

# (Ephesians) Awake Ye Who Sleep

by Brian Brodersen

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*Brian Brodersen's sermon emphasizes the importance of living according to God's standards in a morally compromised world, urging believers to awaken and walk as children of light.*

**Duration:** 1:05:49

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:3, Ephesians 5:5-7

**Topics:** "Time Management", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding God's will and redeeming the time we have. He encourages listeners to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God and to renew their minds in order to discern God's perfect will. The speaker also shares a story about his 10-year-old son getting bored and playing a video game during a basketball game, highlighting the tendency to waste time. Overall, the sermon urges believers to make the most of the time they have and be prepared for a potential season of blessing and visitation from the Lord.

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## Transcript

Okay, let's turn this evening to Ephesians 5. I'm going to pick up in verse 3 this evening. Ephesians 5.3. As we continue our study through Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, let's pray and ask God's blessing on the Word. Lord, we pray that you would speak to us tonight.

And Lord, we thank you that we can come with that expectation. Lord, just knowing that you speak, knowing that you have something that you want to say to us. And so, Lord, give us an ear to hear what you would say through your word to us tonight.

In Jesus' name, amen. In verse 3 of Ephesians 5, Paul turns from the subject that he's been addressing. The subject of self-sacrifice to its very opposite, the subject of self-indulgence, he turns from genuine love to that perversion of it known better as lust.

And so he says in verse 3, but fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints. Now, the ancient civilizations were not a whole lot different than our modern civilization. They had the same kinds of problems that we have and the same kinds of moral issues that we are faced with were the issues that they were faced with at that time.

And so sexual immorality was very dominant in those ancient cultures as it is today. And so Paul is, of course, here giving instruction to God's people on how they are to be living and how our lives are to be a direct contrast to the lives of those who are not part of the family of God, those who are outside. And so fornication, uncleanness, covetousness and here covetousness, I think, would also have a sexual connotation just because of the connection.

And so he's talking about just that deep lust, that desire for sexual things. Paul says these things are not even to be named among you as is fitting for saints. So, you know, I mean, the thought that we would be practicing these kinds of things involved with them doing them is just.

So contrary, Paul says, don't even be talking about them, don't even be thinking about it. It's not to be any part of your life or experience as a Christian. We are to be removed from these kinds of things, he says, neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor coarse jestings, which are not fitting, but rather giving of things.

So he's basically describing the conversation of people who are steeped in sin and in perversion. He says those things are not to be found among you as God's people. We're living in the midst of all that kind of stuff, just as these Ephesians were.

They were living in the midst of it. But Paul is saying you're to come out of that. You're to rise above it.

You're to be so different from others. There's to be a stark contrast between you and the world. And so these are things that.

Are not really to be found in the church, but yet. Unfortunately, sadly to say, these things are far too often found among believers as well, but this, of course, is an issue that we need to deal with, because as Paul goes on to show us, this is something that God will not tolerate. And those who are living this way, those who are involved in these things are displeasing to God and potentially setting themselves up for God's judgment.

So he says for this, you know that no fornicator, unclean person or covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. So. He says.

You know, this. Remember this and we need to know and remember it today, nothing's changed with God. He still has the same standard today that is declared in the scriptures and doesn't matter what anybody says, God still holds that standard high and he expects us through the power of his spirit to rise to the occasion and to live up to the biblical standard that he set.

Verse six, he says, Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them. So he anticipates that there are going to be those there would have been those back at that time who would have said, oh, you know, these aren't things that you ought to be worried about.

You know, God's not going to judge you for these kinds of things. Paul anticipates that back then. And of course, we find that those are the kinds of things that we're hearing today as well.

God's not concerned with sexuality. People will say those aren't the important issues. You know, God made us as sexual creatures and we ought to just do what comes natural to us and just know that that aspect of our humanity is is a gift from God.

And we should just, you know. Indulge in it to. Our heart's content.

Those are vain words, they're empty words back in Paul's day. Many things that we would even still today see as very sinful and even unlawful. These things were allowed.

These things were oftentimes promoted within the society. Prostitution was it was something that was acceptable to the society at the time. As a matter of fact, in the city of Ephesus, there was that temple you remember to Diana or to Artemis.

And there were many priestesses who worked in the temple and outside the temple, and their job was to bring in money. And the way they did it was through prostitution. And so it was culturally acceptable at that time.

