TITLE: Time

TEXT: Ps. 139:16; Ps. 39:5; Jam. 4:14; Ps. 90:10-12;

Mt. 25:1,14-30; Jn. 3:3-6; Lk. 17:20-21; Ro. 14:17-18; Lk.9:27

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about the most precious commodity that we have in this life and that is time.

 One thing that each of us here this morning have in common is that we have been allocated a pre-determined amount of time.

**Psalms 139:16 (NIV)**

**16your eyes saw my unformed body.**

**All the days ordained for me**

**were written in your book**

**before one of them came to be.**

 All of us have a pre-determined amount of time allocated to us. Some will have more or less than others but all have been allocated a certain amount of time.

 Once our time runs out, it runs out! So our time on earth is a limited commodity.

 Items of limited commodity are valuable. In fact, value is most often determined by how much of a thing that there is.

 Peanuts are relatively cheap because there are a lot of them. Run out of peanuts and you just have to grow some more…

 Diamonds on the other hand are very valuable because they are relatively few in comparison to peanuts. And if you run out of diamonds it will take thousands of years to produce more.

 Time, in respect to human life on this planet, is very valuable because once it runs out it cannot be replaced.

 King David talks about the brevity of time in:

**Psalms 39:5 (NIV) 5You have made my days a mere handbreadth;   the span of my years is as nothing before you.    Each man’s life is but a breath.**

David here describes the lifespan of man as a mere handbreadth. The distance between the thumb and the little finger when the hand is fully extended.

What was David using as a comparative measure?

Eternity! In comparison to eternity, the total existence of time, our life is but like a handbreadth.

In contrast to the timeframe of eternity--

**Each man’s life is but a breath!**

 Take a deep breath and then exhale—in contrast to eternity, God’s dimension of time, that is what your time on earth is like. One breath!

**James 4:14 (NIV)** **14Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.**

They have these little misting bottles for runners and bicyclists to help cool you down. The bottle is filled with water and each pump of the trigger of the bottle produces a puff of cool mist.

 That is what our time on earth is like in contrast to eternity-- Like a puff of smoke that all too soon dissipates and disappears.

David talks a lot about the commodity of time in the psalms…**Psalms 90:10-12 (NIV)**

**10The length of our days is seventy years—**

**or eighty, if we have the strength;**

**yet their span is but trouble and sorrow,**

**for they quickly pass, and we fly away……**

 **12Teach us to number our days aright,**

**that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

Life expectancy in the United States today is at an all time high.

 In Iowa the male life expectancy is 79.8 years. Up dramatically from just five decades ago when the life expectancy was something like 66 years.

Scientists have predicted that the average lifespan in the United States may reach 100 by the end of the 21st century.

 They say that the genetics that control aging could be altered to extend life beyond the 70-80 years referred to in Psalms 90:10.

 In the Our Daily Bread devotional one time it told of a man named D.J. DE Pree, who was a longtime member of RBC Ministries board of Directors.

It told of how Mr. DePree took these words of Scripture seriously and literally and calculated the number of days from the date of his birth until he would turn 70 and at the end of each day he would reduce his total by one.

 He said to see that number decline reminded him of the brevity of life, how precious time was, and to remind him to make every day count for the Lord.

Do you know what time and butterflies have in common? They both fly… Time flies! The older that you get the more of that truth you realize about time.

Example—Transparencies with timeline)

I don’t want this illustration to freak anyone out this morning, and it shouldn’t…Especially if you are a Christian. Because we have the promise when our time runs out on earth and when all of our time has been exhausted, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

 And once we are present with the Lord then time becomes irrelevant. Time will no longer be a precious commodity because we will have a never ending supply of it..

 But with regards to the time that we have in this life..

 Does seeing this impact you this morning as it

did me? As I reflected upon all those X’s in my life that represent time spent!

Spent on youthful lusts of the flesh! Spent on self-satisfaction and gratification and a thousand other things that have absolutely nothing to do with eternity or anything else that will transcend this life.

 A lot of Time totally wasted! Time spent that is forever gone!

 The fact is we will all do one of two things with the time that we have been given. We will either spend that time or we will invest that time. Time spent is time wasted. Time invested is time that will earn a reward.

