

A Life Beyond Description

by Erlo Stegen

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the importance of living wisely and purposefully in challenging times, guided by God's will and promises.

Duration: 1:20:57

Scripture: Psalm 103:12, Proverbs 17:24, Micah 7:18, Romans 8:31, Ephesians 5:16-17, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living a life that reflects the teachings of Jesus Christ. He urges listeners to examine their lives and ensure that they are living wisely, not foolishly. The preacher emphasizes that this should be a daily commitment, with every aspect of one's life being a perfect picture of a Christian life. He warns that failing to live according to these principles is a disgrace to Jesus Christ and God's Word. The preacher encourages listeners to repent if their lives do not align with this description and to seek God's guidance in redeeming their time and living as more than conquerors.

Transcript

Shall we pray once again? We ask you, Lord, to be present. Speak through your presence, your holy word, and your spirit. May this time be a blessed time.

I've been a bit busy, so I didn't have time to prepare as I would have liked to. Most of what I'm going to say I had prepared in English. But because of the lack of time, I'll speak in English and ask Brother Manta to interpret into Zulu.

Our text is taken from Ephesians 5, verse 15 to 17. Ephesians 5, verses 15 to 17. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

Verse 16, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. That's Ephesians 5, verses 15 to 17.

The text today is very short, only three verses. The verses themselves are short. They are often overlooked because they are sandwiched between two passages that are very well known.

As is often the case in the Bible, little verses say a lot. We need to hear what God is saying to us. Because we do indeed live in difficult times.

We cannot predict what will happen in six weeks, or eight months, or five years from now. The secret things belong to the Lord our God. And even on a small scale, we can't predict what will happen tomorrow morning.

How should we live in times like these? Our text offers us three answers, each one filled with clear direction for the days ahead. There are great opportunities for the children of God. Now, should we be optimists or pessimists? Should we be somewhere in between? Let's see how God's Word helps us answer those questions.

The first point I would like to mention in this short text is, be very careful then how you live, not as unwise, but as wise. That's Ephesians 5, 15 to 17. Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise, but as wise.

To be careful means literally to walk accurately or precisely. King James uses the old word, circumspectly. It has the idea of walking on a narrow path along the side of a steep mountain.

Keep your eyes open, lest you take a wrong step. And then you plunge to your death. Sometimes we are guilty of living too fast.

We make too many snap judgments, too many hasty decisions. We speak too fast, we move too fast. And we react too fast.

We answer before we hear the question. We just keep on pressing the throttle of life forward. Because we've got too much on our plate.

And we dare not slow down. It's even possible, in the name of God, to go too fast. We want to right the wrongs of the world too fast.

We try to win the world too fast. Because we speak too quickly. And because of that, our words are hasty and ill-timed.

We go before we're ready. We speak before we have anything to say. We teach before we're taught.

And build high before we build deep. What happens when you hurry, hurry, hurry? You don't watch where you're going, and you trip and fall. Most often, we trip not in headlong pursuit of evil, but in our headlong pursuit of good.

The answer lies not in buying a plane or getting organized, But in those ancient words of the psalmist, be still and know that I am God. We slow down enough to get involved, to get God involved. We discover that He can do more through us than we can ever accomplish on our own.

Redeem the time, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. The King James Version uses the word redeem. As in redeeming the time, to us redeem is a salvation word, but originally it comes from the marketplace and means to buy back, to purchase.

You redeem something when you buy it for your own use. You note that the NIV translation uses the word opportunity instead of time. That's because the Greek language has two basic words for time.

One word refers to the passage of time in the sense that we talk about hours or minutes or seconds. We say what time is it? It's 6.20pm. We are leaving in eight minutes. We are leaving.

That's one sort of time. The other Greek word refers not to the strict passage of time, but to the moment of opportunity that requires action. Martin Luther King meant when he told the vast crowd gathered at Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall in Washington.

On a hot August day in 1963, We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind things of the fierce urgency of now. It's that phrase, the fierce urgency of now. But that's not all.

Paul says there is a particular reason we must redeem the time and grasp the fierce urgency of now. Check that little phrase at the end of verse 16, because the days are evil. Here's another translation.

