

A Time to Every Purpose

By Paris Reidhead*

Our Scripture this evening as a background for the message, A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE, is found in Ecclesiastes 3. I would like to read this. I believe that it will put us in the spiritual climate for what I trust the Lord has to say to us tonight.

Ecclesiastes 3:

“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. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end” (Ecc. 3:1-11).

Too frequently we feel that truth can simply be viewed with the intellect as though it were of unchanging and unchangeable in its impact upon us. As though that truth were always going to be the same to us, but when we come back to it at another time, the truth which we have seen contemplated will be just as it was in the beginning. Have you had the experience of being with friends, perhaps in fellowship, perhaps in some form of family relationship, perhaps school chums, those with whom you have worked, walked, played? And then you say we are going to get together for a wonderful time of fellowship. But you know when you get back and try to reconstruct the atmosphere as it was in the days when you walked together you find it is extremely difficult. I have heard it said that wartime buddies that were so close on the battle field and pledged undying friendship, after they have gone back into civilian life, married and found their place in industry and business, and family, get together for a reunion, and after about 10 minutes when they laugh at the things that were so tragic when they happened and regale themselves with the stories which aren't quite as amusing as they were when they were in a trench or foxhole somewhere, they look at one another as strangers and wonder why it was they thought that if they could just get together they could reconstruct the happiness that they had then, or the pleasure in each other that they found. You see they had forgotten that there is a time for everything, and it is impossible for time to stand still.

Years ago I read about a young couple, quite, they thought, madly in love. And so they said this, they said it fervently, “We wish this day would last forever.” Well their wish was granted by some circumlocution of time; it went on ordinarily for everyone else, but for this couple the day was repeated entirely as it had been. Everything happened just as it had happened. And after about a week of this they were so utterly sick of each other and this whirl that was going to last forever and never change, that they separately committed suicide rather than face the prospect of meeting each other in this unchanging period of time. It was just unendurable after a few days. And so we have to recognize that time is a fleeting thing. You find, for instance, that we view it as though it had substance, it had breadth, it had some measurable quality to it, but actually we are living in NOW, and NOW hardly has existence at all, because you well view your life when you view it as perhaps a tape on a tape recorder.

I had occasion to use ours this evening, and it started with the large roll on the left, went through the machinery and to the other, and there was just that hair line of speaking. I stood and contemplated it a moment in the light of the message tonight, as I was hearing a message that I had brought from this pulpit about a month ago. It was not the same as when it was brought here. And yet there it was. You could hear the congregation cough; you could hear me as I hit the pulpit. It seemingly it was just a preservation of a moment of time, but it was not quite the same. It was unrolled on the tape, passed that little knife edge where it was being picked up and amplified.

This is a picture of your life. When you began you had a large role of the future, and hardly any past. Someone asked me when I was in Indiana a while ago, How old is your youngest? I could say then, She is one year, one week, and two days, or something like that. They said, My how can you remember. Well, I said, it isn't so difficult when you have so little past as Julia Anne has. It

is not hard at all. But ask me some of the other children and it is not quite as simple. Their past is a little larger, you see, and to remember it is more difficult. And so it is. You began with no past and all future. And it is unrolled, but now is this knife edge right here, and as it comes past now, the moment that you say N- ow, the N is past and the OW is future, and when it is over it is past also. So time is just a fleeting edge of the moment. And this is where we live; we are living in this perpetual moment, and it can never, be the same. You cannot go back to it. You cannot unroll the tape as it were and say, Oh, I wish I could play back last summer at that Bible Conference where I attended, the atmosphere, the presence of God, the pressure of the Spirit of God upon my heart. What I wouldn't do if I could just go back to it, but you cannot go back to it. This is past. And thus it behooves us to recognize that we are living on this thin knife edge of NOW. And we should prepare ourselves to live there at that point.

You have heard that a certain road to a certain destination is paved with good intentions. Well I find that, it is not only that road to that place that is paved with good intentions, but I find that most of us have books on our shelves that we were going to read someday. We bought them at a meeting when the speaker was addressing us, and we were under the impact of his personality and thought, and so we MUST have his book, but we have gotten interested in other things and we have not read it. So we're planning for a vacation at Atlantic City when we can take along a bag of books and then we will be able to catch up on all this valuable reading that we have not had time to do. But it is strange that when we get to wherever it is that we are going, we discover that we spoiled the whole trip because we had to take ourselves along, and we have carried with us the same attitudes toward the passage of time we had when we were home. And really nothing is changed.

