

Times Up!

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon emphasizes the urgency of responding to God's call before the opportunity for repentance is lost.

Duration: 25:29

Scripture: Psalm 81:11, Romans 1:21-28, Hebrews 10:26, Hebrews 10:30, Revelation 10:6

Topics: "Time"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of time running out and the impending judgment of God. He uses the analogy of a time limit during exams to illustrate the idea that there will come a point when God will say 'times up' and judgment will occur. The speaker emphasizes the importance of accepting God's love and the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ before it is too late. He also references biblical examples such as the days of Noah when God declared that His spirit would not always strive with man. The sermon concludes with a reminder to repent and not harden one's heart.

Transcript

Well, we come to Revelation chapter 10, the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ. And so we encourage you to be with us tonight as we will be talking about the second coming of Jesus to this world. And I personally do not believe that it is very far off.

But this morning we'd like to draw your attention to verse 6, where John sees this angel standing on the sea and upon the earth, lifting his hand to heaven, swearing by him that lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer. That word time no longer is literally no longer a delay, or you might paraphrase it, times up. It's a phrase that we've heard many times in life.

In school, so often when we had exams, there was a time limit in taking the exam. The teacher would put the little time clock on her desk. And as we were taking the exam, the alarm or the little bell would ring and the teacher would say, time's up, turn your papers in.

And whether or not you'd have been able to finish the test, the time was up, the time allotted to take the test, and then it was time to turn in the test and get your results. It's sort of awesome to realize that there's coming a day in the near future when the Lord is going to say, time's up, the time for the testing is over, time to turn in your papers. And this is exactly what we have here in the 10th chapter as this mighty angel

standing on the land and on the sea declares, time's up.

God has allowed man to go as far as he will. And now God is going to judge. The time for judgment has come, the Lord returning and judging the earth for its sin.

God is going to say, time's up. There is a time we know not when, a point we know not where, that marks the destiny of men to exhort and despair. There is a line though by us unseen, once it has been crossed, even God himself in all of his love has sworn that all is lost.

How far can we go on in sin? How long will God forbear? Where does hope end and where begins the confines of despair? An answer from the sky is sent, ye that from men, ye that from God depart, while it is called today, repent and harden not your heart. As we look at history, we find that there are many times in history when God has said, time's up. I think of the days of Noah when God declared, my spirit will not always strive with man.

The time when God said, time is up. God said to the church of Thyatira, I've given you space to repent, but because you have not repented, therefore I will cast you and those that commit fornication with you into the great tribulation. Another time when God is going to say, time's up.

When you think about it, when God said, my spirit will not always strive with man, it's good to know that God's spirit does strive with man. Why? Because God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And God lets man go as far as he desires.

He strives with him, he warns him, he calls him to repentance. But if a man remains abudurate in his rebellion against God, if he continues to go away from God, there can come that time when God says, time's up. I gave you space to repent, but you repented not, and therefore you will be cast into the great tribulation.

God told Ezekiel, say to the wicked, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked might turn from his wickedness and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? The warning that there is that limit. How long will God strive with the wicked? How long before God says, time's up.

I will strive with you no more. The scriptures declare that God has given up on certain people. A tragic day when God says, I give up.

I've dealt with them long enough. I've given them enough warning. I've called to them enough times.

They've turned a deaf ear to me. I give up. In Psalm 81 11, the Lord said, but my people would not listen to my voice.

Israel would have nothing to do with me, so I gave them up. In Romans 1 21, Paul writes, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. Neither were they thankful, but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

And professing themselves to be wise, they actually became fools, and they changed the glory of an uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man. And to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things, wherefore God gave them up. In Romans 1 28, because they did not want to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind.

Why did God give them up? Because they wouldn't listen to him. Because they would not glorify him as God. Because they didn't want to retain God in their mind.

So God basically says, I give up. Time's up. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, and he said, they have perished because they have been deceived by their unrighteousness.

Because they did not have a love for the truth, that they might be saved, God will send to them a strong delusion that they will be leave a lie rather than the truth, that they might be damned who believe not the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness. A step further, when a person goes so far, when a person hardens his heart so long, when he rejects the calling of God's spirit to his heart, God gives them up. But even a step further, God turns them over to a strong delusion.

They become deluded. They believe a lie rather than the truth. The strong delusion.

God says, time's up. You don't want to believe the truth, then believe the lie. God said to Hosea concerning Ephraim, Ephraim is joined to her idols.

Let her alone. Don't bother with her anymore. Don't preach to her anymore.

Don't call to her anymore. Let her alone. She's given over to her idols.

A sad thing when God says to the pastor, let them alone. They've given over to their idols. Their time is up.

Don't warn them any longer. Don't try to help them any further. Interesting, three times God told Jeremiah, don't pray for them anymore.

Jeremiah 7.16, therefore, do not pray for these people. Neither lift up a cry or a prayer for them. Neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear you.

Don't bother, Jeremiah. I'm not going to hear you if you pray. In Jeremiah 11.14, the Lord said, do not pray for these people.

Neither lift up a cry or a prayer for them, for I will not hear. And in the day that they cry unto me, because they are in trouble. In Jeremiah 14.11, the Lord said to Jeremiah, don't pray for these people for their good.

When they fast, I will not hear their cry. When they offer the burnt offerings and their prayers, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence.

Basically, they had their time. They had their opportunity. Time's up.

Don't pray for them anymore. And again, a sad day when God said, don't pray for them. Let them alone.

