

# 12/24/22 - Lk. 2; Gal. 4 - "The Fullness of Time"

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[ 0 : 00 ] We are going to turn to God's Word in just a moment, but I do invite you to prayer at this time together. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this night and knowing that this is Christmas Eve, a time where we reflect upon a time when you came into time.

You bound yourself to time to bind yourself to our sin. And Lord, we pray that this night is not like any other, thinking that it's just merely a tradition.

It's never just a tradition when we have your Word open. So, Father, we do turn to your Word, and we hope that this will be a time that those who are far from you are drawn near.

Those who are drawn near to you will be driven deeper in relationship with you. And so we give you this time in asking for your blessing.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. The sermon title tonight is The Fullness of Time. The Fullness of Time.

[ 1 : 18 ] I was thinking about all of my time that I spent in the Word of God this year. It was 50 sermons in all out of my own curiosity of the time that I've spent.

And isn't time just a peculiar thing? I would say so. If we want to be honest, we're quite ignorant and naive to the critical connection between the flow of time and reality.

We sort of take reality for granted and disconnect it to, like, this is bound to a flow in time. Even Carlo Ravelli, he's a theoretical physicist.

He labels himself as a serene atheist. He says that our naive perception of time's flow doesn't correspond to physical reality.

Meaning, this is what we're talking about. The disconnect between time, time's flow, and reality. We sort of just have a naive sense of that flow of time.

[ 2 : 22 ] By nature, we know as Christians that time is defined by nature. By the movement of the sun, dusk to dawn, we receive our time. And from there, our days are distributed into hours, minutes, and seconds.

The beginning of all of this takes us back to Genesis 1, where it says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light.

And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.

And there was evening, and there was morning. The first day. Don't we live in this physical realm of reality?

[ 3 : 31 ] That all of what is surrounding us, day in and day out, has length, it has width, it has depth, it has volume, but also it has time that we take for granted.

Time is therefore the duration between this reality and the other reality. And as our clocks change, time is actually the precondition for that change to occur, which attributes to profound historical significance, consequently.

You see, what I'm trying to indicate and observe in our time tonight is that if our faith is concerned, our belief or unbelief of that which was happened in the past, that which has happened in the past, relating to reality, is therefore directly connected to time.

A duration of time. In other words, faith has historical significance. Did it really happen?

I often ask that question as I look at my family with four kids. Did that really happen? According to reality, yes, but according to time, certainly true.

[ 5 : 00 ] Looking back through the passage of time, something came to pass in what is known as the first century time period.

The world literally changed. Time split into two. Hope was born.

And I hope that we can apprehend the historical significance of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Why? So that we can apprehend the redemptive significance of what Jesus Christ has accomplished in real time, in real history.

So let's explore this true historical reality that's bound within time, which continues to offer hope in our time even today.

[ 6 : 08 ] So I'm going to break this up into a couple different sections. The first section is looking at time and history. We're going to look at a couple different passages for this.

throughout the duration of time, we know that God has made a promise to mankind. Since the garden, since the very creation of light of which God has called day, there has been a promise since in Genesis 3, the first promise of God, which was directed straight to the serpent.

The Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. First thing I want us to see tonight is that time is a gift of God that we waste.

[ 7 : 34 ] while several aspects of time in this life occur within that spectrum and reality of that duration, the passage of time, we know one thing is for certain.

Looking at all of these pages within the Scriptures is that we make poor use of our time. Poor use of our time. Don't believe me?

Give me a significant stress in this life and give me a carton of ice cream and a phone full of Instagram reels and I promise you the wasted time is real.

It is a true struggle in our day. And many of us, on the other hand, find ourselves in more severe, situations than just ice cream, than just Instagram reels.

We find ourselves filling up our free time in significant stresses by viewing explicit content on our devices or other forms of medicating in the name of treat yourself, which is known in our culture.

[ 8 : 52 ] Friends, we waste so much time time. And in that, we misuse the very gift of God for both believer and unbeliever.

both realms are not utilizing time to honor God. Now, while it can be expected of an unbelieving world to misuse their time, how much more vital is it to realize in the church how much we often waste our time?

Throughout the duration of time, the story continues into the book of Judges. Not too long ago, we studied Judges 21, starting in 24.

It says, And the people of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family. And they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

In those days, there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

[ 10 : 07 ] There is no such thing as free time. There is no such thing as free time. If our time is truly free, we are in bondage to sin.

This is certainly a historic problem that stretches throughout the pages of Scripture. And so we see another section, the fullness of time.

While mankind has used their time unwisely in rebellion to God, there was a certain point in time within the time continuum of true history, a true reality, the fullness of time.

Galatians 4, verse 4 speaks about that. Paul says, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoptions as sons.

You see, a second point is that time is a gift of God that He did not waste. while we have spent our whole lives, and all redemptive history points to it, that we supremely waste our time, we see that God surely doesn't in the fullness of time.

[ 11 : 55 ] He did something miraculous. There came a time that the author of time, who exists outside of time, allowed Himself to be bound in time in order to be bound to our sin.

This is the fullness of time. The historical problem that mankind has created was met with a historical solution that God had promised way back in Genesis 3.

What child is this who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping? This, this is Christ the King. Boy, what a time to be had. This moment of Christ's birth had split the time into two between B.C., before Christ, and A.D., Anno Domini.

We see that. The year of the Lord split time into two. History records many significant things were happening during that time period of Christ's birth through this, what's known as the first century.

[13:35] We see that Rome had basically unified everything under its government at this time, which actually, interestingly, gave way to that spread of the gospel that we just read in Acts.

