

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph 5:16)

Time. It is a subject of extreme interest to mankind. As a subject, there may not be anything that has more books, movies, songs, poems, treatises, essays, pontifications, and just general thoughts expressed about it in all of humanity. It is woven into our very nature to know and understand our time in this world is finite. We cannot shake the understanding, in every cell of our body, that from the moment we are born we are essentially running backwards toward death. Even in denying God’s truth, in every age of art, literature, science and philosophy, mankind has pondered and tried to undo this one simple truth:

“For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:” (1Pe 1:24)

Our flesh is as grass and our glory as the flower. What does that mean? Well, think about grass. It’s everywhere, but it’s one of the most ephemeral of all plants. It lives for only a brief period of time and then it is gone. No blade that came up in our lawn this year is likely to be there next. As an organism it is hardy and universal but each individual plant has a very, very short existence compared to, say, an oak tree. It’s a wonderful metaphor to describe the life of men – we’re everywhere on the face of the earth, but in the grand scheme of things no one person lives all that long.

That shortness of time, the brevity of our existence, is a thing that science and medicine have been trying to overcome for ages. Instead of focusing on the value of the time they have, they chase this idea of gaining more. They constantly look for ways to cheat the system, as it were, with drugs, super foods, lifestyles, philosophies, diets, gadgets, etc., all looking at how to get more time for themselves. It is an obsession. Just look at the number of movies that deal with time travel. It’s a microcosm of the reality.

In typical fashion, this obsession with time is always done from a human perspective, thus the attempts to game the system and get more. A spiritual viewpoint on time doesn’t look to getting more, it looks to using it more wisely. A spiritual view of time recognizes several key things about its nature, so let us look at the nature of time as we delve into the depths of our text today.

Time is a real, created ‘thing’

To understand the need to redeem time, I believe it is necessary to establish in our minds that time is an actual ‘thing’, just like money, food, oxygen, etc. It has a beginning

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

Time didn't exist before that moment of the 'beginning'. Things happened, God certainly existed, but the notion of marking passage of time seems to be a unique thing to the human existence.

Time has a forthcoming end to it

"And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."
(Revelation 10:6)

He put time here to help us understand that separation of ourselves as creation from Him our creator

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." (Genesis 1:14)

He placed markers in our sky to delineate our mortality and our finite nature, to show us without fail and without question that time has passage for us. It has no passage for Him.

I make this point because all too often men speak of time not as a 'thing' that is measured but simply as a measure in and of itself; a way to satisfy our need to put order, structure and measurable boundaries around the chaos of our lives and the inevitable decline toward death. We look at our watches and our clocks and think THAT is what time is, and it isn't. Consider the physical existence of time and it becomes easier to see what is meant by redeeming it, which we will get to later.

Time is finite for each of us specifically and the world generally

There is a finite amount of it that once expended will not be replenished. It is not a 'renewable resource' to put it in modern parlance, but even though you cannot see it, taste it, hear it, or feel it, time is as assuredly a physical entity we can redeem as any other thing.

Each of us has a fixed amount of time to walk the earth.

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10)

The Bible is in one sense, a book about time and the fixed nature of it.

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,"
(Genesis 2:4)

The Hebrew word generations means history. What is history but a retelling of events as they occurred at a specific time? Every generation has a beginning and an end to it, which marks the passage of time.

The finite nature of time is, however, restricted to created things. God is outside the realm and rule of time.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Peter 3:8)

I don't believe this is intended to fixate for us a measurement of time for God. This is an indicator to us that there is no significance of time with God. Though to us there is drastic difference between the passage of a minute and a year, for example, there is no difference to God in the passage of one day or a thousand years. Time has no rule, influence, power or control over Him. Time presents no boundary for God as it does mankind, as eternity is His boundless boundary. It has no beginning or end as time does for us.

“They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” (Psalms 102:26-27)

Though scripture does reference God in terms of time, using words like *everlasting*, *immortal*, etc., these are words used to help us frame eternity because we have no concept of it. Eternity simply IS. That is part and parcel of His name I AM. He has no beginning or end, He simply IS, and therefore time does not bound Him.

Time is not ours, we cannot add to what we have, and it constantly moves **forward**

If time has no influence or sets no boundary for God, it must exist only because He has created it.