I think it behooves us to recognize that we live in NOW. God lives in a NOW which is eternal. The past is to HIM as the future. He lives in that timeless element of an eternal now. He is Himself eternal, and that means that the future is to Him as the past. It is all spread out before Him. But you live in the now of the moment, and thus it behooves us to recognize that if we are to be faithful to this little thin knife edge of opportunity that we have got to make some radically different attitudes than we generally possess. For we are all going to be far more spiritual.

When as a student at Taylor University, carrying a load of senior study and also Pastoring a church, engaged in Saturday work in order to fill out the family income, and having an occasional meeting in the churches in and around Marion, Indiana, I found this: that if I could just get to Africa, I was going to be — well Praying Hyde wouldn't have anything on me. He was... I was going to break his record before the first month was out and continue to break it from then on. I was going to be that Praying Hyde¹ of the 20th Century. Now there was not any question about it in my mind. I did not know by what process this would happen, but I had implicit confidence that it was going to take place, that there would be some metamorphosis, perhaps the sea air — I had heard that the ocean voyage did you good, and it was going to do me this kind of good, I felt. I was going to be an avid student of the Word. I read it perfunctorily there at school, because I was engaged in a heavy load of study, and then I was going to be witnessing day and night because it was so much easier perhaps to talk to people in Africa than it was to talk to hardheaded Americans. Well you know, I made the trip, and when I got off at Port Said in Egypt I discovered that a great change had taken place. I had been seasick a good bit of the trip, and this certainly would have physiological as well as psychological effect upon me. But I found it just as difficult to pray in Egypt as it had been, actually more so than it had been at home. I found it just as difficult to read the Word, and I found it more difficult to speak to people because there was now a cultural and a language barrier which I had not found in Indiana, and furthermore the same adamancy of spirit prevailed on the mission field as it had at home. They were just as indifferent, just as hardhearted and hard minded as they had been back home, and I came reluctantly because you see the first week was excused because it was adjustment and we were still travelling; and the second week, because it was further adjustment; and the first month, and the second month, and the third month, and always some mythical tomorrow I was going to begin this life of tempestuous intercession and heavenly warfare that I had come out to Africa to begin and to indulge in. But it just never came to pass. It never happened that way. Why? Because I carried with me the same attitudes that I had cultivated and developed along through the precious years of my life. And it is this I am convinced that is the cause for much of the paralysis in Christian's growth, that is, it is pathetic you know to

¹ John Nelson Hyde (1865 – 1912) was an American missionary who preached in the Punjab.

find that people listen to truth that they have heard for years, their minds consent to the truth, their hearts agree with the truth, and they have become so familiar with it that they almost feel it as theirs. If they were to analyze their own heart attitude it would be that they have become familiar with the outline of the box, but they have never opened it and partaken of it.

Like a child that gets a present at Christmas and for some reason is so indifferent to the giver's interest and his own welfare that he leaves this Christmas box sit there by where the tree long since has been taken out to be thrown away. He leaves it sit, unopened in the place where the tree stood. And he comes to it and he puts it, This is my Christmas box, look at the wrapping, and it is addressed to me, and I have been told by the one who sent it what is in it; but he has never ripped the paper and torn the ribbon and lifted off the cover and made the contents his. He is always going to do it, but it is not right in the morning. That is too early. It is not right at night. That is too late. It is not right on Saturday. The family isn't there. And Sunday, too many are there. And for one reason or another he lets the present sit week after week. And he never gets into it. Oh, how tragic it is to sit and gaze at truth, read the Bible, study it, learn the phraseology, learn the terminology, learn the doctrinal structure, pet it, pat it, lift it, hold it, carry it, do everything but take it. Why? Because we have developed these attitudes of procrastination, doing only that which is necessary for sheer survival, the pressure upon us to survive being as great as it is. We find that it is excusable. I believe everyone in the Christian life finds that there is not only a natural tendency in this direction, but there is also a satanic encouragement for them to continue to procrastinate.

