

Introduction: Pg. _____

Take out a piece of paper or pull out your phone and want you to write your answer to this question: "How many times a day do you look at the clock?"

Think about it. If you were to take a stab at the number of times you look at the time on your phone, in your car, on your laptop, on the microwave, on your watch, how many times you look at the clock on your wall? 14 or 15? 30? Who's north of 50? But let's not forget about the prompts for checking the time: desire and responsibility. When you get hungry? (You probably check the time). When you want to watch your favorite tv show, or the Pats on Sunday night football? Or When you are waiting for the bus or train? Did your number just go up?

Now, I know you are waiting for me to pull out some crazy number sociologists have pinpointed that would tell us how many times Americans living in urban environments check the time, because then you would all be amazed and be persuaded to continue listening to me talk. . . :) But I don't need to do that, now do I? We live in Boston, MASS.

Time is one of the dominating realities of our lives. We seem to never have enough of it. Not to mention, the time we spend often feels wasted or less than unfulfilling. Our culture is hyperconscious when it comes to time. That is why...

I believe the greatest currency of our culture is the currency of time.

"The Currency of Time"

Psalm 90

Robert Levine is a social psychologist at Fresno State University who has written a fascinating book titled *A Geography of Time*, with a catchy and lengthy subtitle: *The Temporal Misadventures of a Social Psychologist, or How Every Culture Keeps Time Just a Little Bit Differently*.

Levine cites **5 Major Factors** that seem to Push a Culture **toward a greater tempo of time**, and consequently a greater preoccupation with time. Here they are:

1. **Economics:** Active economies put greater value on time. The wealthier the society, the faster it tends to move. (Hello Boston!)
2. **Industrialization:** "It is one of the great ironies of modern times that, with all of our time-saving creations, people have less time to themselves than ever before. . . . almost every technical advance seems to be accompanied by a rise in expectations."
3. **Population:** Bigger cities have faster tempos. 5M in the metro area.
4. **Climate:** Here, hot = slower; cold = faster. It's only September, but January's coming. Boston.
5. **Cultural Values:** Individualistic cultures move faster than those emphasizing collectivism. Individualistic cultures value achievement over affiliation, which usually leads to a "time-is-money" mindset, which in turn results in an urgency to make every moment count.

How many times have you said: "time is money"? Filthy Americans! :) Is the point made?

The greatest currency of our culture is the currency of time.

That is why I am very excited to explore our unceasing relationship with time, with you over the next four weeks. We are going to look at what looks like to value time, manage it, maximize it, and how

we should incorporate taking time to rest. It's going to be fun and painful, but mostly fun. And more than that I hope it drops us into some major clues as to who God is, who we are in light of who he is and how we can live a life of wisdom when it comes to the reality of Time.

To get us started, we are going to go to an ancient prayer penned by a man named Moses in chapter 90 of the book of Psalms. Listen carefully as I read this reflection [on the transient nature of human life.]

Read Psalm 90

These words invite us to...

The Point: Value the invaluable currency of time.

Let me give you three ways to value the invaluable currency of time. #1.

I. Value time by understanding God and his world (1-11).

- The opening words of this prayer form the foundation of what follows. They teach us a great pattern for our own prayers. Start with God and his character. Remember who he is.
- Verse 1 tells us that God is our Dwelling Place
 - The story of Jesus tells us that God made us to find our home in him.
 - What is remarkable about this opening statement is that it comes from a man, who was leading a people, who *never had a home!* The people of Israel were exiled in Egypt where they were oppressed as slaves. Then escaped Egypt and traveled on an Exodus journey into the wilderness where they wandered for 40 years without a home.
 - But God is home to those who have no home. This is the power of the message of Jesus. He welcomes us home.
- Verse 2 goes on to speak of the Transcendence and Eternality of God.
 - Before anything that we can see was able to be seen God was there.
 - "From everlasting to everlasting you are God."
 - God has no birthday, and God has no deathday. No beginning. No end.
 - We call this the eternity of God. It points to his infinite nature.
 - It signals to us, he is transcendent. He is over all things, independent of all things!
 - These are mind-bending realities.