Don't pray for their good, because I won't hear you. We read that in the time of Noah, that God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And God basically said, time's up.

You've reached the limit. You've crossed over the line. And the time to repent is past.

It's now time for judgment. I think of the men in the city of Sodom. God had been patient with them, but they had reached the limit.

The day of grace was over. They persisted in their evil until the fire and brimstone came from heaven, and the city was totally destroyed. Their time was up, and they didn't even realize it until the fire and brimstone buried the city.

God seems to declare that a day can come in a man's life when they will seek God, but not be able to find him. Isaiah 55 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. But the implication is, seek the Lord while he may be found, that he will not always be available.

You know, some people make the mistake of thinking, well, I'll just call upon the Lord when I'm in trouble, and he'll be there, and he'll answer me. But not necessarily so. You can go so far that God says, well, you've had your opportunity.

There shall be no more delay. Your time is up. Isaiah indicates that you can wait too long before you seek him.

You can come to that place where you can seek him, but he won't be found by you. You may be getting along fine in life. You may feel that you do not have a need for God.

You have money in the bank. You have a good, secure job. Your family's in good health.

But you never know what tomorrow might bring, or what might be waiting around the corner when you will need to call on God to help you. You want to make sure that God will not say to you, as he said to the children of Israel in Judges chapter 10, you have forsaken me, and you have served other gods. Wherefore, I deliver you, I will deliver you no more.

Go and cry unto the gods which you have chosen. Let them deliver you in your time of tribulation. God has been very patient with many of you.

But be careful that you do not assume that the long suffering of God implies approval. Approval with what you are doing, or that God doesn't see, or that God doesn't know, or worse yet, don't think that God doesn't care. It doesn't matter to him.

Paul wrote to the Romans, you have despised the riches of God's goodness, and his forbearance, and his long suffering. Not realizing that the goodness of God was meant to lead you to repentance. But through your hard and impenitent heart, you've only stored up unto yourself wrath, that when the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God will come, you will be destroyed.

In Hebrews chapter 10 verse 26, we read, if we continue to live in sin, willful sin, after that we have received the knowledge of truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for the judgment and the fiery indignation of God, by which he will devour his ambassadors. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment do you suppose he shall be thought worthy of, who has trodden underfoot the blood of the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.

For we know him that has said, vengeance belongs to me, I will repay, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. He comments, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.

Today if you are here, and you've heard over and over that wonderful message, that God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in him would not perish, but have everlasting life. But for some reason or other, you have chosen to reject God's love, and the gift of God through Jesus Christ. You've decided that maybe someday in the future, you will make a decision to follow him.

You really do not know how close you are to that time when God may say to you, time's up. I've given you space to repent, but you repented not. I've given you opportunities to pass the test, but you refuse.

And he withdraws the offer of salvation, and he declares, don't pray for them anymore, for I will not hear you. I've given up. Someday you will hear God's final call to you, to accept his offer of salvation true.

And this could be it, my friend, if you only knew. It could be God's final call to you today. And if you reject, God will say, time's up.

That's it. It's all over. Don't think that you can come to God at your convenience.

God has set a time for you to come. I think of the words of that song, almost persuaded now to believe, almost persuaded Christ to receive. Seems now some soul to say, go spirit, go thy way.

Some more convenient day on thee I'll call. Almost persuaded, but the harvest is past. Almost persuaded, but doom comes at last.

Almost cannot avail. Almost is but to fail. Sad, sad, the bitter wail.

Almost, but lost. And so it will be with many who have gone too far, who have said no to the Spirit of God once too many times. And God says, time's up.

Time to turn in the paper. It's all over. Will you pass that test? You have the answer.

Father, we thank you for the patience and the long-suffering. How you've put up with people for so long. I think of the times of Noah.

How that you waited over a hundred years as Noah preached to them and warned them of your coming judgment. And how they just laughed and scoffed and rejected your invitation to repent. Continued every man doing that which was right in his own eyes.

Ignoring you until the day that Noah entered the ark and the doors were shut and the rain, the judgment began to fall. Lord, I pray for those that are here today. You've been speaking to their hearts.

They've been considering, but perhaps procrastinating, putting off saying some more convenient day, another time, maybe in another place. Lord, help them to realize the seriousness of your call upon their heart. Help them to realize, Lord, that even as you said to the people of Noah's day, I will not always strive with man.

If Lord, you're still striving with them today, we pray that this would be the day they would harden their hearts no more, but they, Lord, would surrender their lives to you today. We ask this, Father, in Jesus' name, amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you today.

If the Lord is still speaking to you, be thankful, and I would encourage you to take advantage of it. Call upon the Lord while he may be found. He won't always be there.

There can come that time when God will shut the door and you'll be left out, but it doesn't have to be. The door is open for if there is the slightest inkling in your mind, I really need to surrender my life. I really need to make my commitment.

I encourage you, do it. The Spirit is still speaking to you. He hasn't left you yet.

Take advantage of it. Respond today to the call of God upon your heart. Your life can be transformed.

It's such a good life. Why would you want to put it off? I don't understand it, but your opportunity is now, and I would encourage you, seek the Lord now while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near before the evil days come when you say, I have no pleasure in them.

This is the day. This is the time. This is the place for you to respond to the Spirit of God speaking to your heart.

These men are here to pray for you. They're here to just welcome you into the kingdom of God and into that glorious life that God has and wants for you if you'll just but allow him to take over and work in your life. The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

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