And so there might have been those who would argue and say, well, you know, Paul, please come on now. Look, this stuff couldn't be all that bad. I mean, you know, everybody does it.

It's just part of our society. It's something that's looked upon favorably. Even the government endorsed it, thought it was a good thing.

But yet, Paul says, let no one deceive you with empty words and more and more and more. Things are moving in that direction in the culture that we live in, aren't they? We still have laws intact today that make these kinds of things illegal, but people are working hard to try to overturn those laws and to legalize things like prostitution and so forth. Europe is quite a ways ahead of us with this sort of thing.

They've done that in many of the countries in Europe already. And as usual, we're not going to be outdone by the Europeans. We're going to try to catch up with them as quick as we can.

And there are people that are, you know, insisting that we move in this direction. And so there might come a time when the things that were one time seen as taboo in society, many of them are already. But there might come a time when all of these taboos are completely erased.

And, you know, you just live the way you want to live sexually. And it's all legal and endorsed by, you know, the society in general. Even the government is in agreement.

And but nevertheless. God has his standard. And that's who we've got to look to.

We've got to look to the word of God and the word of God is very clear. Let no one deceive you with empty words. Because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

You know, when we talk about sexual immorality to even use that term today is offensive to many people in the culture because they do not believe that there is anything immoral about sex at all, any type of sex. So, you know, that we would even suggest that there can be some sort of immorality connected to sex is is offensive to people today. But even though, you know, attitudes are changing among people, we have to just stand firm.

As Christians in the scriptures, God has made it clear he's got a moral standard and he's not going to change it. It's not a flexible standard. It's not one that you go with.

If it suits your fancy and then, you know, if you prefer something else, then don't bother with it. It's a standard that applies across the board to everyone. And.

And because this is becoming so dominant around us, we have to be extra careful not to, you know, get sucked up in it and to start to condone it or to just, you know, while it's really not that big of a deal, it is a big deal to God. But, you know, the world has an interesting way of. Trying to wear us down in our convictions and sort of change our minds, you know, very subtly they do it through a variety of different means, but so often through.

The media, through advertising or through, you know, perhaps some of the films or some of the music, you know, it's just. They're trying to normalize these things. And sometimes they'll, you know, they'll hook you in, they'll.

Say, set up, you know, maybe a sitcom or something where, you know, there's a lot of humor and, you know, it's real enjoyable from that perspective. But then, you know, they'll they'll start the humor, you know, starts to move in the direction of sexual innuendo and and all of that. And but, you know, it's so funny.

So you keep watching it and they and they go from bad to worse. They keep going deeper and deeper into it. And this is just a way of wearing people down and trying to break down standards and things like that.

But verse six is a powerful, powerful warning. Let no one deceive you with empty words. You know, people can come up with all the theories and they've got the generally the psychologists are behind all of these, you know, new declarations regarding sexuality.

And just recently, the American Psychological Association, I think it was endorsed same sex families and, you know, came forth and said that, you know, this is a this is a perfectly legitimate environment for kids to grow up in. We fully support adoption into same sex families. And, you know, there's something very valuable about this kind of an experience for a child.

And, you know, just on and on about the virtues of children being adopted by same sex couples. Let no one deceive you with empty words. Don't care if it's the American Psychological Association or, you know, how many degrees a person has behind their name or whatever else.

This is the kind of stuff that Paul is talking about. Let no one deceive you. These are empty words.

The wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience because of these things. So we now, of course, what can we do in regard to the world? The world is going to go in the direction that it's going to go. But Paul is writing to Christians and he's warning us and he's telling us not to compromise ourselves in these areas.

And there are many places in the scripture where there are warnings against sexual immorality. And one of the basis that Paul puts forth for us abstaining from any of this sort of thing is because of the fact that we are joined together with Christ. He says, in essence, you've become one with Christ because you're a believer.

And how could you think of taking Christ and joining him to some unclean or unholy sort of a thing? So the union that we have with Christ is to keep us from ever thinking about moving in that direction, because if we were to do it, as Paul said, we basically would take Christ with us. He who is joined to a harlot becomes one with a harlot, he said, and then he asked the question of the Corinthians. He said, are you going to take Christ and join him to a harlot? But, you know, that's true with.