T: That's who God is, but what about us?

- Moses reflects on the nature of God in light of their current circumstances. On the Exodus journey, death was all around them. They were acutely aware of the brevity of life.
- The poetic imagery we find in these verses is intense. We should not only *think* through these words, we should *feel* them.
- We should let them *sink deep*. In light of the eternity of God... We are.
 - Dust. (3). We are Created. Frail.
 - Our days are transient. (4-6)
 - Verse 4 is a poetic way of comparing the boundless nature of God with our limitations.
 - Take 1,000 of your years. That's like a day to him. Does that sober you?

- And if not, he takes it a step further: nah, not a day, 1,000 of your years is like a watch in the night to God. That's 3 hours, 12% of one day. Unbelievable.
- And by the way, the point here is not to make us feel small; it's to help us see that God is great.
- In the words of a 16th century pastor (and you have to love the original wording here): **"Betwixt a minute and a million of years there is some proportion, but betwixt time and eternity there is none."** - Matthew Henry
- Translation: You and God - No proportion. No comparison!
- Can we just pause here and say: Isn't it amazing a God, this huge and infinite and transcendent above time, would care about us to the point of condescending to us in the person of Jesus so that he could extend us grace and love and an invitation to come back home? Unbelievable.
- Our days are transient.
- Our days are swept away like a flood. (5)
- Our days are like a dream. Here and then gone, if we can even remember them. (5)
- Our days are like grass (5-6).
- They are like a SIGH. (9)
 - That is *nota* beautiful picture. We expire. Fizzle out. (We are all going to fizzle out... Thank you, I'm not coming back to this church - this tanner guy is a little too pessimistic!)
 - Not pessimistic, Realistic. If we fail to get real about time, we will fail to understand the value of time, and if we fail to understand the value of time, we will fail to make our lives count. So one more... :)
- Verse 10: "The years of our life... are soon gone, and we fly away." Like a plane in the sky: there one minute, out of sight, the next.

Do you recognize that your life is but dust, a dream, a sigh, soon gone?

T: He goes on to offer the theological rationale for it in *verses 7-11*.

- These verses tell us that our world is NOT the way it is supposed to be. Life feels so short because God made us to LIVE and LIVE forever. WE long for more.
 - Death stings because death is not the way it's supposed to be.
 - Ecclesiastes talks about it: "He has set eternity in our hearts." (Ecclesiastes 3:11) Could it be that our longer for more time, is a clue that God made us for the age where time will not limit us.
- We rejected his gift of life. Death entered our world.
 - Michael Reeves says: "[God's] judgment does not mean the destruction of the *creation* once declared good; it means the destruction of all *evil* for the *renewal* of the creation.
 - Personal sin... If someone could take their iPhone and record your every move, how comfortable would you be? What if they could get inside your head and broadcast your thoughts and inside your heart and broadcast desires? That junk doesn't belong in God's good world, and certainly not in God's perfect presence.
- Verse 11 - we can dismiss this or we can consider this?

T: Verse 12 begs us to consider it. "Teach us..." Point #2

II. Value time by counting each day a gift (12).

"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12)

“Teach us”

- This implies that we *all* have something to learn about valuing time! Right?
- I mean, why pray, “teach us,” if we do not have anything to learn?
- So if I can go out on a limb here and side with the Bible, here’s the point: you and I do not value time like we should.
 - [When we’re young, we think: our whole life is ahead of us.
 - When we’re older, we may so: my of my life is past, what’s the point now?]
- God must give us the ability to see everything see our days in a new light. When we look up at his eternity, and we look around at our mortality, there is something very clarifying about it.
- Teach us...