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:16-17)

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

Therefore, like all things created by God, time belongs to Him, and He has but loaned them to us.

“Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.” (Job 41:11)

“Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.” (Deuteronomy 10:14)

All that is in the heaven and earth belongs to God, and we are but stewards.

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1)

We must be stewards of time as we are all other things given us by God. We must look to how we use our time diligently, just as we would our money. Indeed we must guard how we use our time with MORE diligence than money, because money can be replaced if you lose it or spend it foolishly. You can get a second job and earn it back. You waste one second and it is gone forever with no hope, no ability to return it to you for proper use. Because time moves forward toward its end, with no reversing of course, no do-overs, forever forward, you cannot make up for when you lose it.

Dispose yourselves of the phrase “make up for lost time”. You can't. For each of us individually and all of mankind universally, time is what we call a closed system. You cannot add to it or subtract from it. Each of us has a fixed and determined amount of seconds which we will live. We cannot make up for a second we squandered by gaining an extra one somewhere else.

The idea of “making up for lost time” is cut from the same cloth as all the arguments supporting works righteousness. These arguments rest on the ability of man to overcome the negative balance our natural depravity creates for us with God. We cannot make up for a wasted second any more than we can use good works to outnumber or outshine evil works we have committed. It simply cannot be done. Just as works righteousness makes you lazy in your diligence against sin, this idea of ‘making up lost time’ makes you lazy in your effort to redeem the time you have and use it properly in service to God, since you walk around in the false notion you can overcome your deficiencies at some later date.

It is a part of our natural depravity to waste time. What is it to waste time? Put simply, doing anything that isn't the worship and praise of God. Sin and selfishness pull at our energies every second of every day, pulling and pushing us to spend time in activities that at best are neutral to our souls, and at worst are dragging them toward everlasting damnation. We are consumed by the very act of living, which distracts us from worship, from service, from prayer, from praise, from study and all the other activities we know we should participate in that are focused on God and godliness. And while not excusable, as Paul tells us, it is understandable:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” (Romans 7:18-19)

As humans, it is by our depraved nature simply not in us to spend all our time focused on God and serving Him. That does not absolve us of the obligation to seek that perfection and work toward that goal of having all our time be spent in service and supplication toward God.

This is why Paul speaks to redeeming the time. Since we cannot add time to our lives, or get any of it back when we've foolishly squandered some of it away, we must redeem it. This phrase "redeeming the time" is actually used twice by Paul – once to the church at Ephesus and once to Colosse. Strong's defines the word (1805 – exagoradzo) as "to buy up, that is ransom; figuratively to rescue from loss, improve opportunity; redeem". It is the same word used to describe what it is that Christ did for His people at Galatians 3:13 and 4:5.

Now we know we can't buy time, and we can't rescue the time we've already lost, so how is what Paul exhorts us to even possible? We can't rescue time from loss or ransom something against the time we have to gain more. This seems like an impossible task we're being handed here, and if you only look at it carnally, it is. But if you dig into what Paul is exhorting his friends at Colosse, Ephesus and Laodicea to do and look at it spiritually, it actually is a beneficial work, worthy of the undertaking.

Let's look at the verses I'm speaking about specifically in some of their context:

*"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. **Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.** Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."* (Colossians 4:2-6)

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is

*a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” (Ephesians 5:1-21)*

This is another example of where not seeing the context of a thing can lead you to look at it the wrong way. If you were to simply look at Colossians 4:5 and Ephesians 5:16 independently, you could easily come to the conclusion that Paul is speaking about two different, though perhaps related reasons for redeeming our time. But if you look at them in their proper context, you see that he is saying almost the same thing to both churches, but giving a great deal more specificity to the church at Ephesus, perhaps to help them see better the need of what he is saying.

Examine it closely – Paul tells the Colossians to “[W]alk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” He similarly tells the Ephesians “[S]ee then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil”.

To walk circumspectly is to walk in wisdom. While not the same Greek words, you can't truly have one without the other. If you are unwise, you won't be properly circumspect or diligent, because you won't know what you're supposed to be watching out for. Conversely, if you're circumspect of a thing or situation, you must have wisdom and discernment to be so diligent. They are part and parcel of the same way of thinking.