These are desperate times. Not only evil, but desperate. Paul writes these words while chained to the guards in a Roman jail.

The emperor was a man by the name of Nero. Before too long, he would set fire to Rome and blame the Christians for it. Later he would order Paul to be beheaded.

An Ephesus was a city wholly given over to heathenism. In Paul's day, it was the most important city in the Roman province of Asia. It was located near the coast.

Ephesus served as a centre for international commerce and business. It was a prosperous, bustling, booming city. Booming city with the famous Temple of Artemis.

That was the glory of ancient Ephesus. Artemis was called Diana by the Romans. But they referred to the same thing as the Temple Artemis.

Artemis was called Diana by the Romans. That was the glory of ancient Ephesus. Artemis was called Diana by the Romans.

But they referred to the same thing as the Temple Artemis. Artemis was the goddess of sex. Her temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The central portion contained a statue of a woman with many breasts. Symbolizing unfettered sexual freedom. One ancient writer said of the Ephesians, Their morals were lower than animals.

Astrology, black magic and sorcery joined with sexual perversion. To produce a degraded form of idolatry that held ancient Ephesus in its grip. Meanwhile, clouds of persecution are rolling in on the horizon.

As the gospel spread, it encountered opposition in the form of entrenched interests that saw Jesus and his followers as a threat. The cross currents of heresy threatened to undermine the purity of the gospel. That's what Paul meant when he said, These are desperate times.

What would he say today? Evil days tempt us to despair, discourage, encourage us to give up. To say we can't do it because the day is dark. The hearts of men had grown cold.

And then they said there is nothing to be done. Days of moral corruption offer special opportunities for the prosecution of great enterprises for the kingdom of God. That's what Campbell Morgan says.

That's good news. The things that make it difficult for us living as Christians are the things that make us shine. Hard times are blessings in disguise.

Days of moral compromise offer incredible opportunities for the gospel. When the world around us seems to be going haywire, we have an incredible opportunity to display the life-changing power of Christ. The darker the night, the brighter the light shines.

Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. The final question is, are you an optimist or a pessimist? It's like being in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified. On Friday, pessimism reigned.

On Sunday, as the truth slowly dawned that the Lord has risen from the dead, that one great truth broke through as they began to believe. The best good news anyone would ever hear. Sorrow turned to joy.

Grief turned to laughter. And grief turned to laughter and despair gave way to hope. We live on this side of the empty tomb.

So yes, Christians are both pessimists and optimists. But we are much more optimistic because though we see what is happening in the world around us, we know that Jesus Christ conquered the grave. And because He lives, we too will live.

These are great days to be alive. It's exciting days. Amazing days.

Even uncertain days. And frightening days. All those things are true at the same time.

When we see evil advancing in the world, keep in mind what Jesus said. Let not your heart be troubled. There have always been times like these.

And no matter what happens today, the promises of God will still be true tomorrow. Because the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

In Exodus 15 verse 2 we read that. That's why be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them.

For the Lord your God goes with you. He will never leave nor forsake you. We find that in Deuteronomy 31 verse 6. Now a few scriptures that should be a blessing to us.

There is no rock like our God. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble. These are all wonderful promises. God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgression. I'm just mentioning some promises. If you haven't got time to jot it down, you could get the notes from me.

If you haven't got time to jot it down, you could get the notes from me. Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? If God is for us, who can be against us? He says, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. These are all verses of the Bible.

I don't mention where it is written. But if somebody would like to have them, I could give him my notes. Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. And here are two final verses. The first one is actually the next to the last verse in the entire Bible.

He who testifies to these things says, yes, I am coming soon. Amen. Come Lord Jesus.

And this is how we should live in light of these magnificent promises of God. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. Because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. That's why be encouraged.

Let not your heart be troubled. Watch your step. Redeem the time.

Seek to do God's will every day. Why be a pessimist when we are living in the greatest days of history? Who knows but that we may be a generation that hears the trumpet call of God. Jesus may come back in our lifetime.

If that is true, things will get better and worse at the same time. So do not despair. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. So that we will be and are more than conquerors, not conquerors, it's something more.

