

“Life’s Rhythm” A sermon by Lee Ireland
Cathedral City Community Presbyterian Church
August 19, 2018, Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Ephesians 5:15-20

Let us pray together: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

How many of you wear a wristwatch? How many of you no longer wear a wristwatch but now carry your cell phone to tell time? Some time ago, I heard an interview on the radio. And if my memory serves me correctly, I believe the interview was with the director of the National Watch and Clock Museum in Pennsylvania. The interviewer inquired of the museum director what type of wristwatch he wore. The answer was none! Like many Millennials and younger, even though he was the head of the National Watch and Clock Museum, he didn’t wear a wristwatch.

Whether you use a wristwatch or depend on your cell phone, the device is there to tell time. Time. Our world is obsessed with time. We have calendar apps on our phones and our computers to keep us on schedule. Our phones have alarms to remind us of upcoming appointments. There’s a digital clock on your computer screen. Most likely your car has a clock on the dashboard that you use to get to your destination on time. As you drive down the street, you may pass an electronic sign that has the time in enormous numbers. Oh no! It’s 10:30 and I’m late for my doctor’s appointment!

We certainly keep track of time and our schedules through our phones and computer apps and all the clocks that surround us. Do having all these clocks and apps make us better at managing our time? I’ll let you answer that question. One thing is certain, time is one of the biggest stressors in our lives and in our culture. We work too many hours and are trying to squeeze more work in less time. We have too many distractions competing for our time, and that adds more stress to our life.

Which activity should I engage in? How should I spend my time to be most productive? The questions in our minds are endless as we go through the day tied to our schedules and our clocks.

What do you think the Apostle Paul would say about our obsession with time? Well, he does address time in today’s reading from a letter he wrote to the church at Ephesus. But when he wrote this he wasn’t talking about our clock time. Paul said, **Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.** When Paul uses the word ‘time’ here he’s not talking about the time you and I keep with our phones and wristwatches. The Greek word he uses for time means not clock time, but a significant moment, like an unexpected opportunity or a critical turning point in one’s life.

Paul wrote these words to the members of the Ephesian church who lived in a pagan culture that was probably not receptive to the message of Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection. This may be what Paul meant when he says, ‘the days are evil.’ The neighbors of the Ephesian Christ-followers weren’t open to hearing about Jesus, so Paul advised the Ephesians to make good use of the few opportunities they had to share Christ, because there wouldn’t be many of them. Paul urged the Ephesians to use every significant moment, every unexpected opportunity, to tell others about Christ. Likewise, we should use every significant moment, every unexpected opportunity, to tell others about Christ.

Let’s go back to my question: What do you think the Apostle Paul would say about our obsession with time? Today, some may say that we live in a pagan culture, but there’s certainly no shortage of

opportunities to tell others about Christ. Why we have TV networks devoted to doing just that. Sports figures testify to their faith and make the 'one way' sign when they accomplish something significant showing to the world that their accomplishment depends on Jesus and God. That's just examples.

Perhaps, if Paul were writing today, he would tell us to make the most of our time – the time on our wristwatch or computer or cell phone or car clock. And how would we do that? I believe Paul would ask us to live 'as wise' people **filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

"Ok", you say, "that means I have to take time from my busy day to spend time with God. I've heard pastor after pastor tell me this many times. Where am I to find the time to sing songs and make melody to the lord in my heart? I can't pack another thing into my day!" That's a fair question. Many folks go to bed at night listing the things they wished they would have accomplished instead of the things they did accomplish that day. So, if we are to sing songs and make melody in our hearts – in short, spend time with God – how are we to do that given our busy, crazy world? How are we to spend time with God in our busy world?

Let me suggest to you a different way to approach this topic of making time for God. And let me state the obvious that my comments are based on. You have to want to spend time with God and make that time a priority in your life. If that's what you want to do, and I hope it is, then together, let's consider a different approach to finding God time or spending time with God.

Are you a morning person or a night owl? Do you have a time during the day when your energy level is low? Likewise, is there a time in the day when your energy level is higher, and you can get things done without struggling. Now, I know that some of you wonder where your energy went on most days, but just stay with me for a few more minutes. Energy or not, you probably already know there's a rhythm in your life.

This idea of a rhythm of life is not new. Animals and plants and people all have this internal rhythm. It's built in. God has given it to you. Wise people use it to be more productive. And wise people can use this internal rhythm to draw closer to God. Just consider that there are certain times of the day when you are more receptive to God, when you may feel closer to God and want to spend time with God

If you desire to spend time with God, then find the time that works for you. For me, it's in the morning, in the quiet time in the house. For others, it may be after you've taken care of all those 'things' that were on your mind when you woke up in the morning. That list of things you need to do today will distract you if you try to have God time in the morning when you wake up. For folks like you, you might more easily spend time with God after some of those tasks were cleared out of your mind later in the day. Others of you may want to spend time with God in the evening after you've taken care of most of the day's tasks and your mind is a little less distracted.

Is it possible for you and for me to tap into this natural life rhythm of life to draw closer to God? Yes! The world that God created suggests to each of us that there are times when we are better at communing with God, at spending time with God.

For this coming week, tune into your natural life rhythm and determine when you are most receptive to God. Put your wristwatch, computer, or cell phone aside, and discover what time during the day is most favorable to your spending time with God. Then make that time with God a priority for yourself each day.