Any facet of sexual immorality, whatever we get involved in, we're bringing Christ along with us, we're dragging him into it and we're dragging him through it because we're vitally connected to him. So I have to have that in my mindset as I'm tempted by these things, as these things come before me and as they're presented to me as as options, I have to remember, wait, I'm joined to Christ. I'm connected to him.

If I indulge in that, then I take him along with me. Am I foolish enough to do such a thing? I hope not. But then Paul also gives us another reason, he says that you are not your own.

You were bought with a price, your body no longer really belongs to you. So to take your body and to use it for immoral purposes is really to take something that is not yours and to use it in a way it was never intended to be used. And that's a great violation of God's command.

And so because of these things, Paul says the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience, there's a day of reckoning coming. There's a time of judgment for these kinds of things, and yet I think we can definitely affirm that the judgment begins even. Now, there's a judgment coming in the future, of course, but Paul said he that sins in this manner sins against himself.

You sin against your own body and there are many consequences to sexual immorality, not just spiritual consequences or eternal consequences. Those are, of course, the most severe, but there are present consequences, physical and emotional consequences, the suffering physically that can occur because of immoral lives. Many people in history living immorally have died of sexually transmitted diseases, and we live in a time when we've got a little bit of an advantage in the fact that, you know, we've developed antibiotic treatments and things like that.

And, you know, people can go out and contract a disease and then run down to the doctor and get an antibiotic and, you know, just keep going. But of course, we know there are other diseases that aren't treatable through antibiotics like AIDS and so forth. So there are the the built in consequences to this kind of behavior.

But there is the greatest and most severe consequence would be that of the judgment of God. So he says, do not be partakers with them for you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

So, again, you see, he's emphasizing the contrast you once were darkness, you he says you were darkness, not just merely you were in the darkness, but the darkness was in us. But there's a distinction now, you were light in the Lord, walk as children of light for the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth. Now, in verse nine, some translations read for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.

And that seems to flow a bit better. That might be the better translation, actually. But he's saying, walk as children of light for the fruit of the light is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.

So, again, just emphasizing that there's to be. A godliness about us, a lifestyle that is distinct, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

Now, again, remember, this Paul is writing to Christians living in an immoral world, living in a dark world. He says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The word fellowship implies a partnership, communion, a deep connection.

Now, it's impossible to escape coming into contact with the works of darkness to some extent, isn't it? Because it's all around us. We're inundated by it. It's, you know, everywhere we go, we were.

Confronted with language that's obscene, we're confronted many times with images and just, you know, the environment around us. Is such that it's a difficult environment, but that's something that's, you know, pretty much unavoidable. Paul said when he was writing to the Corinthians about not having.

Relations with people who were fornicating and committing adultery and those things, not having contact with them or any close association, he said, I wasn't really referring to the people in the world because that's the way the world is. He said you'd have to actually leave the world. In order to get away from this stuff, ultimately, but he said, what I'm talking about is not having fellowship with people who say they're believers, but yet are living this kind of lifestyle, he says, disconnect yourself from these people.

And he says that so that people who are living in sin and professing to be believers can see that there's a consequence to their sin, they're they're cut off from fellowship, and hopefully that'll bring them around to the point of repentance. So he says here, have no fellowship, have no close association, have no partnership, have no intimate relations with those who are involved in the unfruitful works of darkness. It's a wise thing to choose godly people to associate with because it's beneficial for your life spiritually.

If we choose to closely associate with people who are not serious about their walk with the Lord, then we can suffer because of that. So he says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. So we're not to participate in these things.

We're not to have fellowship, but we're to expose them. You know, it would be good. If we were a bit more bold at times and would just simply say, hey, you know, that's wrong.

No, I don't want to do that, I'm not going to listen to that or no, I don't think I'll stick around and watch that. So often we're put in compromise situations by fellow Christians. You know, oh, come on, let's just, you know, this isn't that big of a deal.

Let's just and and then we end up having some fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Paul says, no, don't do that. He said, rather expose and say, no, that's you know, that's not going to benefit us.

That's not going to build us up in the faith. That's not going to bring us closer to Christ. We need to expose those things for it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore, he says, awake, you who sleep arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. So, Paul, again, the context here, you know, he's talking about walking as children of light.

And what he's saying is if we're really walking with the Lord, then our very lives are going to expose those deeds of darkness for what they are. And as we are exposing those deeds of darkness at the same time, that can have an impact upon people to really themselves get right with the Lord. God wants to use us with each other to provoke each other, to challenge each other, to rebuke each other, even at times.