What is it that we are to be circumspect and wise toward, so much so that we must care for our time in relation to these things? Paul tells us – those who are without and the evil days in which we live. He spent a considerable amount of verbiage to the Ephesians calling out the evils of the day, and the need to reprove that evil prior to making this point. He reminds them of the darkness they once walked in, and how that they are now of the light, and how they should have no fellowship with works of darkness.

We must be aware of the danger those without pose to us, and the evil of the day that rules them. We must be wise toward those things that they do, separate ourselves from them, have no fellowship in their deeds and reprove them at every opportunity.

But what does this have to do with time? Why is Paul making this connection, and how are we supposed to redeem something that we can't gain more of and can't get back when we've misused it? Staying away from evil makes sense, but what does it have to do with redeeming time?

If you think about it, it has a lot to do with time. Remember, the word redeeming means to "buy up", some of the expositors translate it "buy the opportunity" or "seize the opportunity". The idea is to seize every opportunity you can to separate yourself from and not be a partaker in the thoughts and actions of the children of disobedience.

This has many facets. One facet of this redeeming of time is if you do it properly, you are essentially redeeming time from someone that would otherwise be spent in evil and dark deeds doing that which it is a shame to even speak of. We cannot go out of the world, we know, so what Paul is saying is that every minute you are in the world, seek to redeem it from the evil that surrounds you. You can't add to the time you have on earth, but you can certainly make the time you are here less evil, with proper humility, reproof and armoring of yourself through the word of God. We can't make people good, but with a proper spirit and behavior, we might influence them to not partake in active evil and at least productive uses of their time.

So look at this practically, and ask yourself some questions. Do you walk in the light in your school interactions, in your work interactions? Do you make yourself above reproach, not haughty, but one who is known for following the rules, exceeding expectations, and performing to your utmost so that everyone around you benefits from the work you do? Or do you flaunt the rules behaving as though they don't apply to you and let everyone know how you don't need to be careful with them? Do you use the time you are in the world to live as an example of walking in the light, or do you use that time to live like a hypocrite?

When we are in the world, we make a testimony. We have to redeem the time from the wicked influences we are surrounded by, the darkness that encroaches upon our light to make a proper testimony for our God. If we do not redeem that time properly, there is nothing good that can come out of our time in the world. We aren't in the world recruiting or trying to proselytize. That's not the testimony we're sent to make. The testimony we are giving is through our redemption of time from evil uses, wherever and whenever we can. That testimony is delivered and the time is redeemed by not getting caught up in worldly things with worldly people. It's not encouraging them to share with us and engaging with them in conversations regarding their sins. We redeem the time when we help people stay focused on the task at hand and behave in a way that aligns to our master's requirements, rules, and direction.

So then, if we redeem the time from evil while we are in the world, buying the opportunity as it were to influence others toward good, how much more should we look to how we redeem the time individually and amongst ourselves?

So that puts us back to one of my earlier questions – how is it possible to redeem time if we can't gain ourselves more time or make up for misused time?

I think of it like this. First, since I can't recover the lost time, I seek forgiveness for my wastefulness and let it go. Time moves forward, as does our God, and dwelling on past indiscretion creates a spiral of death where we just spend all our time dwelling on our inadequacies, and then past inadequacy becomes present inadequacy because we are spending our time focused upon ourselves rather than God. We mourn for our sins, absolutely, but we do not walk through life in a continual despair – that is not a proper use of our time.

Second, I consider who I am trying to redeem the time from. Who is it that I am seeking to save this time from so that it isn't wasted in filth and squandered away? It is none other than myself, in the form of what Paul calls the "old man". Paul exhorts the church at Ephesus to

“. . . put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;” (Ephesians 4:22)

Put away that filthy "old man" who you used to be, rioting in drunkenness, whoredoms, fornication, deceitful lusts, concupiscence, pride, arrogance, envy, strife, wrath, vanity, deception, etc.; break away from his walk of life, his conversation, his behavior, way of thinking, how he carries himself, dresses himself, portrays himself in his own mind. Exorcise that part of your nature – if it were possible, cut it out of you!