Now, I believe that the Scripture makes it clear, abundantly clear that there are certain things which never will come back again. Every opportunity for service, every opportunity to speak that kindly word of encouragement, every time when a smile would be the means of lifting, and a frown of pressing down, that you miss, this I say is an opportunity that is fled and will never return. It is simply impossible to go back and reconstruct the situation again. And oh how often it might be that you wish you could to that person that, suffering under the lash of someone's criticism came to you, and instead of lifting and healing the wound and covering it with love and prayer, you added to the bitterness, the gall, or the hurt of the injury, or failed by some lack of empathy understand the need of the time. Someone has said, Many a vast and grand project that would have blessed humanity has been killed because of a sneer, a lifted eyebrow, or a word of discouragement. Remember everything that is big today was little at some time, and as I passed just the other day again the magnificent structure up here, crossing to New Jersey the George Washington Bridge, I thought again how simple it would have been for someone to have come to the person that was standing there dreaming and visualizing and purposing and by a sneer, by just a word killed it. On the contrary, someone was prepared to go ahead. He had a vision, and he was willing to do it, willing to pay the price, recognizing that there was a fleeting quality to his opportunity. Now if you will see this, then you are going to have to take an entirely, for some at least, an entirely different attitude.

You are going to have to say this: When the Spirit of God speaks to me this is the moment to obey, this is the moment to lay hold of that truth. What will happen if I make a statement like that is this, that somebody is going to get up in the middle of the service and say, I forgot to put the stove out under the tea kettle, and you are going to do it now. That is not just exactly what I mean. I do not want to stimulate erratic behavior. This is not in my mind. I am trying to press upon you that have come to the place of being balanced, established, well oriented personalities, the fact that you can't just indefinitely go on contemplating truth. Something happens in you that makes this truth appear old, shop worn, immaterial, and irrelevant in your life. It is essential that you should understand that when the Spirit of God works He is working to that point of your need and His purpose. And that you should be prepared to respond.

Let us explain it this way. Here is the sinner that we are concerned about, deeply concerned about him. You have been praying for him. Perhaps you have so accustomed yourself to his indifference that when he comes to you and asks a question, you think that the question is loaded, you think it carries with it some disposition of opposition to you and to what you are saying, and so you let it go by. How much better it would be if we were to carry the attitude of the successful salesman who takes himself in hand in the morning and says, I will sell today. How much better it would be if we would take this opportunity, this attitude, and say, I am going to expect the opportunity of conversing with someone about the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am going to be prepared to grasp the proper opportunity that comes. I am going to be alert to it and sensitive to it and know that that is the moment when I should speak, that this is the opportunity — I cannot put it off, I have to say, this is the moment to take

this advantage for Christ and perhaps to press through. He may have come to you just for the express purpose now of saying something. He may have to cover and guard lest he appear sentimental by some flippant, frivolous thing. But if you assume, you set yourself to this predisposition that you are going to talk with someone meaningfully about Christ, then you can believe that this is the opportunity that you have. And you will capitalize on it. You will use it. Whereas if you go and say, Well, I am going to be a witness, I have never said no, just this isn't the proper time, you will find that it is so convenient that no time ever becomes proper to engage in the most important task in the world of talking with people about their never dying souls and their relationship to Christ. There has to be a sense in which you are alert and you are prepared, and you are living at the pace of the knife point of NOW and that here is the time for that word quickly spoken that is going to be the means of extending your opportunity for witness and conversation about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we think of the sinner, and would address a word to him. If you are here tonight and you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ, I know that you said, Someday you are going to become a Christian. Only once have I ever met a man who was absolutely determined to go to Hell. Once I have. And he said that he signed a contract that years ago with a pestiferous preacher who was always talking to him, and he drew up a contract and framed it with his own legal terminology, and signed it, and said, I hereby on this date, this place, relinquish all interest in Jesus Christ. I never want to hear further of Him or of the Gospel that is professed to be preached in His Name, and I am determined to go to Hell, if such there be. I therefore relinquish all interest in Christ. Signed it. Handed it to the preacher and said, I hope this will stop you bothering me.