The temptation is to just sort of go along with everything. And that's the thing that we have to watch out for. Maybe you're in a situation where you're around Christian friends, but yet you feel like everything's compromised.

You feel like when you're together, you know, there's nothing really edifying going on. There's nothing significantly happening spiritually. As a matter of fact, you feel just the opposite is taking place.

And you walk away from a supposed time of fellowship with your Christian friends and you're feeling filthy. You're feeling defiled. You're feeling like, you know, this isn't right.

You know what God says, expose that. You be the one to stand up and say, you know, this isn't right. This isn't what we should be doing as Christian people.

Let's let's get away from this stuff. Let's, you know, get in the word. Let's pray.

Let's let's really. And, you know, somebody's got to stand up and do that. That's what Paul's exhorting us to do here.

He says all things are made manifest by the light, expose those things, let your light so shine before men. And I think what happens in the body of Christ is that because we just allow little compromises to come along, we don't say anything. We don't want to hurt anybody's feelings or anything like that.

Pretty soon we're just walking in darkness ourselves to some extent, not totally and completely. But yet there are a lot of things that have been allowed back in. You'd be amazed at some of the things that are going on among some Christians today, Christians today, you know, it's not exclusively younger people, but sometimes that's where it's sort of brewing among the groups of some of the younger people.

You know, they're they're sort of reevaluating the faith of their fathers, you know, and kind of taking a new look at it and seeing, you know, well, I don't know that we need to be all that strict about, you know, this particular thing or or another area here. And so, you know, they're experimenting, experimenting a little bit. And among these crowds, you know, you find that they feel that they've got some real liberty in the Lord.

So, you know, they'll after the Bible study, they'll all go out and, you know, maybe buy some beer and get a movie and go home and just kind of kick back, you know. Drink a beer to watch a flick and, you know, but hey, praise the Lord, you know, we've got liberty, we're Christians, we don't you know, we're not uptight, you know, we're we're not hung up on this stuff like some of the other people. And and, you know, some of them are going to the point of saying, you know, the there's certain words, you know, that have become taboo among Christians.

You know, these words aren't really bad words. We you know, and so they're redefining obscenity in their exercising, you know, their liberty and, you know, feeling like they can talk this way. And, you know, this is no way to determine whether or not a person's really a Christian.

So, you know, they're basically just cussing like everybody else. Acting like everybody else and saying that, you know, the Lord's with us and we're we're free, man, in Christ, you know, we're not hung up like you guys uptight and legalistic. And then when it comes to sex.

There's those same kinds of things that start creeping in, it starts with the little things of the language and, you know, maybe a little, you know, freedom with the alcohol and, you know, some of those things. But then, you know, well, living with your girlfriend, you know, I mean, that's that's not that big of a thing. You know, hey, what what's a marriage certificate anyway, man? You know, it's just a piece of paper.

I love her. She loves me. Before the Lord, we prayed about it.

You know, people are saying stuff like this. A years ago, a friend of mine got married down at the beach with just him and his girlfriend, the Lord. The Lord performed the wedding, you know, convenient, didn't have to give an honorarium to the preacher or anything, you know, no paperwork involved.

Just but that that kind of stuff, you know, it starts creeping in and and then, you know, in some extreme, it just it just keeps going in that direction. And over in over in the UK where, you know, I live for a while, there's they've got the gay Christian movement. And they're accepted by some of the evangelical community and they'll have different festivals, you know, they have a lot of festivals over there during the summer, music festivals and things like that, and they'll invite a bunch of different groups of people to come and, you know, talk about their ministry or whatever and, you know, get the gay Christians over.

We want to hear, you know, their perspective on everything as well. And, you know, this is. It doesn't start there, it starts with the little compromises in the other areas, but as time goes on, you know, you get to a point where the heart becomes hard.

There's no longer an ability to discern between what is really right and really wrong, and you have Christians and all kinds of confusion. And darkness has come in and Christian people are living. With the same kinds of vices that non-Christians are living with and saying things like, you know, it's really not that big of a deal when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he talked about a situation in Corinth where there was a man who was living with his stepmother, presumably.

And the church had accepted it. The church was tolerant. And they were proud of the fact that they weren't real uptight about this situation, and Paul rebuked them and he said, you are allowing things in your midst that the unbelievers are appalled by.

