

SERIES: **#come**
#timehascome – Mark 1:9-15

Introduction: We continue our series **#come**, where we are emphasizing that our Christian faith is one of movement, not sitting still. Today we note how there is an urgency to the Kingdom of God. Jesus calls us to follow Him, and that call is immediate. With every word and deed, Jesus proclaims that the Kingdom of God is near and invites us to enter it without delay. The time has also come for us to spread the Gospel of Jesus to others before it's too late. "It's time. The Kingdom is near. Repent and believe."

Billy Graham preached the same message for over 50 years, and thousands came to Christ through his simple presentation of the Gospel. Sometimes we make God's Word too complex—we forget the simplicity of the Good News that Billy Graham has preached for all these years.

But that simple message of hope did not begin with Billy Graham, it was the message preached by John the Baptist, and it was the message preached by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The heart of that simple message can be summed up in two statements: 1) Repent, 2) The Kingdom is at hand.

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the good news of God. In Mark 1:15 we hear Jesus proclaim, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Hear that verse from the New Century Version: "The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!"

In our meditation today I want us to ask the question: WHAT TIME IS IT? The simple answer is: "The time has come! It's time for our HEARTS and LIVES to be changed!"

When we think of time, we most often think about a clock, hours, minutes, seconds, and so on. In Jesus' day, there were two different words for time. One was the one we are used to: **chronos**, which is where we get our word chronology, chronograph, etc.... This is the word that describes the measuring of time.

A few years ago a pastor friend of mine left Sacramento heading for a conference in St. Louis with me and several other pastors. He had a layover in Salt Lake City. He told me he had been thinking—"change your watch," but he didn't. Big mistake!

He got off the plane, figured out where the gate was for his connecting flight to St. Louis, and then went to get something to eat. He had a leisurely meal, and then proceeded to wander through some of the shops in the terminal. He went to use the restroom. After he came back out into the terminal, he looked down at his watch and then it hit him—"It's not 3:55 its 4:55! And I'm going to miss my plane!"

He ran to the gate, which now had no one waiting, and he asked the lady at the counter, "Let me guess, I missed my plane?"

Everything turned out OK, as he was able to get on a flight the first thing the next morning and still make the conference, but none of that would have been necessary if he had simply changed his watch to "know" what time it was!

As important as that kind of time is—there is another word for time, and it is the word that Jesus used in verse 15. That word was: **kairos**, which is described as an opportunity, or a "point of decision." It would be similar to our expressions such as: "an opportune moment," or, "window of opportunity."

Jesus was saying that it was time for a decision. The window of opportunity was open. Now was the right time! What was it a right time for? To make a choice regarding God's Kingdom. Jesus said the kingdom was at hand.

This is the same word for "time" that Paul used in his letter to the Galatians: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:4-5)

This phrase could be illustrated by what happens when a child is waiting for their Grandparents to arrive. The child sits by the front window or on the porch waiting, and then as soon as they recognize Grandpa & Grandma's car, they run and announce to everyone, "they're here, they're here!" Do we have that kind of anticipation about Jesus?

We need to ask ourselves: "What are we doing with our time?" We've all either heard, or said, "Quit wasting time!" Usually, our concern is with the clock, and the possibility of running out of time. That is why we have alarm clocks—to help us deal with our "time issues." While that works fine for **chronos** time—time that is measured by a clock, it doesn't necessarily work for **kairos** time.

The time that Jesus was talking about, and what I want us to focus on today, reflects opportunities and choices we must make. Jesus said that there is a right response to the time at hand: change your hearts and lives and believe the good news.

The reason I like the New Century Version's translation of this verse is because it says: "change you hearts and lives...." Most translations use the word "repent," but many don't know what "repent" really means. The word "repent" means: "to change one's mind, to turn around, do a 180." It reflects a change in direction. Basically, that means, we stop going our way and start going God's way. The reason for repentance is SIN. The Bible very clearly tells us that all of us sin, and so all of us need to repent, to turn away from sin and turn towards God.

After Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, scripture says that the people's hearts were opened to God's message and their response was: "What should we do?" Peter gave them the same message Jesus had preached: "Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

Peter's challenge to them was to take a step of faith by turning to Jesus and turning away from sin. He was challenging the people that day to "make the most of their time..." to, "seize the moment."

Are we "seizing the moments" that God gives us? There is a difference between time measured by a clock, and time measured by opportunity. We don't have any guarantees of that kind of time. There is an expression that says, "life is short." While that is true, the fact is we do not know "how short life is!"

Here's a question that can really challenge your perspectives—"If you knew that your life was almost over, and you only had the time to tell only one person, one thing that you haven't taken the time to tell them, who would it be, and what would you say?"

Experts say that 3 people die every second. If this fact is true, then 180 people die every minute, 10,800 people die every hour, 259,200 people die every day, and 94,608,000 people die every year. Of the six billion people on earth today, experts also say that 2/3 of them have never heard the Gospel. If these percentages hold true, then 63,103,536 people die every year without ever hearing the Gospel! Not everyone that has heard the Gospel accepts the Gospel. Therefore, many more people die every year without hearing or accepting the Gospel! That's **Kairos** time, our God-given opportunity.

Now here's the real kicker—"What have you been waiting for?" We have the greatest message of hope the world can receive – Jesus came to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins as he died on the cross in our place. And when he rose from the dead three days later, he completed God's plan of undeserved love, and brought us forgiveness, life, love and salvation.

How many more opportunities are you going to have to do what the Lord has placed on your heart? If the Lord has asked you to do it, then do it! The Apostle Paul challenged the believers in Ephesus to "know what time it was." He said to them: "look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." Eph. 5:15-6

What was true in Ephesus in Paul's day is true in Anoka, Ramsey, Andover, Coon Rapids and Champlin today. We live in difficult times...times where God is being taken out of everything, but He cannot be taken from those of us who know Him through His Son Jesus Christ, and who have the infilling of His Holy Spirit within!

You can use your God-given opportunity to invite someone to worship, to a Bible study or small group, or a special event here at Mount Olive. You can take the opportunity to listen, to walk beside, console and strengthen someone going through difficult times. You seek the opportunity when you get to know each of your neighbors beyond the occasional "hi" or "how's it going?" Then, when God gives you the opportunity through His Holy Spirit, share the message of love, hope and salvation that lives within each of you.

So, what time is it? The time has come – repent and believe! The time has come - Let's not waste the time God gives us. Let's share the Good News of salvation in Jesus! Amen.