

For Such a Time as This

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place"
(Acts 2:1).

This lesson is on the importance of "timing" in our lives, ministries, and leadership. It is not a lesson on time management (the proper use of time). It is based on a lesson taught by G. Randy Adams at a Leadership Development Retreat in West Africa.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:"

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

The Preacher in Ecclesiastes is so correct. There is a time to give birth and a time to die. There is very little that we can do about the timing in these situations. In some of the situations mentioned in these verses, we have little control (if any). The timing is in the hands of the Lord. One songwriter penned these words:

"In His time, in His time
He makes all things beautiful
In His time.
Lord, please show me every day
As You're teaching me Your way
That You'll do just what You say
In Your time."

So much of our lives and ministries are dependent on God's timing. The wise man said, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9, NIV).

A leader must not only know *what* to do, *where* to do it, and *how* it should be done, but he must know *when*. He can know what, where and how, but if he does not act in a timely manner, all of his knowledge will be in vain.

Being the Right Person for the Occasion

When Israel needed a giant killer, God gave them a giant killer. When they needed a deliverer, God sent Moses. He sends exactly what is needed for the time period involved. Can you imagine if God had sent a Jeremiah on the Day of Pentecost? Picture him weeping, "The Day of Pentecost is really here. This is how you can be saved: repent, be baptized in Jesus' name, and receive the Holy Ghost." God did not need a Jeremiah that day. He had prepared Peter with the keys to unlock the door to the kingdom. Peter was the "man of the hour." God often prepares His men in obscurity, unknown to many, and brings them on the scene at the correct time.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19).

God always has a definite man, to accomplish a definite task, at a definite time. Thomas Jefferson (third president of the USA) received a letter of encouragement in 1790 that said: "Great necessities call forth great leaders."

Being at the Right Place at the Right Time

One day Jesus taught His disciples a valuable lesson about timing. This lesson is found in Luke 5. Jesus entered into Simon's boat and asked him to launch out a little from the shore. Jesus continued speaking to the people who had followed Him to the lake. When finished, He told Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (Luke 5:4).

Simon answered, "We have fished all night and have not caught anything. But if that's what You want, I'll do it." Simon did what Jesus told him, and the nets were not only full but began to break. They called for their friends in the other boat, and both boats were so filled with fish that they began to sink.

Simon was a seasoned fisherman. But, Jesus knew the secret of being in the right place at the right time. Proper timing ensures the most effective results. Jesus came to the earth in the fullness of time and was very conscious of timing.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

Simon had fished all night in the wrong place at the wrong time.

One day Jesus said to His disciples, "My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready . . . Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come" (John 7:6, 8).

At the marriage in Cana, "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4).

"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples" (Matthew 26:18).

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27).

Jesus understood timing. It is vital that we are aware of the Lord's timing.

We find another excellent example of timing and obedience in Acts. Philip was enjoying a tremendous move of God among the multitudes in Samaria. He was open to the voice of the Lord and His will. An angel directed him to a desert road. This must have sounded strange to him. The change in direction was so illogical. Many would have questioned, "Whom will I meet in the desert? I'm enjoying a tremendous move of God right here. I'm not finished with this revival yet."

Philip did not protest but simply obeyed.

We never really know what we will encounter when we submit to the Lord and allow Him to lead us. It is a walk of faith. The timing was perfect. An Ethiopian officer was on his way home from Jerusalem. The Lord wanted His servant to be at the right place at the right time so he could meet him.

He also prepared the heart of the Ethiopian to receive truth. What would have happened if Philip had arrived late or early? He would have missed the man, and the opportunity to present truth to him. Because he was obedient to the Lord's timing, he was able to preach to the Ethiopian eunuch and baptize him. This man took the truth back to Ethiopia and the queen's palace. He was a man with great authority and was in charge of the treasury. In modern times he would be the Minister of Finance. As a result of Philip's obedience to the correct timing, the gospel was preached in the great African continent.

Saying the Right Thing at the Right Time

Peter had the right words, at the right time, on the Day of Pentecost. As a result 3000 were baptized in Jesus' name, and the church was born. Philip also had the right words to preach to the Ethiopian eunuch. Time after time in the Scriptures, we find men of God who said the right thing at the right time. It is an art to be cultivated in our lives.

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

"How forcible are right words!" (Job 6:25).

How Can We Cultivate an Understanding of Timing?

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32).

We can gain an understanding of the times by following these points:

- BOOK Be submissive (Romans 12:1-2).
- BOOK Obey what the Lord tells you to do, when He tells you to do it.
- BOOK Have a strong prayer life. Watch and pray. God talks to those who talk to Him. Spend time listening to the still small voice.
- BOOK Read and study the Word of God on a regular basis.
- BOOK Know Jesus in such an intimate way, you can declare His testimony (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Study Questions

1. What does Proverbs 16:9 say? _____

2. What was written to Thomas Jefferson about great necessities? _____

3. What lesson did Jesus teach His disciples concerning the right time (Luke 5)? _____

4. Provide a scripture proving that Jesus understood the importance of timing. _____

5. What important quality did the children of Issachar possess? _____

6. How can we gain an understanding of the times? _____

7. Write out the words found in Proverbs 25:11. _____
