



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

April 27, 2014

P.O. Box 416
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Bobby Bear
Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

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TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

Time. We all have a limited amount of it. We all know this, but we ignore it and waste time anyway. We are so selfish with time, not willing to share it or give it to others. Time is of the essence is a legal term used in contracts to emphasize the necessity of meeting the date or dates stated in the agreement. If one of the parties does not, that person is liable. Why must we have contracts to force us to do what we are supposed to do? So it is with life in general. We must often be forced to do the right thing.

We are so selfish with our time as well as many things. We hear people say, "I deserve some time to myself, don't I?" I don't know, do you? Did someone with authority tell you that? We are too concerned about us and not enough concerned about others. Everyone has responsibilities, many of which we created ourselves.

We get married, have children and become a Christian. We have created responsibilities of great magnitude (**Ephesians 2:22-6:3**), all of which offer great rewards. If we wanted life to be all about us, we should have not made those commitments.

There is another area that we need to think about. I have found that growing old is filled with regrets.

I look back and see all those missed opportunities. I now can see what was important and what was not.

Times in life come and go, never to return. The time we have with our children passes so quickly. Once they start school, time is shorter and then when they reach their teens, time is still made shorter. They go away to college and our time with them almost stops. They get married and move to have a job in their field. You now see them less than you ever did.

If you plan on molding them into the kind of person you hope they will become, do it now. If you want a lifelong relationship with your wife and/or your children, do it now. Put aside those selfish ambitions. Give yourself to God, your wife and your children now, because "Time is of the Essence."

By Bob Haley

WHEN WEAKNESS IS STRENGTH

“So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:7-9).

In a very real way, we cannot be too weak for God to use, but we may well be too strong (See **I Corinthians 10:12**). Areas of strength in our lives may well also become areas of weakness. Samson’s strength, David’s heart and Solomon’s wisdom quickly come to mind as good characteristics that were, at some point, emphasized by these men to the neglect and exclusion of God and His will.

Notice three truths to remember about our weakness.

- 1. God’s grace always IS sufficient (12:9)**
- 2. God’s power is made complete in OUR weakness (12:9).**
- 3. When we are aware of our weakness, THEN we can be strong in Christ (12:10).**

Not only are there truths to remember in this passage about the necessity of humbly keeping in mind our weakness and realizing our real source of strength, there are also a number of lessons regarding the value of “thorns” and difficulties in our lives.

The Danger of Pride. “Thorns” have a way of puncturing pride, don’t they? Note **12:7** – *“So to keep me from becoming conceited because...”* and *“to keep me from becoming conceited.”* The verse begins and ends conceited. (**Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 16:18** and **I John 2:15-17**). If conceit were a possible problem area in Paul’s life, might it also not be in ours as well?

Difficulty Often Lurks in Unusual Places. The passage says, *“because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations...”* With blessing and privilege often come great responsibility and struggle (**Luke 12:48; Philippians 1:29**). And times of blessing may well be followed with times of great trial. The baptism of Jesus in **Matthew 3** is followed by the temptation in the wilderness in **Matthew 4**. The *“surpassing greatness of the revelations”* of Paul in **12:7** is followed by the “thorn.”

Thorns Can Be Really Hard To Live With. Paul “pleaded” with God to remove it on more than one occasion, and Paul was far from a wimp! The NASB says Paul “implored” God to take it away. Scripture is silent regarding the precise nature of Paul’s thorn, and I am glad. We don’t know the identity of Paul’s thorn in order to relate it to our own – whatever our particular “thorn” might be.

There really is a ministry in our thorn – to trust in God and the sufficiency of His grace – and to rely on His strength and not our own.

Mike Vestal