You're allowing it, you're tolerating it, and they were doing it under the banner of enlightenment. Oh, you know, we're enlightened where, you know, we understand that these things aren't that big of a deal. You know, God, God is not like I said earlier, God is not concerned about sexuality.

He's interested in justice and, you know, bigger, more important kinds of things, social issues, taking care of the poor and, you know, making sure people get a fair wage and people's living conditions and all those kinds of things. Emphasis on social justice and deemphasizing personal issues like sexuality and all. Well, God is interested in social issues, certainly, but he's also interested in the way we live personally.

And so as Christian people, we. We are to take the initiative and maybe you, as I said, find yourself in a situation where people are compromising around you. Don't wait for them to stand up and say, wait a second, you take the initiative.

You stand up and say, you know, this isn't right. Let's stop doing this. Let's let's get back into what we know God delights in.

Let's let's fellowship. Let's pray. Let's seek the Lord.

Let's put the things of the spirit first. There's a lot of pressure not to do that. And when you do it, people then will point the finger and say that you're self-righteous and things like that.

But that's, I guess, just part of the cost. So he says now Paul is giving a quotation here. We don't know where the quotation is from.

Some people believe that it was sort of a paraphrase of Isaiah 61 and others see that it might have been from Daniel. And then some say this would perhaps be just a saying that was going around at the time attributed to the Lord, but yet not recorded. We don't really know.

But this is what he says. So God has said this. Paul is affirming that awake you who sleep arise from the dead and Christ will give you light.

Awake you who sleep. It's possible for the people who are supposed to be awake, arisen and full of life to be in a state where we need to be reawakened. The word revival means to revive, to awaken.

To bring someone out of a slumber and the church is in need of revival. The church is in need of being awakened to its calling, to the great plan that God has for the church, to the glory that God has awaiting the church. And a lot of the things that are happening that we're talking about here tonight are things that I think are the result of losing perspective on who we are.

And what we're to be and where we're going, people have lost sight of the glory of God and they've become, to some extent, bored with their faith. And so now it's time for entertainment. The church is so overcome today with an entertainment mentality.

You know, people want to be entertained. We live in an entertainment oriented society, and so the church, we've just adapted that and, you know, everything is geared around entertaining people, making them feel comfortable and good. But that's all an indicator that we've lost sight of the glory of God, the greatness of our calling, the purpose that he has for us.

If we really laid hold of that, we'd be so busy, we wouldn't have time to worry about being entertained. Entertainment is, in a sense, it's a sort of a result of boredom, isn't it? You're bored. You don't have anything to do.

So here, entertain me. My 10 year old son, he gets bored really quick. We're driving somewhere last night and, you know, I was looking at me as his chin like this.

He was looking very serious. And I said, what's the matter? I'm bored. You're bored, OK, well, I'm sorry, we have to drive.

We're going to a basketball game to entertain him, but he's bored on the way. So, you know, then we're at the basketball game and I hear this little, you know, electronic thing going off beside me and I look over and he's playing a video game on the telephone. Breeden, there's Kobe Bryant right there, there's Shaq.

Put that stupid video game down. Well, I was bored. Now, he's 10 years old, so we can excuse that he'll grow out of it.

If I discipline him properly. But we're not a whole lot different as adults, are we? And but how how can we be bored if we're bored? It's because we've lost perspective on who we are and what we're to be doing here on Earth and who our God is and his glorious kingdom and what his plan is. We should never be bored for a moment.

There's so much to do in regard to the kingdom of God. But it's because of this kind of thing. And so as Christians, people who should be revived and excited and thrilled, we need an awakening.

And Paul says, awake you who sleep or rise from the dead and Christ will give you light. And the Lord will give us that light, but we need to realize, as Paul said in writing to the Romans, it is now high time to awake out of sleep for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. My goodness, things are just escalating toward the second coming.

And I was thinking about it this past week, you know, as I scan the newspapers and just kind of listen to the different things that are going on in the world, and we got a couple of interesting articles that came through, I think, in the register this week. First of all, there was a front page article on this biochip that they're now talking about implanting in us. And, you know, this this is stuff that they're talking about on the highest levels.

In our society, they're talking about the virtues of implanting a chip. And with the terrorist threat, there's, of course, you know, they're seeing a greater need because of the ability to, you know, steal passports and driver's licenses and these kinds of things. Man, this chip would do away with all of that.

