WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT WEEK OF AUGUST 1, 2022

August 1

Happy Monday, and happy August, DGCC Family.

We will take another break this week from our walk through the Biblical books and detour once again in another direction. This week I’d like to take a look at the topic of God’s timing as we begin the month of August and summer flies by.

Yesterday I was in the Menard’s by our house and, believe it or not, they had Halloween decorations on display:

If you look in the upper right, you’ll see something called “Spooky Mingos.” I stood there in the aisle for a moment trying to figure that out, and then I realized they meant “Spooky Flamingos.” Not sure how one can make a flamingo spooky, but maybe a few will have to grace the Bury yard this fall just so I can say we’re the only house on the block with “Spooky Mingos.”

In any case, putting up Halloween decorations way before Halloween, made me think about how human timing is so unlike God’s perfect and sovereign timing. As I ponder the difference between human timing and God’s timing, I can’t help but be reminded of this Proverb:

“In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps” (16:9).
Speaking personally, there have been many times when I thought I had everything all planned out with a "Plan A," and a "Plan B," and even "Plans C and D," and then, well, it turned that while I had planned my own "course," the Lord cared enough to "establish" different steps for me. Steps that led to wonderful things in my life that I never could have imagined.

My prayer today is that the same is true for you. There’s nothing wrong with planning, but go ahead and take the steps to see what steps God has laid out for your life. And then see to what amazing places those steps will lead.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

August 2
Grace and peace to you this day.

As we continue today with the topic of God’s timing, one of the things I always come back to is this: The Lord has no problem letting us wait.

In the breadth of our humanity, especially in modern times, we tend to want everything NOW. We all carry around a device that’s about the size of a deck of playing cards that literally brings the world instantly to our fingertips.

For example, I’m currently reading a book titled “Victory at Sea” about the naval battles and conquests before and during WW II. In a look back in history, the author describes the brilliant naval strategy of British Admiral Horatio Nelson in defeating the French and Spanish navies during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In the blink of an eye, I had maps on my phone showing exactly what that strategy was and what happened over 400 years ago.

Want to order some clothes, a new lawn chair, Chinese takeout or find out who won the World Series in 2016 (the Chicago Cubs, of course)? It all comes right into your hand in a matter of seconds.

All of this make us impatient, hasty, and at times a bit exasperated when we have to wait for something. And yet, our eternal God has a different perspective. This is what Jesus’ dear friend the disciple Peter had to say about it:

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:8-9).
Our timing is often rooted in “wants.” God’s timing, however, is rooted in salvation. As Peter points out, God’s perfect timing is such that He desires that no one shall “perish,” that is, experience physical death without trusting in Jesus and thus gaining eternal life in His presence.

Perhaps the only thing our smart phones can’t deliver on a moment’s notice is exactly that: the promise of eternal life. That can only be gained in placing our faith, our belief, and our eternal trust in the One who came to earth in accordance with the Father’s timing, so that “everyone,” including you, and including me, may “come to repentance” and spend eternity in the glory of the Savior’s presence.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

August 3
Greetings, DGCC Family.

Well, it’s nine days to “The Big Day,” our daughter Jillian’s wedding. Truthfully, my biggest challenge that day will be trying my best not to be a blubbering father-of-the-bride as our “little girl” becomes a married woman.

Looking back on the last twenty or so years since we brought her home from China, I’m reminded that the story actually begins well before that. After we adopted our son Matt in the summer of 1991 when he was three days old, we waited the requisite period of time before proceeding with the process of another adoption.

The process proved to have one challenge after another. An adoption from a birth mother in the Midwest fell apart at the last minute. A referral for an adoption from Russia didn’t work out. We looked at adopting from other countries, but there were roadblocks along the way. I personally was ready to be done with the whole thing. The emotion of it all was just wearying. However, Judy was confident that the Lord has spoken to her and said, “I have someone for you over there.”

I’m afraid to say that I was a bit like Abraham’s wife Sarah when God told her that she would have a baby. Abraham was approaching 100 years old, and Sarah was right up there with him. All their lives they had wanted a son, and yet Sarah until then had been unable to conceive. Then one day, the Lord appeared to Abraham in the form of three men, and this is what Scripture records:

“Then one of them said, ‘I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.’ Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, ‘After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure? Then the Lord said to Abraham, ‘Why
did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son’” (Genesis 18:10-14).

I can’t say that I laughed, but I had my doubts. However, Judy remained confident in the Lord’s promise and very long story short, there came that day when we walked up the terminal at O’Hare and off to China we went. Two days after that the Lord graciously dispelled my doubts as Judy held our new daughter in her arms.

Next week I will walk up not a terminal but an aisle, with that little girl now a grown woman not in her mother’s arms but on my arm. And I’m confident the Lord will bless her, her husband, and their marriage. Of that I have no doubt.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

August 4
Greeting you today with the Shalom of the Messiah.

We will conclude our brief look at God’s timing today with the reminder that ultimately, God’s timing is centered on salvation. This is how Paul says it in his letter to the Romans:

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (5:6-8).

The Lord had Abraham wait until he was 100 years old before granting him a son. The Jewish people were in captivity in Egypt for 400 years before God led them to the Promised Land. And then they had to wait 40 more years as they wandered in the wilderness because of their sin. A thousand years passed between when God made His promise to King David that someone would be on His throne forever and when He fulfilled that promise with the coming of the Messiah.

As Paul says, God does things “at just the right time.” While that is almost never in our time, it is always at the perfect time.

And once again, to that I say, Amen.
August 5

Happy Friday, everyone!
Here’s your musical devotion for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3HH__1Zbs

IHS,
Pastor Lou