

Time--the Tongue

by John Newton

John Newton's sermon explores the significance of time, the struggle with pride, and the importance of spiritual growth amidst distractions.

Scripture: Psalm 139:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 5:15, Philippians 2:3, Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Time Management"

Description

John Newton expresses his admiration and reverence for the recipient, acknowledging the presence of the Lord in him and his role as an instrument of grace. Despite external appearances of brightness, he reveals his internal struggles with spiritual coldness and pride, recognizing his need for deeper affection towards Jesus. Newton reflects on his busy yet often interrupted life, filled with responsibilities and the challenge of time management, seeking prayers for wisdom and improvement in serving the Lord.

Transcript

January 27, 1778.

Dear and Rev. Sir,

I call you dear because I love you, and I shall continue to style you Reverend as long as you dignify me with that title. It is indeed a pretty sounding epithet, and forms a striking contrast in the usual application. The inhabitants of the moon (if there be any) have perhaps no idea how many Reverend, Right Reverend, and Most Reverend sinners we have in Europe. And yet you are reverend; and I revere you, because I believe the Lord liveth in you, and has chosen you to be a temple of his presence, and an instrument of his grace.

I hope the two sermons you preached in London were made useful to others, and the medicines you took there were useful to yourself. I am glad to hear you are safe at home, and something better. Cheerful spring is approaching; then I hope the barometer of your spirits will rise. But the presence of the Lord can bring a pleasanter spring than April, and even in the depth of winter.

At present it is January with me, both within and without. The outward sun shines and looks pleasant; but his beams are faint, and too feeble to dissolve the frost. So is it in my heart: I have many bright and pleasant beams of truth in my view, but cold predominates in my frost-bound spirit, and they have but little power to warm me. I could tell a stranger something about Jesus that would perhaps astonish him: such a

glorious person! such wonderful love! such humiliation! such a death! and then what he is now in himself, and what he is to his people! What a sun! what a shield! what a root! what a life! what a friend! My tongue can run on upon these subjects sometimes; and could my heart keep pace with it, I should be the happiest fellow in the country. Stupid creature! To know these things so well, and yet be no more affected with them! Indeed I have reason to be upon ill terms with myself! It is strange that pride should ever find any thing in my experience to feed upon; but this completes my character for folly, vileness, and inconsistency, that I am not only poor, but proud: and though I am convinced I am a very wretch, and nothing before the Lord, I am prone to go forth among my fellow-creatures as though I were wise and good.

You wonder what I am doing; and well you may: I am sure you would if you lived with me. Too much of my time passes in busy idleness, too much in waking dreams. I aim at something; but hindrances from within and without make it difficult for me to accomplish any thing. I dare not say I am absolutely idle, or that I wilfully waste much of my time. I have seldom one hour free from interruption. Letters come that must be answered, visitants that must be received, business that must be attended to. I have a good many sheep and lambs to look after, sick and afflicted souls, dear to the Lord; and therefore whatever stands still, these must not be neglected. Amongst these various avocations, night comes before I am ready for noon and the week closes, when, according to the state of my business, it should not be more than Tuesday. O precious, irrecoverable time! O that I had more wisdom in redeeming and improving thee! Pray for me, that the Lord may teach me to serve him better.

I am, &c.

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