 And as a Christian God has called us to invest our time not just spend it!

 Our age, will to a large degree, determine our perspective of time. The more that we think that we have the less valuable it is to us. The less that we have left the more valuable time becomes.

 My perspective of time in going to be a lot different than Cassius or Mia’s perspective of time because of the amount of time that we perceive lies ahead of us.

 Of the grafts that I used this morning the time that Cash and Mia has left to either spend or invest is a fraction of the amount of time that I have already spent or invested! The time that Cash and Mia has spent or invested so far in this life is closer to the amount of time that I have left to spend and invest if we all were to live to be around 80 years old!

 That difference in itself will give us a little different perspective about the time that we have left.

 It is a matter of supply and demand. The shorter the supply the more valuable a thing becomes.

 And likewise, those of you older than myself perspective of time is going to be different from mine because of how you perceive time from your prospective. Some have already gone past my timeline this morning and are going for the 100 year mark and that is great. Keep those O’s going on ahead of you!

 But where we are on the timeline of life will contribute to our perspective of time.

 I would like to share a poem that was written for her caregivers by a woman in a geriatric ward in an English hospital… **It is called An old ladies poem.**

Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

 **~An Old Lady's Poem~**

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?

 A crabby old woman, not very wise,
uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes?

 Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try!"

 Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
and forever is losing a stocking or shoe.....

 Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will,
with bathing and feeding, the long day to fill....

 Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse; you're not looking at me.

 I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
as I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.

 I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother,
brothers and sisters, who love one another.

 A young girl of sixteen, with wings on her feet,
dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet.

 A bride soon at twenty -- my heart gives a leap,
remembering the vows that I promised to keep.

 At twenty-five now, I have young of my own,
who need me to guide and a secure happy home.

 A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast,
bound to each other with ties that should last.

 At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
but my man's beside me to see I don't mourn.

 At fifty once more, babies play round my knee,

again we know children, my loved one and me.

 Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead;
I look at the future, I shudder with dread.

 For my young are all rearing young of their own,
and I think of the years and the love that I've known.

 I'm now an old woman. and nature is cruel;
'Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.

 The body, it crumbles, grace and vigor depart,
there is now a stone where I once had a heart.

 But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
and now and again, my battered heart swells.

 I remember the joys, I remember the pain,
and I'm loving and living life over again.

 I think of the years All too few, gone too fast,
and accept the stark fact that nothing can last.

 So open your eyes, people, open and see, not a crabby old woman; look closer ... see ME!!

There are many applications that I could make from an illustration such as this, but one simple one that I want to make this morning is how age itself changes our perspective of the time we have been given…

*I think of the years All too few, gone too fast,*

*and accept the stark fact that nothing can last.*

Until we see time, our time, as the precious and limited commodity that it is we will have a tendency to just spend our time instead of making an investment of our time…

 In this regard time is a lot like money. We will either spend it or we will invest it. When we spend it, it is for the most part gone.

 When we invest it, it has the potential for growth and can bring us a reward greater then what was invested.

 Now catch this! If you are a Christian, if you have asked Jesus Christ to forgive you of your sins and have made Him the Lord of your life then God has called you, to not be a spender of time, but has called you to be an investor of your time..

 Jesus teaches us this very thing in Matthew Chapter 25.

 Jesus was teaching His Disciples what the Kingdom of heaven is to be like.

 Jesus starts out Chapter 25 by saying:

 **Matthew 25:1 (NIV)** **1“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ….**

And then Jesus goes on and uses different parables to describe what the kingdom of Heaven is like…

**Matthew 25:14 - 30 (NIV) 14“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.**

**15To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.****18But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.**

**19“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.**

**20The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’**

**21“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’**

**22“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’**

**23“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’**

**24“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.****25So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’**

**26“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?****27Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.**

**28“‘Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.****29For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.**

**30And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’**

 A couple things that we need to understand:

#1. We are to be living kingdom lives right now!

For a Christian the kingdom of God is not just near but the kingdom of God is here!

**Matthew 12:28 (NIV) 28But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

Jesus here equivalents the Kingdom of God as coming with the Spirit of God!.