Let's be plain thinking about this hateful beast, this leech, this rotten core of our nature. This "old man" is not gone from us. He is ever present and will be until we die or ascend into the clouds to meet our Savior. Do not as some, fall into this false doctrine that you cease to sin when you make a profession of faith and/or are baptized. Not so! When Paul tells the church at Rome

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans 6:6)

He is not saying to them that the "old man" dwelling in each of them is perished, and therefore sin no longer inhabits them. No, he is reiterating to them that their sins were nailed to the cross with Christ, that they will not be remembered because of that death that was suffered, not that there is no longer sin in us, and he is reproofing us not to serve sin. He makes the point plainly later at verses 12 and 13

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto

sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Romans 6:12-13)

We must not obey the whisperings and temptations of this “old man”! Yes, the “old man” is still in us, and is fighting, using the strength of the very nature we come into this world with to rule us, to have power and dominion over us, to plunge us into the maelstrom of sin and “superfluity of naughtiness” (James 1:21) that our every cellular core screams to participate in. That “old man” seeks to deny the application of grace and the efficacy of Christ’s blood for us! He seeks to have us walk in the vanity of our own minds (Ephesians 4:17) rather than in the light that makes all things manifest, whether they be good, or evil. He seeks to keep us blind, deaf and dumb to the evils of sin and he is in lock step with the “old man” that inhabits every other member of Adam’s race! This natural depravity inhabits every one of us and seeks to be relieved and satiated by the temptations Satan puts in the world to lure us away from the path toward the strait gate (Matthew 7:14).

This “old man” is who we war with over the time we have in our lives! This is who we must redeem the time from. I say it again, not the time we’ve lost, but the time RIGHT NOW, this VERY minute, and the next, and the next, etc. And the battle is literally every second of every day! There are no time-outs, water breaks, respites, repose, breathers, recesses, interludes, lulls in the action. No, not so much as one,

“ . . . because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8)

A lion that is hungry, a lion that is defending their prideland **does not rest**. They pace, they roam their territory looking for that wounded or weak animal they can bring down, that usurper roaming their territory looking to take what is by rights theirs. That is how our adversary is, and he has a ready, willing ally in the “old man” that inhabits all of us.

To keep this “old man” at bay as it were, or out of the driver’s seat, requires our active and constant diligence – it requires us to redeem the time from his hands by actively looking for ways and means to do right, to serve God, to be engaged in His ways, our feet in His paths.

That doesn’t mean we all become hermits or monks living in a tower somewhere, pretending to be holy by reading the Bible 18 or 20 hours of every 24 – Ben hit on that last week. It doesn’t mean we try to go out of the world for fear of its influences and ability to embolden and empower the “old man” to do evil. It doesn’t mean that we walk around counting beads while we rotely repeat some verse we’ve memorized.

Redeeming the time with the “new man” that renews our spirits, our minds and gives us communion with God is a thing that is hard. It is a thing that clearly goes against our very nature and is at war with the zeitgeist of our “selfie” age. But this battle is one we must fight, and it is worth fighting.

Redeeming the time we have available to us is an active, thought-driven and conscious thing we must do. It doesn't come naturally to anyone, and if someone tells you it does, I'm afraid they are lying to you. It is 100% against our nature to look at the time we have available to us and choose to do something that serves God rather than something that serves ourselves. It does not happen without active intervention and abstention from fleshly lusts. Our natural mentality is to run toward the lust.

That's why it's called redeeming the time, remember. We're plucking it away from our natural self to prevent it from being wasted; I submit to you that we all, every one of us, waste a great deal of time. Even when we're trying not to, we end up sliding off a good course into something wasteful. I know it happens to me.

There are many ways this can happen, many faces it wears. You could be not redeeming the time you have in front of you right now, by letting your mind wander, thinking about how much longer am I going to blather on or thinking about whatever you've got going on later today, some work you need to finish, some activity you want to get to.

Think about how many times you're in a group of your peers, participating in some activity, and your conversation is 100% engaged in and focused on some worldly thing – last night's sports event, television show, some new music that came out, etc. You're driving down the road to some preaching event and you're singing the lyrics to some musical together, instead of talking to one another about the things of God? How many seconds of our lives have we wasted in the presence of one another talking about things of the world with more vigor than we talk about the Word?

