

ONE CHANCE—“WHILE WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY”

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:10

There is a sense of urgency coming from the Holy Spirit toward His people in these days. We may not know if Christ’s return is imminent, but most discerning believers would probably agree that perilous times could be knocking at the door. That reality may move some into action, knowing that we may not have much time or opportunity to do the work of the Gospel before Jesus returns or doors are shut.

But there’s something that the Lord has been trying to communicate with His people and with all mankind in every generation. It’s a truth that will create within us a sense of urgency regardless of our circumstances, whether we live in a land of peace, or if the world is falling apart all around us. It’s the reality that “*you are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away*” (James 4:14). As human beings, we often don’t feel that sense of urgency or seriousness until we see that we are near to reaching a deadline. But in truth, what is our deadline for accomplishing what Christ Jesus has for our lives? The “deadline” is the day of His return, or the day of our death, whichever comes first. Either way, our opportunity to do His work is over, finished. Let me ask you some questions: Do you know what day the Lord will return? Do you know what day you are going to die? It’s that spirit of complacency, laziness or unconcern that pushes the reality of these questions out of our mind, that makes us think we have plenty of time. The next verse in James 4:15 says, “*Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”*” But nowadays, if someone says “Lord willing...” they are looked at like some kind of spiritual oddball, or as if they have a lack of faith.

Have you ever noticed how the Lord Jesus described the day of His coming in Matthew 24 and Luke 17? Look carefully: “*For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating,*

they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.” Did you notice that He didn’t give us a description of all the evils that people will be engaged in when He returns, although He surely could have. Is there anything wrong in and of itself with eating? with drinking? with marrying or being given in marriage, with buying, selling, planting or building? Obviously, these things are not in themselves evil. But the real problem was that these people (which consists of the vast majority of the world, and perhaps the church as well) were not concerned about Christ and the work of His Kingdom here on earth, but preoccupied with their own affairs. “*No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the One who enlisted him as a soldier*” (2 Tim. 2:4).

Don’t be mistaken: we don’t want to get in the flesh and go out in our own strength to try and accomplish His work, without His power and direction. But the reality that our time and window of opportunity is short will put within us a greater fervency and sense of urgency in our prayer life: “*The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer*” (1 Peter 4:7). As our hearts cry out to be a vessel in His Hands to touch a dying world in these last days (before His return or our death), then surely He will give us the direction, wisdom, love, power, everything that’s needed to do His will (read Hebrews 13:20-21).

Jesus said to His disciples (that’s us), “*We must work the works of Him Who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.*” How does this apply to His disciples of today? The “day” represents our window of opportunity here on this earth. The “night” is the time of His return or the time we die, whichever comes first. One of our greatest desires should be to do His work during our one chance here on earth, “to do good to all people” while we have opportunity. “*Night is coming*” when the opportunity is over.

“*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17*