“To number our days”

- What does that mean? **Life is short. Play Hard.** (Do you remember these shirts?) So Christians, who are better at mimicking culture than transforming culture make t-shirts that say: **“Life is short. Pray Hard.”** Is that what this means? Not exactly.
- Numbering our days refers to “assign a value to”
 - When I was a freshman in college (Freshmen, here’s a story for you), I was trying to settle in on a major and was thinking about business: I knew God was leading me to serve the church, so I knew it would help.
 - My very first class: micro-economics with “Arthur Chesler” (KWC) we was some bad mamma-jammas
 - I’m no economist, but I do understand this: Scarcity drives value. (Rare books. Oil prices. iPhones - Galaxy owners watch out!)
- Last week, Jon encouraged us to live budget with our Money. We should do the same with our TIME.
 - 168 hours in a week. Roughly 112 of those are waking hours.
- How do you assign value the days God has given you? I think the key is in the question. We recognize they have been given to us.

Time is a Gift.

- Each day is a gift. Each day is a treasure. **CALENDAR PIC.** We only have one shot at today. September 11. One shot at September 12.
- Your Career at Tufts, Lesley, Harvard, MIT, Bunker Hill. Wherever you attend. One shot.
- I’m 35. Only 3 more months and then bang! 36. I get one run at it! These years with the kids at home. Man, this one hurts: Parker is seven. She’s taking up the whole bed. I can’t take it. I’ve only got one shot. God, help me to number my days.
- **Jonathan Edwards** wrote an excellent little reflection in December of 1734 titled “The Preciousness of Time.” In it he said: **“Time is so short, and the work which we have to do in it is so great, that we have none of it to spare. . . . time is a thousand times more precious than money; and when it is gone, cannot be purchased for money, cannot be redeemed by silver or gold.”**
- “Teach us to number our days.”
- If your life weighed the value of time, how far would the scale tip? Do you treat each day as precious? Is each moment a gift?

- I know some of us are stressed by how much we have to do this week. How can we manage our time in such a way that reflects a heart of wisdom from God and seeks the good of others?
- How can we maximize our time so that each day counts and we can look back with great satisfaction? We'll cover those questions the next two weeks. :)
- But today, let me ask you: How can you incorporate the prayer of verse 12 into your week? Could you start your day? When you commute to work? When you walk in to be with friends or family? When you end your day, could you reflect, did I really value the time you gave me today?

T: Do you feel as though you have not numbered your days? There is hope for you... But it comes with turning over our lives to God and allowing him to assign the value. That's what verses 13-17 are about.

III. Value time by asking for God's renewal (13-17).

In light of this, the eternity of God, the frailty of humanity, the shortness of time due to the judgment of God, the need to value it, in light of all this, the Psalm concludes with a bold & "assertive plea."

- Return! Have mercy on us. Change our situation.
- Satisfy us!
 - The word "satisfy" means to fill us, but it is even stronger than that. This prayer is a prayer for God to overwhelm with God, with himself.
 - Not a change my circumstances, better home, more money, less stress, a nicer boss, though God cares about every detail of our lives, so pray away, but our greatest prayer is for *more of God*.
 - Why?
 - The path to rejoicing and gladness, every day, is more of God. I'll take it.
 - The path to renewal the presence of God. And that is what this is all about. The word "morning" points not just to a few hours in the morning (though by implication, I think we should always seek to start our day with God); the word morning refers to renewal. Every morning is the renewal of a new day.
- Make us glad!
 - Because of the grace of God in Christ, the glory of our future will make our present suffering look like it was nothing (rw). It will be that good.
- Show us your power!
 - What is better than seeing the work of God?
 - And what better way to pray for not just our vocational work but every good deed we perform:
- Let your favor be upon us & establish our work of our hands.

Conclusion:

We can value time by understanding God and his world, counting each day a gift, and asking for God's renewal, but we live on this side of the cross. Literally A.D.

JESUS. "My hour has not yet come." (3x). "My hour has come." Now through his sacrifice, we have the opportunity to spend our time in a way that honors God, serves others, and fulfills us. Jesus is the path to wisdom. PRAY.