We can't express in words if these promises are true. And that is what your and my life should be like every moment, every day of our lives. Because the days are evil.

Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. If we grasp these truths and promises, there is no word to express how wonderful it is to be a Christian. So then walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. How wonderful are these promises I've read to you from the Bible.

There are no words in any language, English, Afrikaans, German or whatever it is, to describe the beauty and the wonderfulness of these words. If they are true in your life. These words I have read and I have mentioned are promises in the Bible.

These are promises to describe what a Christian life should be like and your life should be like. There is no word and there are no words in any of our languages to describe the wonderfulness and glory of these promises in a Christian's life. That you live not as a fool, but as a wise person.

The days are evil. That's why we've got to redeem the time. Because the days are evil, that's why you should redeem the time.

Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. There are no words in our languages that can express the glory of a Christian's life.

Is that the truth of your life day by day? There are no words and there is no language in this world that can describe the beauty and the glory of a Christian's life. There are no words and there is no language in this

world that can describe the beauty and the glory of a Christian's life. Have you heard, understood that? Is that what your life is like? Is that a good description of what you are? Is this a description of your life? Is this what the people see in you and in your life? If it is not like that, then you are a disgrace to all Christians.

Have you understood that clearly? That is what your life and the message of your life should be to all mankind. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. If you should have forgotten what has been said, then you could come and get the message, black on white.

This is a description of every Christian's life in this world. This is a description of what your life should be like as a Christian, day by day. Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Thank you. God bless. That is what your life should be like every day.

If it is not the case, you should repent right now. These words should be the description of your life every day. Otherwise, you calling yourself a Christian are a disgrace.

Therefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. To our Lord Jesus Christ, and to God's Word, and to the Holy Spirit. I hope that you have understood these few words that are God's Word, describing what you should be like.

That your wife, your children, the eldest to the youngest, your neighbours, that they see this life in you. Otherwise, don't call yourself a Christian because you are bringing shame and you are a disgrace of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, these few words that you have spoken should describe what our life is like day by day. And that these words are a good description of your wife concerning you, your children concerning you, and your relatives, that they say this is a perfect description. That every member of the family, from the eldest to the youngest, will testify.

This is a perfect description of our father, husband, of our relations. And that this should be a description of everyone's life here present in this service. If that is not the case, you should repent right now.

And cry to God that calling yourself a Christian will not be a disgrace to your Kingdom, Lord Jesus. Amen. He suffered at the cross.

He paid the price that you should be able to live this life. And that this should be a perfect description of your Christianity. If not, then cry to God right now and get converted.

And that every man who ever lives in this world, who has had a look at your life, will say this is a perfect picture, this is a perfect description of your life day by day. Dear friends, this short message and these words should be a perfect description of your life day by day. And that your wife will say, this was a perfect picture and description of my husband's life.

And that your children, the first born to the last born, will testify, this is a perfect picture of the life that is lived by my father, my mother, and my children. My eldest brother to the youngest brother. That you should work, that you should live as we have heard in this short message.

Not like a fool, but like a wise person. Is your life like this? Is your testimony like this? Or have you forgotten? You can get the notes and then test and examine yourself. That this should be a perfect

description of your life day by day, day or night.

That whoever looks at you, sees this description. This is what Jesus came for, for you. And if your life isn't like this, moment by moment, day or night, it's time that you redeem.

The time of turning to God with all your heart. This is a picture and a photo of what your life should be like. That your wife, your husband, your children, your relations, can testify to this.

This is a picture and a photo of what your life should be like. Shall we pray? Lord, print these words and this message indelibly into everyone's life who calls themselves a Christian. That any everyone present here may live this life.

If not, may he repent in dust and ashes. That this won't just be a message that has been preached, but that it is a perfect photo of everybody's life here. And Lord, if someone's life is not perfectly like this, may he turn to you wholeheartedly, repent in dust and ashes, and be a changed person from now on, living as a Christian.

And no more live like a child of the devil as a fool. But as a Christian who is holy, living a divine life to your glory. Lord, please grant that everyone's life here present will turn to you wholeheartedly and live according to the heavenly pattern.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28883.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/a-life-beyond-description/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net