January 9

Greetings, DGCC Family.

As we continue with the year 2023, we will continue with our walk through the books of the Bible in order, but with breaks in between. This week will be a “break” week.

One of the things that I have been thinking about lately is the notion of “time.” Maybe because I turned 65 and have officially obtained senior citizen status, or that our daughter is now a married woman, or that our son is “in his thirties,” but whatever the case, I’ve been thinking about the nature of time, and particularly its passage, especially as it relates to our eternal God.

Of course, inasmuch as we are bound by space and time, God is not. He functions on a timeless, eternal continuum whereas we function, for the most part, on a schedule. I was talking to another pastor recently and we were discussing the need for a routine in order to stay disciplined with our work. Get up at 6:30, devotionals, exercise, shower, breakfast, and start the day. Everything planned minute by minute. Maybe some of you go about your day in the same way.

Given that, it’s no wonder that we get impatient with the Lord and wonder WHAT IS TAKING HIM SO LONG?!?!?

But our perspective is not His perspective. Our perspective involves completing tasks, checking off boxes, and doing it all on time, on budget, and on schedule. But the Almighty has one thing first and foremost on His mind and on His heart: our eternal destiny. The disciple Peter, the dear friend of Jesus, said it like this:

“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).

And so as we go about the new year with our tasks and routines, as each of us get another day older, as we set our timers and alarms, rest assured that the Lord is “patient” with us and wants nothing more than for us to rest with Him in the timelessness of eternity.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Grace and peace to you DGCC Family.

Continuing with our discussion of the nature of “time,” when I was in high school in the mid-70’s, aside from the jazz musicians I followed, one of my favorite popular musicians of the day was Jim Croce.

Jim was a poet, at least in my mind, and there was a time when I knew the lyrics to almost all of his songs. Now you might ask yourself how it is that someone who aspired to be a jazz trumpet player, someone who followed Maynard Ferguson and all the great big bands – Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Buddy Rich, and so on, also liked a musician like Jim Croce. Maybe, just maybe, it had to do with the fact that one day in the cafeteria at Conant High School, where I attended, I overheard a group of girls talking about how romantic the song “Time in a Bottle was.” Maybe.

In any case, I went off and bought a guitar and tried to learn it so I could play Jim Croce songs to impress the girls. I was a resounding flop on both fronts.

However, to this day, I remember the opening lyrics to “Time in a Bottle:"

“If I could place time in a bottle,
the first thing that I’d like to do,
Is to spend, every day, till eternity passes away,
Just to spend them with you.”

With apologies to the late Mr. Croce, these words seem a bit sappy now, or do they?

As I think about our eternal God, isn’t that really His desire for us? The God of the cosmos longs for nothing more than to spend eternity with each of us. Our intimate, personal God desires nothing more than an intimate, personal relationship with us that stretches beyond our imagination. The world and all in it will eventually fade, but those of us who place our eternal hope in the Son will remain with Him forever. The disciple John said it like this:

“The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:17).

None of us can put time in a bottle or constrain it in any way, but here’s what we can do: live every day as if the first thing we would like to do is to spend eternity with our Creator God.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
January 11

Greetings to you this day in the name of the risen Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

As we continue to discuss the notion of time, we begin to understand that our timeless, eternal God nonetheless uses time to move forward His plan of salvation. That often means that he places us in a place and time in accordance with His sovereignty in order to advance His purpose. That can bring us discomfort and, at times, even danger. This is certainly true of Esther, whose story can be found in the book of Esther.

Esther was a Jewish girl living with her parents in exile in Susa, which was part of the Persian Empire. Her parents died at an early age, and she was adopted by her cousin Mordecai. Esther’s birth name was Hadassah, but she changed it to hide the fact that she was Jew. Through a series of events, she finds herself in the harem of King Xerxes and becomes his favored mistress.

One of Xerxes’ palace attendants hatches a plot to kill all the Jews in the kingdom and gets the king to go along with it. Mordecai learns of the plot and tells Esther that she must go to the king and convince him not to go through with it. Esther tells Mordecai that no one goes to the king unless summoned or they could be immediately killed. This was Mordecai’s reply:

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (4:14).

Esther goes to the king and, long story short, he foregoes the plan to kill the Jews and they are all saved.

Have you ever wondered why God has placed you in a certain place at a certain time? Rest assured that if we abide in God’s will, we are not promised earthly comfort, but we are promised divine blessing. God places us just where and when He wants us, just like Esther so many years ago. I would encourage you to read the story of Esther, and then pray about when and where God is placing you, day by day.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
January 12

Grace and peace to you this day.

As we conclude our brief discussion of the nature of time, no such conversation can take place among believers without acknowledging that moment in human history when the Son of God bows to the will of the Father and submits to His perfect timing, even to His death.

Jesus had His friends around Him and was celebrating the Passover. As they had gathered, Jesus foretells of His death with these simple words:

“Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified’” (John 12:23).

“The hour has come.” Sad, profound, and so full of grace and love and mercy.

“The hour has come.” Words that fulfill God’s timeless plan of salvation for His people.

“The hour has come.” Words that convey that the Father, and the Father alone, sets the timeline for human redemption.

And on that day when our hour has come, we will rest in eternity with the One, and because of the One, who on that day, spoke, and submitted to, these words: “The hour has come.”

IHS,

Pastor Lou

January 13

Happy Friday the 13th everyone! Here’s your musical devotional for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n145-J8ejg

IHS,

Pastor Lou