On one occasion I met with a man that seemed to be somewhat indifferent and so I drew up a similar blank contract and asked him if he would sign it. He looked at me, his face became ashen, his eyes filled with fear. He said, No, only a fool would sign a thing like that. I wouldn't sign it. I said, Well you said you don't want to talk about Him today. Every time I have seen you you have said the same thing. Why don't you get it over with? Perhaps then I would stop bothering you. I don't think I would, but why don't we try it and see. At least on your part it would give you an excuse with others. It wouldn't help with me, but why don't you try it? He said, I wouldn't do that. Of course, I expect to repent and believe and receive Christ some time. You see what he was planning on was that there would come a time in the future when he would feel the same way that he had felt back there as a child in the revival meetings, in their little southern community, when he would sit there and hold the bench and weep, as the Spirit of God was bringing him face to face with his guilt and the dreadful possibility of eternity in Hell. But what he forgot was that he would never react the same, that he would never feel the same, that situation could never come again. He would be different if it were that he went back. Everything would have changed because he had changed. I am not preaching deadline salvation, saying that if you do not come to Christ in this meeting, this week, this year, you won't come to Christ, but I am saying that there is something devastating about having an emotional, spiritual, intellectual awakening to need, and then contenting ourselves to go out without dealing with that need. Something happens in us, something happens to us, something dreadful happens that makes it so difficult to ever capture the moment again. And I know this; it will never be easier than it was at that time, to take that step, to deal with that action, to meet that need. There is a time for the sinner, that verse that says, Harvest is past, summer is ended, and I am not saved could have been the mournful cry of one that had undergone every kind of spiritual influence, hardening his heart all in the vain expectation of someday doing the thing that he had refused to do up until then, and would be incapable of doing by his own inward change of heart at the time that he might have been inclined to do so.

And so we find that there is something for the sinner. And oh how much there is for the Christian. How many a time the Spirit of God has spoken to someone concerning some area of sin, some area of failure, some area of iniquity. We found it the other day considering the Psalm. First it was just in the mind, the thoughts deviated, and then the desires changed, then the action was considered, and finally it became a presumptuous sin. The four steps into apostasy and into rebellion. And so it is with you, dear child of God, things that you read today, things that you look at today, things that you converse about today the heart is grieved, tomorrow not quite as much, the next still less feeling, until finally it becomes common, accepted, and is taken for granted. We must recognize that this is the enduring effect of repeated experience, and we must realize that the Spirit of God can be grieved. And I am speaking to you, dear child of God. When you have discovered that you have grieved Him, this sensitive One, God the Holy Spirit, who has so recognized that we are flesh that He has modulated the revelation of Himself to be borne by our humanity, and when He in grace comes to you and says, This attitude is wrong, these words are wrong, these

actions are wrong, you ought not to feel this way, you shouldn't have done this, it is such a simple matter for you to say, Oh, well I'll take care of that later, but there is something that has happened. And later is not going to be as good as now. There is a sense in which your blessing with God depends upon your dealing at the moment with the need as it has arisen. Can you recognize then that revival is not to be something toward which we press?

When I think of the fact that we have this continuing illustration of the importance of NOW going on there in Ruanda and Urundi. You recall, I have referred to it here repeatedly, how that the Spirit of God some, what would it be now?, 15 or 16, 17 years ago, because when I was in Africa in 1946 it had already been well established, for Dick Lythe our District Commissioner had married the daughter of one of the Anglican missionaries in the area that had been greatly affected by the Revival Movement. In fact, I asked him about it when I was a guest in his home, and he said, Well I don't know what to think about that. Come to find out, when he had gotten down there they had taken after him about the long briar pipe that he used, and he wasn't too enthusiastic about, this revival movement that made these people come to him and talk to him about something as what was what he felt was his own personal business. And so he wasn't too sympathetic about it. So I know it was before '46, and probably back in '43 and '45 that the Spirit of God began to work there in Ruanda and Urundi, and it began when a missionary was aware of his failure, aware of his sin, aware that he grieved God and he not only was aware of it, but he did that which the Spirit of God indited him to do. He went to the native national pastor with whom this altercation, friction and feeling had developed and he asked for forgiveness and pardon and accepted the responsibility, with the consequence was that the pastor was just on the way to see him to ask the same. They went before the church, testified to what the Lord had done in healing the breach and in giving them peace. It came to the congregation. The congregation responded. It went on beyond that congregation into the other villages, and now for these years, upwards of 20, this revival fire has gone on unbroken. Just last week Alan Redpath, speaking at the Christian Life Convention, or the week before, testified to the marvelous grace of God that he had beheld there in the Ruanda area as last summer, no later than a year or so ago, he had been in the midst of this revival. Well now what is the secret of it?

