

Paraklēsis: Urgency

I really dislike spearmint gum. I did like it when I was very young, but that changed... When I was little, I would regularly have to go with my mom to the laundromat – one of the **most boring places on earth**. She recognized this as well and through her empathy and love toward me, would try to lift my mood by allowing me to have a stick of gum to help pass the time. I guess it helped, but after growing up a bit, the smell of spearmint, even the sight of the white Wrigley's gum package, brings me back to times of extreme boredom. Waiting for the clothes to wash and then dry was excruciating for me. Maybe now with "the internet in your pocket," kids have it much easier than I did and can pass the time in laundromats watching YouTube.

Time is a funny thing. For the most part, it plods along, constant in its pace, never wavering in direction and seldom wavering in its speed. It actually did change direction once on the stairway of Ahaz (2Kings20) but I wonder if that was only for Hezekiah, or did everyone experience it? As for wavering in speed, I have personally been **blessed by the Author of Time** with an expansion of time that allowed for something to get done in an impossibly short period. Also, I'm certain we have all experienced the compression of time, because we all know and accept the concept "time flies when you're having fun."

I have been on both sides of the following situation: In heavy traffic, one driver repeatedly changes lanes, frantically trying to get ahead while another calmly stays in their lane, riding along with the flow. And **both cars get to the same place at the same time**.

And what about writing that proverbial term paper? It isn't due for another week – plenty of time. But then the early AM hours come while trying to finish it for class later that morning.

And then there is the strange phrase that we also are all familiar with, "Hurry up and wait." I cannot think of a better example of this than when catching a flight. Inevitably I leave home late, rush to the airport, nervously sweat and check my watch in line at security, and then sit and patiently wait for boarding, and then sit and patiently wait for takeoff. There are so many examples in life of **how time affects us in irrational, unexpected ways**. I wonder if there is a parallel to this in our spiritual walk.

*Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, **They will run and not get tired**, They will walk and not become weary. (Isaiah 40:31)*

Those who wait will run and not get tired. But, if we are waiting, then why would we run?

*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The **farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil**, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. (James 5:7-8)*

The farmer also waits for the weather to be agreeable. As soon as the spring soil is dry enough, **he runs to prepare the fields** and plant the seed – no time to waste before more rain comes, and every day added to the growing season equals more yield. "Make hay when the sun shines." And hurry up, too, or else the late rains will spoil that hay!

*Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, ... But **those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land**. (Psalms 37:7-9)*

Don't fret. **Just wait for His promise**... Are you kidding?!? Have you looked around lately? There's no time for waiting, this world is going down the tubes and fast! Really, this is true, but I need to point out

that it always has been true. Corruption, injustice, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, forsaking God... nothing new there. Egyptians, Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Romans, Mongols, Nazis, ISIS... did I forget anyone? Ha, I would like to see an "exhaustive" list. I found this interesting and timeless quote:

'We have fallen upon evil times, politics is corrupt, and the social fabric is fraying.' (ancient Chaldean stone from ~3800BC)

I have heard many times that **the state of the world is indicative of the urgency** that we need to have toward our relationship with God. I want to argue against that idea. I think that the state of this world has always been, is now, and always will be, fallen, broken, and tragic. Our urgency must come from our understanding that **we are in bondage to time**. And God is not. God is eternal. And we are not. So, as the Author of Time, when His bride has made herself ready, He will come and **we will be out of time**. The wise virgins in Matthew 25 made themselves ready, while the foolish virgins had no urgency and ran out of time. Messiah Himself warned us directly of running out of time.

*"We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; **night is coming when no one can work.** (John 9:4)*

And even before He came, the prophet Isaiah delivered the same warning:

Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah 55:6)

Psalm 90 really addresses this for us. I encourage you to read it and study it with respect to this topic of urgency. The author, Moses, realizes that Eternal God has granted us a finite amount of time and **we need to use that time effectively**.

*So teach us to number our days, That we may **present to You a heart of wisdom.** (Psalms 90:12)*

Moses is asking God here to instill in us a sense of urgency so that we might efficiently, without procrastination, **prepare for our physical end**. This does not mean 401k, IRA, investment portfolio, life insurance, and bigger barns.

*"Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' "So is the man who **stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**" (Luke 12:18-21)*

Present to God your heart of wisdom. This is what He wants us to seek and find: a heart of wisdom and a relationship with Him. **But, do it today, while you have peace on all sides, while it is still light.**

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:2)

Peace to you and glory to God!

-Nate

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