

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

February 3, 2019

What Time Is It?

by Frank Himmel

"What time is it?" is a common question. Looking at a clock will give you one answer; looking at the Bible will give you quite another!

It is time to wake up. "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). Too many are sleepwalking spiritually. Some give no consideration to spiritual matters at all. Others naively assume that things are just fine, when the truth is they are dead in their sins in which they walk (Ephesians 2:1-2). This verse in Romans, however, is addressed to Christians. Some of us need a wake-up call, too, to be roused from indifference and get serious about serving God.

It is time to live for God's will. "... Live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2). Again, this is addressed to Christians. We need to once and for all abandon lustful conduct. "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries" (v. 4). It is time to quit dabbling in devilment and grab hold of godliness.

It is time to conduct yourself in fear. "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourself in fear during the time of your stay on earth"

(1 Peter 1:17). While the Bible speaks of having confidence before God, it also reminds us to maintain a healthy fear of Him. Fear of displeasing God will motivate us to live as He directs. That fear will also help us maintain proper reverence in worship as we draw near to Him. "... Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 10:28-29).

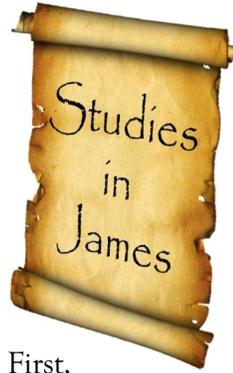
It is time to pray. "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). It is always time to pray: to praise God, to give thanks, to seek wisdom, to gain strength, to intercede for others, to find forgiveness, to rid yourself of worry, and to grow closer to God.

It is time to teach. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers..." (Hebrews 5:12). Our children need to be taught all about spiritual things. A lost world needs to be taught the gospel. Those young in the faith need to be taught the whole counsel of God. Sadly, some who ought to be teachers "have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God..." ▶



Focus on the Outcome

by Frank Himmel



James says we are to view our trials as “all joy” (James 1:2). Two considerations make that possible. First, they bring the temporal benefit of improved character; they actually help us in this life. Second, they lead to an eternal blessing. “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (v. 12).

The Bible speaks of two different kinds of crowns. One is a diadem, a kingly crown. Jesus wears multiple diadems, reflecting his infinite kingly majesty (Revelation 19:12). The other crown is the victor’s crown, the kind given to a warrior returning from a successful campaign or the winner of a race (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). This crown was also worn for ornamental purposes, as an adornment; in that sense Paul spoke of brethren as “my joy and my crown” (Philippians 4:1; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:19).

Eternal life is our crown. It is what the Lord promised to those who love Him more than anyone or anything else. It indicates victory over our trials, success in running our race. It is a crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4), a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8).

Our success, of course, is not on our own; all credit goes to the Lord who strengthens and sustains us. In the throne scene of Revelation 4, the twenty-four elders cast down their crowns before God’s throne as a tribute to Him. He is the powerful ruler. He is the one who empowers us to overcome!

James reminds us, then, to look beyond our immediate circumstances. Focus on the outcome. Paul concurred. “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17). “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18). ■

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It is time to use our opportunities. “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16). Too often we wait for the elusive “perfect time” to act. It rarely comes. The sure opportunities are the ones we have now. Let’s get busy and make the best use of them we can. They may be better than we envision!

“And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’ Behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation’” (2 Corinthians 6:1-2). ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Howard Moore	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Adam Gibson	
CUP	Sam Walters	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Wilson	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Carlos Garcia
CLOSING PRAYER	Stachys McLeod	Albert Harrison Sr