That would be the means of identifying exactly who a person is. And, you know, it would make a safer society. It would be more conducive for security measures and things.

And so now, you know, there's a lot of talk going on about this now. And then reading, you know, just I think it was on the same front page on that same day, the prince of Saudi Arabia offering a peace plan for Israel. If they'll go ahead and give back that which was obtained in the 1967 war, he's promising that all of the Arab world will come together to support peace.

And, you know, the Palestinians, the extremists among them are declaring that they're not satisfied with the 1967 borders. They want to go back to pre-1948, which means they want the Jews out of the land completely. So, you know, all of this stuff is happening around us.

And it's just you know, it's like a loudspeaker. Just broadcasting to us, Jesus is coming again. He's coming again soon, as Paul said, now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

So now it's time to awake out of sleep. If we're sleeping in the light, it's time to awake out of sleep, arise from the dead. And as we wake up, the promises Christ will give you light.

The Lord is right there to meet us when we say, Lord, I've been sleeping, Lord, I've been like I've been dead. Revive me. There is Christ will give you light, but we've got to wake up.

We've got to realize that the time is short. And so he goes on and he says, see then that you walk circumspectly, walking circumspectly. The word circumspectly comes from two Latin words, means to look around.

And the idea is that we are not to be walking along just aimlessly meandering through life, but we are to be walking through life with our eyes wide open, realizing what's happening around us. We are to walk circumspectly, we're to walk thoughtfully, we're to understand the times that we're living in and we're to conduct ourselves based on the reality around us walking circumspectly. Not as fools, but as wise, you see.

A fool is a person who walks around blindfolded, oblivious to what's going on around them, not thinking twice about the things that are happening around them. And there are many people walking like fools today, aren't there? We see all this stuff going on in our world. We see the nation's poisoning for battle and

we see the issues with Israel and all of these things.

And some people are walking along oblivious to it. They've never even given it a second thought. And among that group are some Christians, they're not really thinking about it, they're just going on as though, hey, life's going to go on forever.

You know, I'll just do my thing and and, you know, it's foolish. He says that we are to walk as wise, the wise person looks around, analyzes the situation, takes notes, says, all right, this is where we're at. This is how I've got to conduct myself.

And that's what Paul says. See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools. Listen to this redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Redeeming the time, what's the opposite of redeeming the time? Wasting time. We waste time so often on meaningless things. We put so much energy and effort into things that don't matter.

Some things are completely frivolous. They're just they're beyond worthless. They just have no substance to them, no value, no nothing.

It's just, you know, just a pure waste of time. You know, I wonder if when we were born, if we were handed. A note.

Telling us how many days we would live. I wonder if we would conduct ourselves differently. I wonder if we could break it down into hours, if we might not conduct ourselves differently.

Realizing that I've only got X amount of days or I've only got X amount of hours. If we thought of life like that, I think we would probably do more to redeem the time, realizing, you know, I don't have all the time in the world. I don't have forever.

The sooner we can grab hold of this issue of redeeming the time, the better off we'll be. I wish I would have laid hold of this sooner in life. I wasted so much time in my life.

And now, as I'm at the midlife point or beyond it, I guess I think, oh, I wish I could have that time back that I wasted so much time. There was an advertisement. That someone put out in the paper one time.

It read like this lost yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset. Two golden hours, each set with 60 diamond minutes. No reward offered.

For they are gone forever. They are gone forever. We can't get those precious moments back.

We can't get those hours back. We can't get those days back. But what we can do is we can make a commitment to redeem the time that we've got left.

And that's what we need to do as we consider this first. Jonathan Edwards, who was the great evangelical leader back in the 1700s, the early days of the history of our country, he would write down various resolutions. And just before his 20th birthday, this was one of the resolutions he wrote, never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

Never to lose one moment of time. That's what Paul is talking about, redeeming the time. That's what a wise man does.

A foolish man wastes time, thinks he's got forever. Oh, you know, it doesn't matter. No, I do that later.

It's not important. But you know what happens to that foolish man? He comes to a point one day and he realizes he's out of time and he's never done anything with what he had. And now his time is up.

And for myself, I don't want to spend my life wasting time. I want to redeem the time. I want to take the opportunities that God has given, and I want to see what God will do with the time that he's left us.

