**Time: 2018 and 2019**

Time. Some tell us it is the most precious of all commodities. It isn’t, though it may be in second place. Despite sayings to the contrary, it never stands still and can’t be made or saved… at least not by us. It was created *in the beginning* (Gen.1:3-5,14-19) and is governed only by God (Josh.10:12-14). Though He is infinite and eternal, and therefore completely unbound by time, God is aware of and can tell time (and contrary to popular belief, so can *most* preachers). He specified feast days, sacrifices, and offerings that were time-specific; and made promises that were time-sensitive, Jer.25:11-12; and prophecies that were based on time itself, Dan.12:7; Rev.12:14.

But from our perspective, time marches on… incessantly and incrementally- though it does seem to move faster the older we get. As a little boy, I remember trying to imagine what it would be like to live in the 21 Century- though I couldn’t as I have never had much of an imagination. But here we are starting our 19th year of life in for what was for me as a youngster that unimaginable time.

The end/beginning of the year is typically a time for **reflection** (looking back in review), **inspection** (looking around in evaluation), **introspection** (looking inward in examination), and **prospection** (looking forward in anticipation). I’m not sure that we’ll accomplish any of these to a significant degree this morning, but there a couple of things I’d like us to consider in our “time” together…

1. Time cannot be *redeemed,* cp. Eph.5:16 (KJV), only *used-* wisely or wastefully.

The Greek term *exagorazo* (ex·ag·or·**ad**·zo) can, and in two of four occurrences does, mean to “redeem,” or “buy back,” Gal.3:13; 4:5. But here, and in Col.4:5, it instead means “to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well doing are as it were the purchase money by which we make the time our own” (Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon).

We can’t *turn back time* (despite Daylight Saving Time efforts). If only. What we could say or do differently. What we could relish more and relinquish less…. If we could only *turn back time.* But we can’t for a couple of simple reasons:

1. “We” didn’t **create** time, God did. Therefore, by *right of creatorship,* it belongs only to Him.
2. “We” don’t **control** time, God does. We can use or waste only what time He allows, Luke 12:16-21. Which brings us to…
3. Time is a limited commodity.

It has been so since expulsion from the Garden, Gen.3:22.

It is limited personally by “lifetime,” whatever that may be, Psa.90:10; and,

It is limited universally by “end-time,” whenever that may be, 2Pet.3:8-13.

Since we have only minimal control of one, and absolutely no control of the other of these limiting factors, the wisdom of *“making the most of your time”* from Eph.5:16 and Col.4:5 becomes readily apparent.

All of which leads to this: 2018 was a hard year for many of us. We laid to rest fathers, mothers, spouses, children, siblings, aunts, uncles, in-laws, dear friends, and brethren. We began to experience “new” lives by necessarily leaving behind those whom we love, but certainly not by choice. Donna and I attended five funerals/memorials in the month of December alone- three of them members of your family, and two of them members of ours. I, for one, am more than willing to leave 2018 behind and hope for better things ahead in 2019. But, in my heart, I know that if we’re here doing this again at the beginning of 2020 (will our vision be better?), 2019 will have meant more funerals, more loved ones left behind. In a way, it’s depressing: the more birthdays we have, the more funerals we attend. What to do?

Let me remind you of something with a little math. When the children of Israel left Egypt, they had roughly 600,000 men (probably twenty years old and upward), Ex.12:37. Even if we assume that number to be only ¼ of the population (which is very conservative, cf. Ex.12:38), that means 1.2 million adults (men and women). But, because of unbelief, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until all of that generation died, cf. Num.14:26-35. Think about that and do the math. 1.2 million deaths in 14,600 days (365 x 40 years) yields roughly **82 funerals a day for 40 years!**

Stay with me here. I’m not suggesting that our (yours or mine) loved ones died as a *direct* punishment for sin (though all of them *were* sinners nonetheless). My point is simple: Death, and its separation, is a part of “life” that we all must endure. We don’t like it- in fact we hate it, but we can’t change it… for time waits for no man, it marches on. And that’s what Israel had to do also. They paid their respects to the departed, and surely treasured their memories, but marched on toward the Promised Land. So too must we!

So as much as I have hated the death and destruction of 2018, and even realize that 2019 (unless the Lord returns before it ends- and He may well do just that) will be more of the same, we must **march on toward the Promised Land**:

* In faith,
* In assurance,
* In hope,
* With conviction, Heb.11:1.

For our “rest” is not yet, our “time” is not completed, therefore *“be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall…”* Heb.4:1-11.

*“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out joint, but rather be healed,”* Heb.12:12-13.

And march on, turning neither to the right nor the left, and certainly not turning back to slavery in sin, for *“we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul,”* Heb.10:39!