**if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

A man by the name of Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night with a question on his heart. The question? How can a man enter the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven?

**John 3:3 - 6 (NIV) 3In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”**

**4“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”**

**5Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.****6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

How does a person enter the Kingdom of God? Jesus said by being born again! Not by water signifying physical birth but by Spirit signifying being made spiritually alive!

When Jesus healed by the Spirit of God within Him he declared that the Kingdom of God had come! Not would come at some future point but had come! The Kingdom was in fact among them.

What happens when we are saved? What happens when we receive Christ into our heart?

The Holy Spirit of God literally indwells our heart!

We receive the kingdom of God at that moment! The Kingdom is the Spirit and the Spirit is within us!

**Luke 17:20 - 21 (NIV) 20Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”**

 How can the Kingdom of God be within someone?

 When we invite the Holy Spirit of God into our life God established His kingdom within us!

 And wherever we go we then take His kingdom with us!

 **Romans 14:17 - 18 (NIV) 17For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.**

Again, the Kingdom of God resides within the Holy Spirit and if the Holy Spirit resides within us then so does the Kingdom of God..

We are to be living and advancing His kingdom now!

 Living Kingdom lives today in the world in which we live!

**Luke 9:27 (NIV) 27I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”**

 If the Kingdom of God is just a place to be experienced somewhere in the future after death then how could Jesus say:

**7I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”**

Because…**“The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”**

OK, If the Kingdom of God is not just some future residing place for the saved but it is actually alive within us today then how do we manifest that Kingdom in our daily lives?

EXAMPLE:

 On the first day of class, as had been his custom, a particular Christian college professor asked his speech 101 students to introduce themselves. And in order to help make the names stick with the faces they were to tell what they liked most and liked least about themselves.

The students, in turn, would stand and give their names and what they liked most and least about themselves. There were some laughs, a bit of self-consciousness…but it was a great ice breaker.

 Then…the class attention was focused on the next person, a young lady named Dorothy. She did not stand but kept her eyes glued to her desk top. She did not say a word. The professor thought that perhaps she had not heard or was shy and may have needed a bit more encouragement, Dorothy, Dorothy, it’s your turn. Still no response. Then he said it again, Come on Dorothy. How about you?

 After a rather long pause, she stood but did not turn to face the class. She said, my name is Dorothy Jackson. Then…she turned in the direction of the class and with a sweeping motion of her hand, she pulled her long hair away from her face. There for all to see was a large wine colored birthmark covering nearly the entire left side of her face. She blurted it out, now you all know what I like least about myself.”

Immediately, this sensitive and caring professor moved to her side. He gently leaned over her shoulder and gave her a kiss on the birthmark and then followed that with a big hug. He straightened up and said, “That’s ok. God and I think you’re beautiful.”

 She began to cry and sobbed for a number of minutes.

Other members of the class followed their professor’s lead and gathered around her and took turns giving her hugs. After she had managed to gain her composure, she said, “Thank you. I have waited all of my life for someone to hug me and say what you said.” She paused to regain her composure, and then quietly, almost in a whisper said, why couldn’t my parents have done that? My mother has never even touched my face!

What happened here? This young lady experienced seeing the Kingdom of Heaven revealed because a Godly professor had that kingdom alive within him and allowed her to see it..

Don’t let anyone ever tell you that the human touch given in agape love is not a powerful and wonderful thing..

 We have the Kingdom of God literally residing within us and we have been called by God to invest the time that we have been given to allow those around us to see His Kingdom at work in our life.

Are we living up to that calling? Are we merely spending the time that we have been given or are we investing that time in Kingdom business?

Are we really aware that the Kingdom of God is now, it has arrived and it is alive within us and we have been called to invest our time in doing kingdom business? Allowing others to see and embrace the Kingdom of Heaven for their own lives?

As we simply allow Jesus to live His life through us---ask ourselves WWJD and then do it---we will be making an investment of the time that God has given us and we will be allowing others to see, get a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven! The kingdom that resides in us now!

What about you this morning, are you spending your time or investing your time?

Are you living a Kingdom life today?