You know, we talk about the condition of our country and the condition of our world and the nearness of the coming of the Lord. And, you know, we talk as we think about the condition of our country, we talk about the the inevitability of judgment and all that. But yet, you know, there could be.

A time of mercy, once again, there could be grace, there could be a visitation from the Lord. There could be a stain of sin and a season of blessing, and I think back to the outpouring of God's spirit that resulted in the birth of this ministry. And, you know, if you look back in history, the 1960s were probably.

The most tumultuous years in our history's country or in our country's history, you know, after the Civil War, of course, there was the First World War and the Second World War, and those were serious, serious things. But they we were involved in that. But obviously, it didn't touch us to the extent that it touched Europe.

But in the 60s, American society was in upheaval. And, you know, if you just look at the things that happened from the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, and, you know, the things that were going on on the college campuses. And the cultural revolution that was taking place, it it didn't seem that the country would survive the decade of the 60s.

But what happened right there toward the end of the 60s, God stepped in and he began to do a powerful work in the lives of people and multitudes of people came to Christ. And it just seemed that the Lord stopped the momentum. That had built up and gave us a season of blessing, we're kind of back at that place again.

Where we were in the 60s, very similar, even more severe in some ways, but perhaps. God would do something again, perhaps God will intervene, perhaps God will have mercy, perhaps he will stay the judgment and allow times of blessing. But, you know, if that's going to happen, here's what we've got to realize.

If that's going to happen, it's got to begin with us. It's got to begin with God's people redeeming the time, God's people giving their all to him. God's people being purified because it's when God's people set themselves apart.

That's when God. Is free to work when God was bringing judgment upon Israel, pronouncing judgment upon Israel, he declared to Isaiah the prophet, he said, I marvel that there was no man to stand in the gap to intercede. And the implication there is that had there been someone, God would have even extended his mercy further.

Perhaps God will do that today. Are we those people, are we willing to redeem the time to. Give ourselves to the Lord in a fresh new way and say, God, do something in my life to restore me to what you'd have me to be.

And God, do something through my life to make a difference. Who knows? But what the Lord might come and visit us again and bring a time of healing in a time of blessing. It looks bleak, it almost seems, you know, impossible, but.

We're not the first people to be in a situation that looked impossible and to have God change everything drastically. And so redeem the time because the days are evil, therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is, understand God's will. How can I understand God's will? Well, I can understand his will by presenting my body as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to him, which is my reasonable service, not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewing of my mind that I may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Tonight, let's give ourselves over to the Lord in a fresh commitment and just say, Lord. Bring us out of the darkness completely. Lord, that we would really be walking in the light.

That we would be bearing the fruit of the light in our lives, that we would be. Walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, that we would redeem the time that we would take every. Hour that's given to us and in some way or another, live that hour for the Lord, for his glory, and I would.

Venture to say that if we'll do that, God will bless, he will bring a blessing, he'll do a new work, and I believe that he wants to do new work. You know, I'll tell you something on a personal note, I was driving. I think I might have shared this with him a few weeks ago.

I don't know. I was driving. And.

Just through Huntington Beach a couple of weeks ago, and and I and I must say, I was full of doubt, unbelief, looking around at the prosperity and, you know, just the whole thing that we have here in Orange County. And I was just saying, Lord, what am I doing here? You know, got this. It's already happened here and, you know, we're so inundated with Christian things and the Christian subculture and and look at everybody, everybody's got money, you know, coming out their ears and nobody needs anything.

There's there's not any great hunger for you. And, you know, I'm just thinking of all the other places in the world that people don't have anything. And so I'm really struggling in my heart.

I'm just saying, Lord, what am I doing here? And and at the same time, I'm saying to, you know, nothing's going to happen here. It already happened back in the 60s and 70s. And, you know, and I'm just in this real tug of war in my spirit.

And I'm really. Kind of just crying out to God, just saying, what, why am I here? And, you know, with in the back of my mind, this idea that, you know, it's already happened here and so on, just in a flash, the Lord, you know, you know, the Lord will do that sometimes just just right there, just just an impression on my mind. It was so clearly from him.

He said, you're here because I called you here. I said, oh, OK, well, that solves that for me. The mystery solved.

But then listen to this. This is what really got me. I was reading the other night.

I was reading the Jonathan Goforth. He was that great missionary in China who God used so mightily to bring an outpouring of his spirit. A great revival occurred under the ministry of Jonathan Goforth.

