

9-4-22

Sermon- Chart Your Course, Look For Opportunities

Scripture- Colossians 4: 2-6, CTW Ps 50:1-8, 22-23

Hymns- 639, 264, 353

Theme- We are set free to serve Christ as the Holy Spirit leads us. We are to bathe all things in prayer, looking for guidance and seizing opportunities sent by God as an answer to that prayer. Don't be discouraged when the answer doesn't come right away, stay the course!

I. Many times opportunities come but once.

A. Sometimes they get by us because we just aren't paying attention.

Things slip by us when we are intent on our own projects, goals, or activities.

Then too we can be attacked, criticized, or beat down because of our past failures. Sometimes we can be attacked by the people that we are trying to get through to and sometimes by the very Christians who are supposed to be encouraging us.

Opportunities, golden opportunities, are also missed many times out of pure, unadulterated, laziness.

We may put a mask on it, but it still is laziness. I think that many of us can identify with this scenario, opportunities lost because we don't want to get out of our chair, because we don't want to leave the house, or because we don't want to put up with the physical elements. I myself am guilty of that.

B. For these reasons and/or others, we find a fourth reason for not taking advantage of the golden opportunities that avail themselves to us. We expect someone else to do it.

1. Let them take the flak.

2. Let them feel the rejection.
3. Let them sweat or freeze.

II. In this passage for today, Paul wants us to look at the keys to making the best of the Golden Opportunities that come our way.

A. Look to the future.....not the past.

Phil. 3:13-14 – 13 “Brethren, I do not count myself to have Achieved it; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

We can and should be stirred up by and encouraged by history (the past), but we must never let ourselves become bound to it.

1. We must not let uninspired traditions (as good as they may seem)....kill our good ideas and intents.

B. To some degree...the days of Golden Opportunities are still here.

1. Opportunities within the Church and opportunities among lost souls.

Door-to-door calling, teaching, and witnessing still present themselves as opportunities. They are what we will make of them, however.

We often have the opportunity of cultivating a friendship and opening the door to eternal life for our friends.

I’m not suggesting deceit in cultivating the friendship, but I am saying that we should take advantage of the friendships we do

have and look for the opportunities that present themselves in this arena.

We also have opportunities to help in physical ways with physical problems.

Within the Church, fulfilling our relationship with one-another and with Christ.

Outside of the Church. Many times these acts of kindness present the opportunity for deeper spiritual things.

C. We have to realize that perfection has not yet been attained.

1. There is plenty of room for improvement and a host of opportunities that we can take advantage of both inside and outside the Church.

III. We Need to Look for Something that Everyone is saying Should be Done.

A. People say that they want to be used in the Church, but they don't see where that opportunity is.

Realize that when someone makes the comment that it would be nice if somebody would do something, **YOU ARE SOMEBODY!**

If we are to make the best of opportunities, we need to take the initiative.....we need to look and see.... we need to be ready with the needs of the moment and not sit around waiting for the "right thing".

Church buildings always have things that need to be done.

Make it a point to visit those who are sick, hurting, or lonely.

Do random acts of kindness for others, both inside and outside the Church.

Help people, financially, do it anonymously.

The point is if we would simply think of things that we would want done to us....and then take the opportunity to do them to others, we would be a blessing and an asset to the Kingdom of God.

B. AND THEN...If you see it....DO IT.

Seldom do you have to check in with anybody concerning this.

It has been said that "Great souls prove their greatness by making opportunities where others only make complaints"

C. Look for and attempt to fill the needs that others see.

They state this perceived need in several ways, but it goes something like this- "**Wouldn't it be wonderful if**"

...and then fill in the blanks...

...We had a picnic (or a cookout).

...The Church had a food "pantry".

...We started a fund to help out Christians who don't have any health insurance.

...Someone would keep tabs on those who are sick and see that they get a card.

...Someone would organize the Narthex and keep it neat and up to date.

IV. As we look at obstacles that seem to be in our way... we need to realize they are simply the fence around the blessings.

A. No blessing comes without it's share of obstacles and various drawbacks.

1. Perhaps it can be said. "The greater the wall...the greater the blessings within."

The positive approach to obstacles not only makes them much more palatable, it opens the door to some exciting challenges and some great and exciting opportunities.

Who could have guessed what wonderful and exciting things were ahead for Joseph when he was unceremoniously dropped into the pit.

2. I can't see many of us rejoicing and quickly dropping our means of livelihood to follow someone whom we most probably never laid eyes upon. Just think of the opportunities that would have been passed up by anyone refusing to follow.

3. Think of the many opportunities that Daniel had and how God used him in such wonderful ways. To some, however, these things would not be considered opportunities, but instead they would view them more as obstacles to achievement.

When we work through God and trust completely in Him and move forward in faith, the things that seem so bitter really will become sweet.

Those problems that are in our way, actually are potentially the doors to great and golden opportunities, if we will view them with faith. Don't forget the practical advice from **James 1:2-3**:

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience."

V. We need to search in the discard pile of life for some of our opportunities.

A. Some have rejected certain things as undesirable, unimportant, not honorable, a waste of time, and the like.

Many times we can point to situations that were considered "impossible" only to have someone who didn't realize that it was "impossible". **Just go ahead and do it.**

Matt. 19:26 - But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Phil. 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

B. Others don't take advantage of the opportunities before them because they have a low opinion of people, especially the lost, especially the dirty, especially those who are despicable sinners (such as some of us were).

James 2:1-5 - 1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs

Of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

C. There is a golden opportunity in working with people that nobody else wants to soil their hands with.

1. We know and can understand that these are still lost and loved Souls that Jesus Christ died for. We can rise to the occasion and take advantage of the opportunity of bringing these despised ones to salvation.

Not only will their spiritual life be turned around, their physical Life, the things that originally turned off so many people, will also Be changed because we took the pains to sift through the trash heap of life.

I Cor. 1:26-29-26 "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Let us place a real and heartfelt belief in the worth of ALL MANKIND, and do the work that Jesus calls us to! Amen? Let Us Pray...