have a powerful effect on us.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, NKJV

As student of the Word of God, there is no way to escape the conclusion we are living on borrowed time.

The signs of the times are evident and we must live like Jesus will return any moment.

Knowing time is short should cause us to lean into the Lord more and more and cause us to share our faith with the unsaved.

If we are yearning to see Him return it will cause us to pray for the lost and witness for the Lord when we have the opportunity.

The Apostle Paul gave a wake-up call to the church.

Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Romans 13:11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. NKJV

Christ's return is approaching and the time of His return is nearer than when we first believed.

Every day brings the return of Jesus Christ even closer.

How are we to redeem the time? There are things you can do on earth that will be impossible one minute after you die.

Bringing comfort to the discouraged, feeding the hungry, sharing the Gospel-these are all things that will be impossible to do in heaven but we can do right now.

Paul lists three things we do as Christ followers as a response to the imminent return of Christ.

1. Wake up!

Romans 13:11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The fact Paul wrote this to Christians tells us it is possible to be in Jesus, but asleep **spiritually**.

I know this sounds obvious, but we **don't know** that we're sleeping when we're sleeping.

We **do** know when we're tired and want to sleep and we even are aware when we're falling asleep; but we are not aware of being asleep while actually sleeping.

How many times have you fallen asleep on the couch watching TV or during a Bible study, or prayer time; and suddenly you wake up and you're thinking, "I can't believe I was sleeping!"

A Christian can be spiritually asleep and the sleeping Christian doesn't know their sleeping.

You can be spiritually sleeping and go to church and you can even be spiritually sleeping while serving, doing ministry.

When you're asleep your oblivious to the needs of anyone

The Lord is coming soon, and the time to live for Him is now. Since we have no guarantee for tomorrow, we should live for Jesus full-on today.

2. Dress up for the time.

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness...

John MacArthur said, "*Paul evokes the picture of a soldier who has spent the night in drunken carousing.*"

Still clad in the garments of his sin, he has fallen into a drunken sleep. Now it is time to wake up, throw off the clothes of night, and put on the armor of light."

*The Greek verb translated “**cast off**” was a term that spoke of being ejected or expelled forcefully.*

***Hebrews 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

***Hebrews 12:2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NKJV*

3. Put on.

***Romans 13:12b** and let us put on the armor of light. NKJV*

Again, think of, “*The soldier who had spent the night in drunken carousing.*”

Day was dawning. It was time to wake up, to cast off the old clothes, and to put on something clean and polished and battle-ready. “Armor” suggests warfare, and that is fitting.

Though the return of Christ is imminent, that is no warrant to forsake the battle.

Scripture never suggests that His people should sit on a hillside somewhere to await His coming.”

We put **off** the old man and put **on** the new man in Christ!

There are 2 reasons for the garment change within our life.

- Jesus is not only our commander and chief; He is also the lover of our soul, so we make these changes as a response to His great love for us; empowered by His Spirit.
- *Acts 1:8* says we followers will be witnesses to the world.

When the world looks at us; may they see our new Christ outfit living loud for Jesus; then they will desire what we have!

Christ followers are to live in light of the fact that Jesus can return any moment.

If you have never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, now is the time to act. Our problem is our sin separates us from God.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, NKJV

God's Remedy...The Cross. The ***Book of Hebrews*** tells us; without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sin.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit NKJV

Jesus was born to die, so that we might have Eternal Life and our response is to give ourselves fully to Christ

Romans 10:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation NKJV

- Admit you are a sinner and need forgiveness.
- Believe Jesus died for you and rose from the grave.
- Through prayer, confess that Jesus Christ is the only way to God and commit to live for Him for the rest of your life.

And once we trust the Lord for eternal life...then we surrender to His plans, and He gives us perfect peace.

The return of Christ is very soon; so our expression of worship causes all that is within me to live for and bless His Holy Name!