We understand that the secret is brokenness, and instant confession, dealing at the moment with that which the Spirit of God points out has grieved Him. So the conscience is kept constantly void of offence. Infection does not set in, in the human spirit. There is that point of now. The time to deal is at the moment of discovery, not to postpone saying, Well, we are going to have a meeting, and I am going to go to Mahaffey Camp meeting this summer, and I'll go to the altar there. It is popular to go, everybody goes, I'll go, I'll take care of the matter then. No, no, the infection will become malignant between now and the middle of August. You cannot wait till then. It must be dealt with now. There is a time for every purpose, and the time to deal with that that grieves God is at the moment of occurrence.

I have talked with missionaries just within the past week that have testified that their health, strength, disappeared on the field, simply because they had not learned the lesson of yielding at the point of need for that which had been discovered and had arisen. I think it behooves us, therefore, to recognize dear Christian that there is this living constantly in the NOW, dealing with whatever it is that the Spirit of God points out. And so it is with victory. How many people there are that are looking for a kind of victory, as I have said and repeat because it seems apropos, they want God to give them an experience that is going to wind their little clocks, set it on 12, and it never need to be wound or set again. They have had an experience that will immunize them not only to sin, but to temptation. So if tomorrow they are tempted, then they cast away their confidence, abandon their faith, and say, Well there is nothing to this that I have had. It is all my fault. And they have forgotten that God did not promise them an experience that would keep them from temptation. He promised them an experience that would keep them from yielding to temptation. There is no experience of grace that will protect us from being tempted. If that ever came to you, my dear, you would be holier than our wonderful Lord was, for He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Temptation is the proposition presented to the intellect to please yourself against the will of God. But victory is the provision that He has made so that at that point of temptation you can appropriate His life. You do not have to keep the lights on in the church all night long so that we will be sure to have them next Sunday night, next Wednesday, when we need them. Let's just put the switch off now because we know when we come we can put the switch back on, and the lights will come on.

And so it is that you do not need to go around 24 hours a day gazing at the Cross, seeing yourself on the back side of the Cross, or any of the other truths that we have presented. It is a matter of insight; it is a matter of realizing that when Jesus Christ died you died. Then at the moment, at the time of temptation, at the time when you would fail Him, at that moment when Peter walking on the water begins to sink and he feels the water part beneath his feet that he looks into the face of the Lord and calls, and the look and the call releases the life of the Lord into him. So it is there is a time to appropriate in victory. Victory is not something that He gives, as I said, insulates you, and immunizes you to temptation, but it is God's provision, it is wiring you, if you please, so that in the moment of temptation you can put the switch of faith in expectancy of reckoning on, and it releases His life into you to break the power of temptation and to deliver you at that moment, that point, do you see.

So there is a time for every purpose, and the time to reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin is now a life principle for the rest of your life. But you do not have to have some kind of self-hypnosis where you go around seeing crosses before your eyes. This is not what we are talking about. We are talking about the fact that when Christ died you died. This you understand is historical. Then when you come into the moment of temptation you reckon yourself dead and the reckoning releases His life.

But there is a time also to present your body. There is a time when you recognize and realize that the Lord is asking for a commitment on a new level, a commitment not just of sins — this you dealt with in repentance, not just obedience to His sovereign purpose—this you dealt with previously, but He is now asking you to give up the right to your rights, to abandon to Him some new area. The time to deal with it is the time that you feel His finger. Many a thing that the Lord allowed one year, He does not allow the next, because God is dealing with us. Just as a sculptor may go by and see the chunk of marble here, but he is not ready to deal with that yet. He wants it in perspective, and so he leaves that while he goes over here and works, and then when it comes to the time when he is to deal with that he deals it in the balance with the whole. And so this Heavenly Potter, this Heavenly Sculptor that is conforming you to the image of Christ may allow something to go undealt with today, but tomorrow you may discover that the Holy Ghost is dealing with you about this. What is allowable today may not be tomorrow. And how important, how imperative it is that you deal with the Lord on the moment of NOW, when He is speaking to you, when you have felt the pressure of His Spirit, and you let Him lead you. You yield to that which He is dealing with at the time that He is dealing.

