

Blessings Remembered

God's Word, various images and occasional history, are presented on this devotional website page. "Blessings Remembered" will hopefully prompt memories of many personal blessings from God in your lives. May you always trust in God's promised blessings, past, present, future and for all eternity. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8

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In the month of November our nation sets aside a day to specifically take time to remember our many blessings from God in our Thanksgiving to Him. I pray this "*Blessings Remembered*" might encourage you to continually take time to remember and thank God for the blessings of His promised Word to us in Jesus, our Gracious Lord and Savior, for without His Word we have no blessings.

It's all a matter of time, God's time

"My times are in your hand..." Psalm 31:15a



Photo: Bill VanNostrand

The inside of the fine old watch pictured above reveals an intricate mechanism for telling time. Each part was carefully assembled to create a device for measuring the seconds, minutes, and hours of each day.

Often, we become quite obsessed with time. We seek to control time, in order to make it serve our purposes. Yet, despite our efforts, time so often controls us. We are held captive to time.

We become enslaved by the fear that we won't have enough time to accomplish the things we want in life, all those things that we consider so important. Time then becomes our enemy, as we race against time. All the while, in respect to things of eternal importance, we easily and often lose track of time and lose track of God.

We get caught up in all our daily concerns, as we strive to work in the time for everything we hope to gain. Yet, when it comes to our life with God, we will convince ourselves that we have all the time in the world. Though, our time, this side of eternity, is actually very short. The time quickly goes by, a fact that becomes more apparent to us with each passing year. By contrast, an eternity awaits us beyond this fleeting earthly life, and how that eternity will be spent is of the utmost importance. Will it be with, or without, God? After all, eternity is a long, long time.

Ultimately, all time is in God's hands. ***And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.***

Genesis 1:14 – 15

God's created universe gives us cycles, seasons and patterns that can be measured. Our solar system, part of the "*lights in the expanse of the heavens*", functions in predictable and measurable ways. It gives us, as God's creatures, a basis, or method, for measuring our time.

God brings things about according to His plan, His time, which we can never fully comprehend. ***"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord."*** **Isaiah 55:8** For each person, the most important of all of God's plans is His plan of salvation, the plan to bring disobedient, fallen and

eternally lost humanity back into a right relationship with Him, The Creator. This plan was carried out at just the right time, that is, at the time God decided.

God's prophets knew of this. The prophet Habakkuk spoke about the time of God's salvation: ***"For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end - it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Habakkuk 2:3***

This plan was carried to fulfillment, once and for all, through the birth, suffering, death and resurrection of God's own Son, Jesus Christ. Time, therefore, is indeed very important to God. Its impact, upon His creation and His plans for His people, is critically important. ***[Jesus said] "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*** Mark 1:15

The Psalms declare our inner desire to see the fulfillment of God's plan: ***"But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness."*** Psalm 69:13

In speaking through His prophet Isaiah, the LORD declares: ***"My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose, ...thus says the Lord: 'In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you;...'"*** Isaiah 46:10b and 49:8b

The Apostle Paul assures us that God has certainly answered: ***"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."*** Romans 5:6 ***"...In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*** 2 Corinthians 6:2

Whether it's half-time, over-time, part-time or pastime for us, with God's promise in Jesus, it's always full-time for all time. ***"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."*** Psalm 62:8 ***"...he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; Isaiah 33:6a***

Now, is always the time of God's favor, **it's always the right time** for those who by faith believe in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness, strength, and life that only He gives, and gives so freely to all, for all our times of life.

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8

In Jesus Christ, God’s promises go far beyond our daily times. Through His Word and Sacraments, we are given God’s forgiving and life-giving promise that there will be a time when we will always be with Him, an endless time of joy with the Lord and His faithful in God’s heavenly home.

“At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity. Psalm 75:2 “At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; ...” Zephaniah 3:20 “...the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory,” Isaiah 66:18

In the “mean-time”, as we live out our lives of faith in Jesus, we are lovingly urged: ***“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season (or in other words “time”) we will reap, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9***

“Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore!” Psalm 113:2

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Rev. Bill Van Nostrand

All Scripture quoted from The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.