And I just finished up his biography a week and a half ago or so. So I wanted to go back and read another little book that he wrote called *By My Spirit*, which is a detailed account of the revival that took place. The biography gives you the history of the revivals, but it doesn't give you all the details of what went on.

And so I've been going back and reading that over and it really struck me. There was a point where he had gone into this community and it was just kind of like what I was describing. That was his sense that there, you know, everybody was happy.

There wasn't any sense that we really needed a fresh work of God. It was all just and he came and he thought, you know, Lord, what am I doing here? No, there is no real hunger. There's no.

And, you know, he was pouring out his heart to the Lord and sort of, in a sense, challenging God. Why did you send me here? And the Lord spoke to him in an instant and he said, whose work is it? Is it yours or mine? And he said, I'm able to do what seems impossible to you. And I've got to say, as I read that experience that he wrote down, I thought, my goodness, that's the exact experience that I had that particular day.

And I felt like the Lord was encouraging me that he was saying. Believe me. Believe me to do a work.

And, you know, tonight before I came out here, I went into my little box here in the office and I always check to see, you know, if there's anything in there and there was a letter. And I opened the letter and I read it and it was from a lady here in the congregation. You might even be here tonight, but she was talking about the fact that we're talking so often about the judgment of God upon America and so forth.

And she said, and, you know, that's probably going to come. But she said, but what about mercy from God upon America and what about a new work of God? And then she kind of in the letter wrote out her testimony, how she was, you know, lost and perishing and seemed like she should have been judged. But how God had mercy on her and changed her life.

And she was saying how she's, you know, in this ministry where she's seen these people. And it seems on the one hand, like, you know, their lives are completely wasted and there's no hope. But as she looks at him, she feels like God wants to have mercy.

And, you know, as I read that before I came out tonight, I just felt like the Lord was speaking to me, saying, ask me to have mercy on this nation. Pray for that to happen. Believe that I want to do a work and I believe that God wants to pour out his spirit again.

And he wants to do something fresh in these days. But as I said, it's not dependent on us in the fullest sense. It's ultimately dependent on God.

But if God's going to do something, he chooses most frequently to do it with people. And we've got to be right with him in order for him to do it. So that's why the apostle says awake, you who sleep arise from the dead.

Christ will give you light. We've got to wake up as the church. We've got to get back to that place where we're redeeming the time that we're realizing, you know, all of these things.

We've got to have a life. We've got to have a job. We've got to do those things.

Those things are all necessities. But we have to be careful that they do not consume us, overtake us and. End up.

Doing what with our time, wasting it to a large extent because we can't take it with us. It doesn't matter in the perspective of eternity. And so God help us tonight to commit ourselves to him in such a way that he could do what he wants to do among us.

Let's pray. Lord, we want to pray tonight. And ask you, Lord, to search our hearts, ask you, Lord, to convict us of things in our lives.

That are hindering you from what you're wanting to do in us and through us. And Lord, we've all had the experience of allowing things to creep back into our lives, even things that maybe you've clearly told us to lay down at a certain point. But they subtly creep back in and then we find that we're doing those things again.

And Lord, I'm not talking about necessarily evil things even, but things that are just time wasters, time stealers, things that take us away from the. Most important things. And so, Lord, search our hearts tonight.

Lord, maybe we've surrounded ourselves with friends that aren't. Really edifying us or building us up, even though they're Christians, and maybe we've stood by silently. Haven't said anything and just been sort of caught up in the whole thing.

Lord, forgive us and help us, not self-righteously, but just humbly to take a stand for you. To set the example, to set the pace. Well, Lord, we look around and we see that.

Judgment surely is coming, but we think of Israel and we think of even though judgment was inevitable. You sent, Lord, a fresh work of your spirit among them in the days of Hezekiah and in the days of Josiah. And so, Lord, in these days, we pray that you would send a fresh work of your spirit among us.

Lord, we pray that you would revive your church. Lord, awaken us out of our sleep. Lord, give us that light.

Lord, we pray for our nation. We pray for our president and Lord, even with him, we see your mercy. That we have a man in office who is bold about his dependency on you.

A man who speaks freely about his looking to you for wisdom in your word. A man who asked people. Frequently to pray for him, and we do pray for him tonight, Lord, that you'd be with him and Lord.

That you'd help him to make the right decisions, decisions that will help to perhaps turn.

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