

- Rev. Grant Mangold, Riverside Evangelical Free Church, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

Redeeming Time ?

We need reminders that this world is not all there is. Earthly life gives way to eternal existence, either with the Savior or apart from Him, depending on whether you have received Him or rejected Him.

1 Peter 4:7 reminds us “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded.” When we start focusing on earthly things instead of eternal things, not only does our perspective fail us, so does our purpose for living. God wants us to be clear-headed. He wants us to keep His priorities as first place in our lives.

Pastor and author Colin Smith says “It is all too easy for us to settle down into a predictable routine in which church is part of our lives, organized for our convenience, and we forget why we are here! Our task is great. Our time is short. The end is near!”

What an admonition to us – what a reminder of the urgency – what an encouragement to be diligent to share the good news about Jesus with everyone around us.

How are you guilty of sorting out your life for your convenience, instead of for the purpose God has in mind for you? Perhaps you’ve overlooked how God has specially equipped you for His kingdom purposes.

That’s what Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 4:10 – “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” He’s talking about “spiritual gifts” which are supernatural abilities given to each person when they receive Christ as Savior and Lord. It’s part of the indwelling and transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit, equipping us to serve Him together.

In verse 11 Peter refers to them as “speaking” gifts and “serving” gifts – “whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

God has arranged so that in our walk (serving) and our talk (speaking) that we fulfill His purposes. When we share God’s truth with others, we use the words of the Bible, the Scriptures, what God wrote down that He wants us all to know. When we serve others, we do so by God’s power. Not only on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings but every day, all day.

While He gives us breath we are to serve Him, not to fulfill our personal purposes, but His eternal purposes. The time is short, the need is great. We’re engaged in a great struggle for the souls of men and women and boys and girls.

The challenges are great, but the words of Winston Churchill are instructive: “Do not let us speak of darker days but speak rather of sterner days. These are the greatest days our country has ever lived; and we must all thank God that we have been allowed, each of us according to our stations, to play a part in making these days memorable in the history of...the broader world...that lies beyond our struggles... **We have to win that world for our children.** We have to win it by our sacrifices.”

The end is near. Our task is great. The time is short. How are you redeeming the time for Jesus ?