Spending time together isn't enough. It's good, it's proper, and I encourage everyone to spend more time doing things together. There is an element of redeeming the time whenever we commune with each other, but what good is it if you've redeemed the time from the world only to act like the rest of the world when you're together? Again, there is some redemption, but it's little. I encourage you to think about what you're doing when you're together. If you're headed down the road someplace in a vehicle, actively think about and work at having a conversation that is pointed toward Scripture and what it has to say about the events of the day. Put aside as much of the silly frivolous things of the world we engage in and actively engage with one another about things that really matter; about one another.

Another very practical and simple way to redeem the time you have in your life is to listen to what Ben said last week and take it to heart. Meditation on the Scripture is absolutely a valuable redeeming of time, and learning to be disciplined in your study is a first step to being diligent in your behavior with your peers and the world. It is also the armament you need when you are trying to redeem the time away from worldly and frivolous pursuits. The Word instructs and shows us what is important and what we

need to be focused on, laying out in plain words the evils of the world and why we should be so wary of it.

Remember why Paul exhorts us to do this – because the days are evil and he wants us to walk in wisdom toward those that are without. How can you possibly make a good showing of that, redeeming the time away from evil-doing when you are in the world amongst your school and work peers, your customers and your bosses if you can't (or just won't) do it in the peaceful confines of this oasis? We redeem the time when amongst each other not just to serve one another, but to insure that we can effectively do it when we are in the world ruled by our enemy. This is our proving ground, so that we can through our conversation and manner of life preach and warn even without a sign or without quoting any Bible whatsoever. This ability to redeem the time is part of why the world sees preaching as foolishness – how silly are we to not use the time we have in our lives to just feel good about everything and in every way we can every second of every day? That is foolishness to the world, but it is a shining beacon to someone who is looking for it!

I want to be clear about a couple of final points here today. I'm not speaking to any one of you individually. I'm speaking to every single one of us individually, including myself. This is not an issue the young people need to take to heart and work diligently to do better at, or even start doing, it is an issue we all need to take to heart and apply diligent work toward.

I also don't want you to think that I am trying to be heavy handed; I don't want any of you to be heavy handed in this effort to exhort to redeeming our time together. This isn't a club to go around beating people with. I don't want to see people walking around with some superiority complex telling people to stop talking about this or that and talk about God like they have some moral high ground. No one here is on any kind of high ground at all. Let me say that again. Every single one of us is in the same swamp, equally stuck in the same mire. About the time you think you're way better than someone else at redeeming the time, and you're going to prove it with a bunch of Bible verses in a text stream, or publishing your exposition of some piece of Scripture you've been studying on as though it's some gift you are giving to the masses, check yourself really hard. Unless you're redeeming every second of every day, your efforts are pretty much crap, and I don't hesitate to say that. You think you're bound up doing some good work? Nope. You're not. The seconds you spent thinking your work was good handed the time right back to the "old man". Gentleness, meekness and a genuine valuing of time is the order of the day.

My goal here is to cause us to consider this issue, not declare a minimum amount of time you must actively think about God in a day to be righteous. That's not how this works. You could think about God for 86,400 seconds a day and still not be righteous.

This is a fight against our nature, not a guilt trip I'm laying on anyone. The Preacher tells us very plainly

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

And part of what he tells us there are times for include

"A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;" (Ecclesiastes 3:4)

What this tells me is that if God intended for mankind to live their lives inside the leaves of the Bible, there would be no time for anything else. And He would have said that. Like everything though, the things we do must be approached with a Bible-based spirit.

So I don't want it to get back to me that I said no one can go to a sporting event or go see a play or a movie or do whatever with one another (doing those things with worldly people is a different conversation). What I am saying is do those things circumspectly and with an eye toward redeeming that time you're spending. Wring as much value out of them as you can. I am saying to spend less time doing those sorts of things when you can, and see their value juxtaposed to the value of studying the word and discussing it plainly with one another. Remember to value your time more than any other resource.

I am also not exerting some sense of moral high ground here for myself. I know firsthand that there are simply times where the human mind can't continue to take in new things and has to be distracted by frivolousness to recharge. But you can't be in the 'recharge' mode all the time. If you're not putting in the work, what is there to recharge from?

Solomon addresses time several times, and I think he makes some salient points in the passage I leave you with. While contextually it is about another topic, consider it in the frame I've given you today:

"Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be? There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt." (Ecclesiastes 8:6-9)