Then we must recognize there is something further. We also must recognize that there is a time for the church in matter of revival. I have the Bible open before me to that wonderful portion in Hosea where we find that the Spirit of God is speaking to this prophet, warning them of the things that are to come to pass, condemning them for their iniquities and pleading with them to turn to the Lord. And so as he comes to the conclusion of this most stirring of all appeals among the prophets, we hear him say, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord till He come and reign righteousness upon us" (Hos. 10:12). Why has revival tarried? Why have we been so many years in this land and have not seen the Spirit of God work in what we would call an area visitation similar to what happened in Wales in 1900 early, and what has happened in the Hebrides, and what has happened elsewhere in the world. Why has there not been this visitation among us? I believe it is because of our attitude toward time. I believe that somewhere we got an idea that God moves sovereignly to bring revival, and we just sit and wait for Him to come. How grateful I was for our Brother Oliver's testimony tonight regarding the commitment of your life and the movement that you would make. I am convinced that we are to move in the direction of the greatest need, trusting confidently the Spirit of God will stop us, or change us, or direct us. But oh how easy it is just to sit, sit in respect to revival and say, My, well we do need revival, don't we. It is up to God though. Revival has to come from above, and if God sovereignly wants to give us revival He will give it. And do you know what is happening the while we are disobeying His word, we are ignoring His commandment; we are failing to live at that point of responsibility in the immediate NOW. Here it is. Sow when?— this is the immediate imperative. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. But you cannot reap until you have sown. Break up your fallow ground. You cannot sow until you have broken up fallow ground. What is it? This is confession; this is acknowledgment of failure and sin. This is an acknowledgment of need.

You say, Well I have done that. But have you done it for your nation? Have you done it for the church as we see it across the nation? Have you done it for pastors and spiritual leaders? Have you been able to get out beyond yourself in your agony? We find with the prophet that he was able to identify himself with his day and with his generation. We find this was true of

Jeremiah who could say of his generation that he had identified himself with them, sat where they sat, and had felt what they felt. Have you come to the place that you recognize that even though you may not be the monstrous sinner that God indites in His Word that you are living among them, and unless there is a repentance and a return to God this nation certainly is going to come under judgment. Every other nation that has gone the path that ours is treading has come under judgment. There is no reason to think that God is going to revoke the law of reprisal and of justice in order to protect us, and therefore have you identified yourself with this day and this generation? Have you made their sin your sin? Have you made their danger your danger? Have you made their heart your heart? Have you broken up the fallow ground of your heart in behalf of others? Hear it again: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord. It is time to seek the Lord" — how long? Begin Now and do not stop until He comes to reign righteousness upon you.

Do you recognize now the imperative nature of this? Now is the accepted time, and today is the day of salvation. It is imperative, therefore, if there is ever to be that pouring forth of the Spirit of God that we so desperately need, without which our land and culture will surely perish, it is imperative that you accept the responsibility and deal with this thing personally. You have to sow if you are to reap. You have to break up the fallow ground of your heart if you are to properly sow. It is necessary for you to become absolutely transparent before God, in brokenness and confession. Then, having done this, it is necessary for you to seek the Lord till He come, for this is the harvest that we are seeking. This is the reaping that we desire. We do not labor in vein. God is a covenant keeping God. He has said, "If My people, which are called by My Name," will do what I will tell them to do I will do what, they need to have done. "If they will humble themselves and seek My face and pray, and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from Heaven, then will I forgive their sin, then will I heal their land, but there has to be a personal responsibility." (II Chr. 7:14)

I have explained to you that in the matter of the intercession for the individual, unsaved, it is a matter of identification. You have an unsaved loved one? friend? or neighbor? It is necessary for you to legally represent that person, to go into the presence of God on behalf of that person, stand before God as though you were the person, accept their guilt for you as though you were as guilty as are they, to accept their condemnation, the justice of God's inditement of them, and then having identified with the person plead for mercy. And so it is necessary on a larger scale for the church, and even for the land, for us to identify ourselves with the church, a backslidden church, a worldly church, a materialistic church, a church which is become enmeshed with organization and has become obsessed with size and then to recognize that all of this is displeasing to Him, and cause God's heart to grieve, for He would bless and finds no vehicle of blessing.

