

For broadcast 30th December 2018

## TIME MATTERS

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**I have worked with teenagers for over twenty-five years as a Pastor, School Chaplain, teacher and Principal. Teenagers take you through every gamut of emotion in a matter of seconds. They can make you laugh, cry and all at the same time! And when it comes to time they are the masters of procrastination. Just ask any parent or teacher who is after an assignment to be handed in. When it comes to time they all have endless amounts of it. “I don’t need to do this now – I’ve got plenty of time. It can wait.” I must find out what the secret to all their time is. Most people my age are saying things like, “I don’t have any time to do that. I just need more time. Where did the time go?”**

In 2013 the much loved Australian folk/pop group, The Seekers, embarked upon a series of concerts to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I was trying to convert the students at my school to the music of the Seekers. I failed miserably and they laughed at me. (Why should that surprise me?). But they were fascinated when I showed them a YouTube clip of the Seekers when they first hit the headlines in the 1960s, and then a video of them performing recently. I wanted them to see and hear that, despite the 50 years that had elapsed, and the obvious changes that occurred in appearance and fashions, essentially they sounded the same. And it’s true. Judith Durham’s voice is still as crystal clear as ever. No wonder my father, aged 84, is still in love with Judith Durham! Well, that’s what my mother says!

One of the things that draws me to the truths of the Christian faith is the realistic, the honest and brave way that the Bible tackles many topics. Take time for instance. The Bible is almost brutally honest when it tells us our time is limited. Time matters. *Don’t waste it. Don’t take it for granted. Make the most of your time, for it will soon be gone.*

That’s a message we don’t like to hear and often don’t like to think about. It reminds us that death is lurking around the corner.

*Time can be used or wasted, it can be invested or squandered, but either way, once used, it can never be regained.* Time matters because we have such a limited supply. Time matters because time is the stuff of life, and when our time is gone, so is our life.

The most famous passage in the Bible about time reminds us that there is a time for everything in life:

**There is a time for everything,  
And a season for every activity under heaven:  
A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time to plant and a time to uproot,  
A time to kill and a time to heal,  
A time to tear down and a time to build,  
A time to weep and a time to laugh,  
A time to mourn and a time to dance.**

These words are profound because they remind us that there is a season to life, a rhythm to our existences, and that everything under the sun has its time and its reason. I believe our time, our seasons and the reasons for our existence are all tied up in a loving God who created time, and is a part of that time. Before time existed God was there. *Who created God*, you ask? No one, of course! God always was and always will be. That’s who God is. And there is great comfort and hope knowing that this God is also a personal God who can be known and who wants to know us. The Christian story that begins with God who made time also tells us about God’s son, Jesus Christ, who came to

earth as one of us so we could know God and have a friendship with him. God is not a doddering old grandfather figure. He is not like the Father Time spoken of in various tales. God is an involved and relational God who reveals his nature fully in Jesus Christ.

The Bible, the book which tells us of many truths about God, also explains how a mature appreciation of time is linked to the getting of wisdom. One verse, for example, from the Psalms, tells us to learn how short our lives are so that we might become wise.

What does it mean to become wise? I suggest several things here for you to consider.

Firstly, the Bible tells us that wisdom begins with knowing the Lord – recognising there is a Maker, we have a purpose, and we will meet our Maker face to face one day.

This means that all of my time belongs to God, and therefore how I spend my days is a sacred issue. My time is not just mine to use – I am accountable to God who gave me time, and I am accountable to others – to use my time wisely and kindly and not just waste it.

Finally, because time is the stuff of life, what I do with the moments of my life matters. The opportunities I take, the people I talk to, the path I follow - all of it matters because sooner or later, for me and for you, time will be no more.

The reality is that in the bigger scheme of life most of us actually have plenty of time to do everything we need to do. Someday we will all answer for how we used our time. Did I use it wisely? Did I help others through the use of my time? Did I leave the world a better place through the use of my time? Did I use my time to get to know the God who made me?

And finally there is a new time after we die. That is a different kind of time – a time that will never end. For those who know God through His Son, Jesus, that will be an indescribably happy and fulfilled time where we actually meet God face to face. As much as I love this world and the limited time I have been given, I look forward to that never-ending time in the future.

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