

MIT Morning Devotions
Homily
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“What Time Is It?”

What time is it?

Some of you are looking at your watches, but that’s not what I mean. The time on the clock would be what the Bible calls, “chronos” time. Chronos is the time of day, the hour.

But when I asked you, what time is it? I had in mind another kind of time. In the Greek NT, there’s another word that is translated “time.” That word is “Kairos.” Kairos time refers to an important moment in time, perhaps a time of significant change, or of an important decision or action. Kairos time could also be a special opportunity that suddenly becomes available.

Jesus coming into the world was a Kairos moment. Throughout his lifetime, there were many Kairos moments when he revealed himself or accomplished the will of God in various ways. And at the end of Chronos time, there will be the Kairos time on Judgment Day.

In Ecclesiastes (3:1-8), Solomon doesn’t use the Greek word Kairos of course, but he talks about life as a collection of different times. He writes:

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Not all moments in life are the same. Not every season has the same purpose. Not every situation offers the same opportunity. The key is to know, what time it is. And to know what the opportunity and responsibility you have in that moment.

In Romans 13, Paul says, “...you know what time it is (Kairos), how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers” (13:11).

So, what time is it in your life? Is it time for you to wake up and get a vision for your life, for your people, for Myanmar, and for your future?

On Monday, Dr. Sa Sa inspired all of us with his own personal testimony. The first Kairos moment in his life came when he was 7 years old and three children died of diarrhea. In that moment, he woke up. Something needed to be done to stop children from dying of diarrhea. A vision was born inside of him. As you know, he went on to become a doctor and has created a medical center in his home town in Southern Chin State. Soon, he will complete the first airport in Chin State. It all started when he was seven years old. He suddenly recognized what time it was—it was time for him to get a vision for his life and his people. It was time to start praying and asking God fulfill his dream. It was time for him to start working hard to pursue his vision.

Now, very few of us will be called to be doctors or build airports. But God is calling you to something, something bigger than yourself, something good for your people and for your country. I hope you are praying for God to give you a vision for your life and ministry, and are praying for God to fulfill whatever dreams he has given you that fit with his good purposes for your life.

Meanwhile, there’s also the Kairos moment of today, here in Yangon, at MIT, this semester.

We only have about seven weeks until graduation weekend. For some of you, it’s time to start your term papers. For graduates, it’s time to finish your theses. But beyond school assignments, what do you most want to get out of the time remaining in this semester? What relationship do you most want to enjoy or invest in? What do you most want to give or offer to someone else? Is there something important that needs to be said or done while you’re still here on campus?

We may never pass this way again

There was a popular song by a band named Seals and Crofts when I was young that talked about making the most of the opportunities we have. The refrain was, “We shall never pass this way again. We shall never pass this way again. We may never pass this way again. So I wanna laugh while the laughing is easy. I wanna cry if it makes it worthwhile. I may never pass this way again. That’s why I want it with you, baby.”

Illustration

Over the weekend, I was missing my family and feeling lonely. I started thinking about what I was going to do after I go back home and how great it was going to be when we’re all reunited. But as I was praying about my feelings, I suddenly realized that I am in the midst of a Kairos moment. I only have five more weeks here on campus before I return home for 2 weeks, before coming back here again for graduation and conducting various workshops in Mandalay and Chin State. Five weeks isn’t very long. And the point is, I have a unique opportunity while I’m that will soon be over. It’s precious time to be here on campus. What am I going to do with that time?

What is God calling me to do here and now, while I still can? I may never pass this way again—I don't know for sure—so I want to make the most of the time here with all of you while I can.

Almost immediately, when I received this message from the Lord, my loneliness disappeared. My motivation surged. I wrote out a list of people I wanted to reach out to. I started praying and asking God the opportunities he was giving me to do something good and worthwhile.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes, “Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the [Kairos] time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (5:15-17, NRSV).

The days are evil. The USA and Iran are on the brink of war. The situation in Myanmar is continually churning and boiling over. The Russians and Chinese are aggressively expanding their self-serving, troubling influence throughout the world. People are getting sick and dying. And on and on. You and I don't know how much time we have to love those around us, to learn, to grow, to give of ourselves, and to make a difference for Christ and his kingdom. This time is all we have for sure.

So, again, let me ask you. What time is it in your life right now? And, what are you going to do with it?

Prayer

Benediction

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. —2 Thessalonians 2:16-17