



A Minute with Pastor August 2015

August 2, 2015 - Creation Sunday

It's often what people say when they gather for a meal, bow their heads, and utter a few words. It's what others seek to receive from a priest or pastor before a significant event in their life. It's also what some expect from God on high when they have performed something noteworthy in their own eyes down below.

What is this sought-after commodity? It's the blessing! But unlike the three scenarios above, the Bible describes a blessing as something entirely up to God as to whether He even grants one. While He does pour out abundant blessing, not one of these can be earned and certainly not even one is deserved.

Its first occurrence in Scripture quickly surfaces in the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible as God blesses Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:28). From that point on, He continues to bless humanity according to His own desire.

And even though we have tainted God's plan and often resisted His will, the Apostle Paul declares this:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

God pours out blessing upon us. Are you noticing?

August 9, 2015

It begins to hit around the time of the year when the seventh month turns to the eighth. The whirlwind of thoughts begin to flood the mind: "Where did the summer go?" "I can't believe that school is starting soon!" "Is it just me or is time passing too quickly?" "I guess that project will have to wait another year!"

Time pauses for no one and there are seasons of life where it seems so much the more evident. Welcome to the end of summer where vacations conclude, school begins, and the

daily grind starts anew. The warmth of summer rays soon give way to autumn breezes, which then gives way to – you know what!

Time is a precious commodity that the Bible compares to life, which is here today and gone tomorrow (James 4:14). Even more vividly, Scripture exhorts us to redeem the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). We can regain many commodities in life; unfortunately, time is not one of these!

What are we to do as the clock ticks on with no one to stop it? Moses, the meekest man of his day, supplies this humble insight: "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). Prioritize each day, purposefully submitting to the Holy Spirit's direction. That'll maximize your time and grant you a fulfilling, satisfying day – and life!

August 16, 2015

It accesses the throne room of God. It settles your anxious thoughts and calms your fears. It connects you to the source of your strength. It prioritizes your day. It enables you to extol the glory of God and exalt Him with your lips. It's prayer!

It's both encouraging and convicting to sample the prayers of the Bible as they instruct us on what we should pray and how we should pray. From both testaments spring a deep reverence for God and brokenness from man. Such petitions root themselves in the attributes of the Most High with an overwhelming awe. Listen to this particular supplication:

"For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

This prayer sources in the Book of Daniel (4:34-35), but it isn't from Daniel – or his three godly friends. Instead, it flows from the lips of King Nebuchadnezzar, an unbeliever!

If such a heathen king, overcome by the sovereignty of God could utter such words, imagine what should pour from the lips of true followers of God. So, what springs from your mouth?

August 23, 2015

Think about the reality of money: We expend much of our energy and fill much of our schedule when it comes to this area of currency and possessions. Indeed, we devote 8-10 hours a day making it at our place of employment, than we dedicate 8-10 hours a week finding ways to spend it:

Grocery shopping

Fast food stopping

Mall hopping

Tip dropping

Dessert topping

Then, we spend another several hours a week managing it – balancing our checkbook, stretching our budget and tightening our spending. Money and the pursuit of it is many times an all-consuming task and the temptations are great – working too long, spending too much, and saving too little.

Thankfully, God is not aloof or naïve to this preoccupation with possessions; hence, He has much to say about it in His Word. That's especially true in the parables. Of the nearly 40 parables in the New Testament, 16 deal with money and 2/3 warn against materialism. In addition, more is said in the N.T. about money than about heaven and hell combined. God knows our struggle.

August 30, 2015

Got caught speeding? Now you'll have to pay the fine. Slipped on the ice and broke your hand? Now you'll have to get surgery. Mistakenly put your daughter's red dye in your hair? Now you'll have to visit the beautician. Forgot to take your umbrella with you when you headed out the door? Now you'll have to spend the rest of your morning with a "bad hair" day from the rain.

Yes, there are consequences for our choices – for better or for worse. What we do carries with it repercussions – first to ourselves yet certainly to others. Our life is never lived in a bubble but impacts many connected with us. We don't exist in "plastic-ville" where isolation abounds. Like that tipped domino, one action spills over to affect others.

Generally, that's a very good thing. Experiencing consequences can actually be a teaching tool. If we had little or no penalties for our choices, we would be more apt to repeat the same mistakes and wrong choices! Indeed, we would likely return to that same scene.

Thankfully, all of these consequences are short-lived. They are temporal and left in the rear view mirror. However, there is one decision that leads to an eternal outcome: the matter of salvation. To repent and believe leads to life, but to reject and dis-believe leads to death. Where are you headed for all eternity?