

Church Family Newsletter 19th May 2020

Reflection for today from Reader Roy Goodship

TIME FLIES

Time marches on. We are all getting older. As we begin to realise the time is passing it follows that we should ensure that we make the most of our opportunities. This could come to a head in the so called 'midlife crisis'. The classic definition of this crisis is that finally we come to realise exactly what it is we want to do with our lives but at the same time we realise it is too late to do it.

Are we just drifting along? Do we realise what our priorities should be? Of course, we are bound to say that the first priority is to respond to the gospel of Christ and we do this if we repent and believe in Christ as our Saviour and Lord. The opportunity to do this is now. 2 Corinthians 6.2 says 'behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation'. Why put it off? The issue will still be the same.

We remember when Paul and Silas were in jail the jailor asked the most important question. In Acts 16.30 he asked 'what must I do to be saved?' They answered, 'believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved'. In verse 33 we read 'he was baptised at once'. There was no delay.

We remember when Philip was preaching the gospel in Samaria, he met an Ethiopian, a minister of the Candace queen of the Ethiopians and in charge of all her treasure. The Ethiopian was reading the prophet Isaiah but he didn't understand it. He asked Philip to explain it. Philip explained the passage to the Ethiopian and he told him the good news of Jesus Acts 8.35. Almost immediately they came to some water and the Ethiopian said 'what is to prevent my being baptized?' And so, he was baptised. There was no delay.

The urgency of responding to the gospel is reinforced by the writer to the Hebrews in Hebrews 2.3 – 'how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation'. The opportunity is now.

The willingness of Jesus to forgive is expressed in 2 Peter 3.9 which says, 'The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish but that all shall reach repentance'. But the passage of time has a pressing message for believers too.

Romans 13.11 and 12 says 'it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone, the day is at hand'. Believers must wake up. This being asleep refers to a moral indifference and a lack of spiritual vigilance, an easy-going approach rather than a keen commitment to the truth revealed in scripture. There should be progress in the Christian life.

The teaching of all the apostles indicates an expectation that we should grow to maturity in Christ. There is even a hint of reprimand for the lack of progress. Hebrews 5.12 says 'for though by this time you ought to be teachers you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk not solid food; for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness'.

My wife Gifty is a nurse and she told me about her encounter with a patient one day. This old lady was in her armchair. She was half asleep. Her whole body seemed crumpled up and collapsed as if all the energy had gone out of her. As Gifty approached the lady she looked up and as if summoning the very last vestige of strength in her body she said in a voice which was just a little more than a whisper these two words - 'time flies'.

In Ephesians 5.15 and 16 we read: 'Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time because the days are evil'.