But also, Caesar Augustus, he was in the throne from 63 B.C. to 14 A.D.

And he's actually mentioned in Luke 2, verse 1, in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world would be registered.

In other words, they were taking a census at this time. He was a big name, a big deal, but he did not split time.

This baby in a lowly manger split time. Nothing else amid this time, this real history, came close to equating in as much significance as the birth of Jesus Christ.

[14:45] this is the fullness of time. This is supernatural history.

We see another section here. The historicity of the fullness of time. In our recent series in Luke, we know that this writer, this author, is a historian.

He was hired for a specific work to create an orderly account. We see that in Luke 1, verse 1 to 4, where it says, in so much, in as much, sorry, as many had undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who, from the beginning, were eyewitnesses eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught.

This historic record is a compiling of several supernatural occurrences that run through the river of chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke into chapter 2.

Is Luke offering to us just stories of some imaginative history? Imaginative stories?

[16:33] or poetic speculation? Of course not. This is real history.

It really split time into two. This is a supernatural historic event.

Luke 2, 6 through 7 detail. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger because there was no place for him at the inn.

Church, if we read that the time came for her to give birth, it's because it did. If we read that she gave birth and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, it's because she did.

If we read that Mary laid Jesus down in the manger, it's because she did. And if we read that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in chapter 1, it's because he was.

[17:54] We cannot disregard history on account of its miraculous unfolding. But the world does.

And in so doing, dispose of its history and continue in unbelief. for those of you gathered tonight on this special night of reflection that regularly gather, we'll say.

You know that we celebrate this gospel message literally every time we assemble. It sounds, this sermon might sound similar to many of the rest because it is certainly true.

it is pivotal in the gospel message, the coming of Jesus Christ, born of a virgin. In other words, basically every Sunday is Christmas at Steel Valley Church.

And for that I am thankful. And that's why I sing Christmas tunes each and every day throughout the year. But regardless of our traditions, like decorating the sanctuary or upholding the tradition of that the German reformer Martin Luther began with Christmas tree decorating and throwing that star up on the tree, we can rest assured regardless of our traditions, this gospel is far from tradition.

[19:32] Within the passage of time throughout the year, this reality ought to consume our days. it's not just tradition.

It's a consumption within our belief system. What we hold on to as true, real history, real time. And for the Christian, our hope is secured in the redemptive historical plan of God which gives faith, gives way to faith in times of despair.

our faith is the confident expectation that at the commencement of our time, someday, when our time is completely gone and we receive our last breath, we will be counted as righteous because of His time, because of Christ's time.

Let's split the world into two. Not only that, the moment of the cross splitting the veil into two as well. The accomplishments of Jesus Christ upon the cross and His resurrection declaring us righteous. Real time, real history, and real implications.

[ 21 : 03 ] for those who have faith, our days are consumed and guided according to that gospel message. But for a non-Christian, for those who are living and wasting time in this life, the gift that God has given to every person alive, breathing today, is the most loving thing that I can do than to tell you that nothing in your life is secure.

That's a hard message, it's a hard reality, but it's nonetheless a reality that you will come to grips with one day.

the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is that the Christian realizes that they are a sinner and changes their way of life and clings to the cross of Jesus Christ, the object of our pardon, the object of our forgiveness.

And the non-Christian may realize that they're a sinner going to hell, but until that change or repentance as we name it is observed, you cling to this world.

It's an object of guilt, an object of conviction, an object of rebellion. In the time of our tradition tonight, that we celebrate each and every year, a special time to reflect upon the birth of Jesus Christ.

[ 22 : 50 ] And the world sort of tunes their ear at this time uniquely to the gospel message. It's a wonderful time of year.

It truly is. It's one of my favorites. But in the time of our tradition tonight, may this carry on radically throughout all of our time that follows.

In other words, may this, may the historical reality of the fullness of time in the past, reorient the moment of our time today, and so set us apart with the remainder of our time for tomorrow. don't waste your time. Because God surely didn't waste His.

A time of humble beginnings, but the dawn of redeeming grace. The gospel is supernatural history, but it is history nonetheless within the passage of time.

[ 24 : 05 ] And if it is in the passage of time, it makes it a reality. What will we do with that reality? Will this be just another year of saying, yeah, Christ was born, and just go about living for the world, living to the world's standards, turning to the world in worldly things, just allowing sin to manifest in your life, and just consume your life?

Or will this be the year where you say, enough is enough. Lord, I repent of my sin, and I give my life to you.

Might that be you this Christmas night? Maybe for a Christian, maybe this might be the night that you get your stuff together, that you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God has truly redeemed you, and that His blood has covered your sin, but you constantly turn from that good news, and turn to the world, and you just find a way of compromising in your life.

You know you're not living a life that truly would honor God, and that He desires in your life, and you just keep being consumed, hook, line, and sinker for sin.

maybe this night will be a moment in your time that you turn as well in repentance, that you repent of your sin, repent of your wandering, and receive the gift of time, of a changed future, a future living for Jesus Christ, making the best use of our time.

[ 25 : 59 ] Let's not forget the fullness of time. It was a silent night that night.

Let's close with the reading of that poem and hymn, Silent Night. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin, mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep.

in heavenly peace. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven afar.

Heavenly hosts sing alleluia, Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born. silent night, holy night, Son of God, loves pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face, with dawn of redeeming grace.

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Real history, real salvation.

[ 27 : 54 ] It's Christmas. Amen. let's pray. Amen. Amen. Let's pray.