When I speak of the church I speak of the larger visible corporate sense, of course. And you recognize therefore that it is necessary for you to personally identify yourself with the fact that God lacks a means, He is wondering that there is no intercessor, no vehicle of blessing in days of such tremendous danger; and having identified yourself with the need and with the sin and with the reason for judgment, then to plead for mercy, then to seek the Lord till He come and reign righteousness upon us. But oh we are going to do it sometime. We hope next Sunday the Lord will fall. We hope that at the next missionary convention next year God will come. We hope that next year at the Christian Life Convention there will be something more of heaven. We keep putting it off, living in a perpetual life of procrastination, and forget that it is now. It is at this moment. There are enough people right here tonight to change the world for Jesus Christ. If you would take just the message that I am giving, and the personal responsibility of meeting God now in your need, tonight in your need, and going out of here and living tonight in the light of His Word, not putting it off, not waiting, there is enough spiritual force that could be released by the power of the Holy Ghost through the vessels that are here before me as to change the world for Christ.

What will happen? You are going to say I am one that sounds like a pleasant musical instrument, listens, hear but do not heed the words that we are saying, not that I am saying that the word that is being said today is a word that has come from the Heart of God and borne by the Word of God, and just as Israel and Judah in their sin listened to the prophets and heard not a word that they said and went on saying, It will not be as they say, so it is that I say to you that unless God can find lives He can use as a vehicle for the revelation of the glory of Christ He has no alternative but just judgment poured out upon a land that has held the truth and done nothing with it.

I am not a prophet in any sense peculiar to what is being heard across the land today. What are we going to do? There is a time for every purpose. When the enemy is outside the gates, rattling their sword, and they are far nearer than Sennacherib's army was to the gates of Jerusalem, because the intercontinental ballistic missile does not come with an army across the plain. It comes from the top, and there is no protection against it. And I submit to you that the only thing that restrains wrath is the possibility that somewhere God is going to find a people that will live in NOW, and say NOW is the time to seek the Lord till He come and reign righteousness upon us, and not wait for some mythical personality to develop, not wait for some congenial, convenient period, but are going to see it is a great moral responsibility of being alive in the 20th Century, it places such an obligation upon me, that I have to act with a moral response to the challenge that confronts me.

What is it? It is the NOW of brokenness, the NOW of confession, the NOW of taking His life, the NOW of letting Christ live in us, the NOW of letting Him intercede for us, the NOW of asking the risen Christ to do something that is so desperately needed. NOW is the time. Today is the day.

Shall we bow in prayer. What are we going to do about it? What are we going to do about it? I do not believe that it is possible to argue against what we have said. We have not said anything radical. We have not said anything unscriptural. What are you going to do about it? Do you have that with which the Lord is dealing? I trust not. I trust that everything is up, and you are interceding, and that you are walking in brokenness, and keeping a conscience void of offense toward God, and you are taking His life in a moment of temptation, that you are walking in the fullness of the Spirit. But if you are not, NOW is the time. NOW is the time to break these attitudes of procrastination. NOW is the time to deal with them as sin. NOW is the time to put yourself in a way where you are going to live in the immediate opportunity and not wait for some mythical better day. You are going to live TODAY to the glory of Christ. Has God been speaking to your heart? We could sing and please and entreat, but I wonder if there are those who would say, Yes, God has spoken to me. I am far too late now, but I am going to mind God tonight. I am not going to put it off another day. I am not going to put it off another hour. I'm going to settle these matters with the Lord that have been pressing upon my heart. I am going to do it. If you are will you get up right where you are and come and stand in front of me....(invitation)

Our Father, Thou dost see us as a company. I must stand before Thee in that day when teachers give an account of themselves and discover that theirs is the greater condemnation, that I have delivered my soul and Thy message tonight. We as a people are going to stand before Thee, and I as well with them. What we have done with Thy Truth. O God of grace, Father of Jesus, come upon us until we discover that it is time to seek the Lord till He come and reign righteousness upon us. Come Thou upon us, Lord. Come upon us. Meet us.

Go with us now as we part. Bless the young people as they go to the College and Career Group, and let something be done through the ministry of the Word and the truth of the hour. Bring us to that place of living where Thou dost want us on the level of instant obedience to the Holy Ghost.

May Thy grace, mercy and peace be and abide upon us, ministering to us as Thou dost see we have need, for Jesus' Sake. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, March 18, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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