

## Tending Ancient Paths

### The Paradigms, Posture, and Practices of Jesus

#### What time is it?

*If I could save time in a bottle...* for many of us just that opening lyric can start Jim Croce's song 'Time in a Bottle' playing in our heads!

*If I could save time in a bottle  
The first thing that I'd like to do  
Is to save every day  
'Til eternity passes away  
Just to spend them with you*



followed by the haunting and telling chorus

*But there never seems to be enough time  
To do the things you want to do  
Once you find them*

#### And isn't that the story we read on the faces of men and women everyday?

Everyone is busy - pressed and trying to find 'time'. The opening line of a conversation I have heard countless times '*I know you are busy*', why is that? It seems there is an assumption that time is pressing, rushing, demanding, and seldom, if ever, able to deliver what it promised. I asked the medical assistant taking my vitals at the doctor's office 'what is time for you?'. Her response was honest and yet caused spurred reflection when she said, 'when I can look and see the number of things that I have accomplished in a day' - fascinating. She did not seem threatened by my inquiry but reflective in noticing that she equated time with efficiency and productivity or, dare I add, profitability. As I acknowledged her answer I said 'interesting how often we define time by things that may or may not give us life.' Production does not mean life. In fact, when we experience sickness - the very first order of business is to 'cease' activity and rest in order to restore life and well being! This is something we see every spring when those bulbs that have already begun to make their way out of the ground after an extended time of rest are not measured by quantity but in beauty! Beloved, in a world tipping on the edge of insanity from our frenetic lifestyles maybe we need to rethink how we look at time!

Hours and minutes are not the source of life - the scripture declares plainly, in repentance and rest is your salvation; maybe we have been eating from the wrong tree.

***But there never seems to be enough time...*** and isn't that your experience? If I just had enough time...yet it always seems to outdistance and outpace us - again - and that old familiar feeling of lack comes to haunt the soul, and with it a voice speaking in the shadows; '*if/when you eat from this tree then it will all be better*', *if/when* promising a 'secure' settled life, '*If/when you just reach and take it for yourself you will be secure, significant, and you will belong*'. That beloved is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - the hamster wheel that always keeps us busy but never gives life. **Its the wrong tree.**

Mark records Jesus' first words as this '***The time is fulfilled...***' (Mark 1:15). Jesus' first words are not about a date on the chronological calendar past or present but a shift in **time** '***...the Kingdom of God is at hand...***', or as one person translates this '*the Kingdom is close enough to reach*'. Jesus who said if I be lifted up (a reference to the cross) I will draw all men to myself. Because '*I am the way the truth and the Life.*' And later John hears these words in heaven - '*if anyone is thirsty or hungry let him come to me.*'

Beloved there was another tree in the garden and Jesus restored us to that tree - it is close enough to reach - **the Tree of Life.**

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

One famous statement first written by a poet in 1853 put some words to this reality

*We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most—feels the noblest—acts the best.*

Here is what all this means as we think about the spring of this election year.

**What time is it?**

- It’s always the right time to lay down our frenetic, chronological frenetic demand to push harder so we can hear Jesus’ invitation- *‘are you tired, worn out, burned out...come to Me for I am meek and gentle of heart’* Matthew 11:28. Its always a good time to come in surrender to Jesus.

**Who gets to tell the time?**

- This is a question the church fathers attempted to address when they chose to layout a different calendar for the church. A calendar that begins with Advent and leads toward Lent - a calendar shaped around the central hope of our confession and our source of life - Jesus. A calendar not shaped around my *if/when* resolutions but surrendered to the profound revolution of a Kingdom centered in love. A Kingdom capable of re-founding the world and transforming lives not by power or punishment, but by self giving, self emptying love and forgiveness secured on a tree that gave and gives life! Beloved, this is the One who gets to tell time - the author of time.

**So what do we do with Lent? Especially in the time that we are living?**

- I am not suggesting we dust off old ‘religious’ practices (what are you ‘giving up’ for lent?) - but rather to pause and allow this Lent to give you a pause to hear the words of Jesus afresh, today - *‘the time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe....’* for today, this moment, this year for ALL that my life holds.

What time is it? May this Lent be a time of fresh surrender to eat from the right tree? The tree of life!

**El Salvador Outreach—2024**

- We will again be sending a team to El Salvador April 8-27 of 2024!
- Over the last several years we have partnered with Pastor Louis Alvarado to minister to some of the poorest and most needy of El Salvador.
- Our annual offering has helped to rebuild homes, pay medical expenses, pay funeral expenses, purchase wheel chairs, provide seed, fertilizer, food, and more. All funds given go to minister to the people of this community.
- As a result there are regular monthly gatherings naming the name of Jesus in San Pablo Taca Chico that have reached hundreds.

- The Good News is Preached to the Poor...
- Last year we were able to help over 55 families and continue our on-going monthly work.
- Please pray about participating in El Salvador this year as we send a team—this offering is a combined effort of Praise International, TAP Fort Wayne, and Pastor Luis Alvarado.
- Thank you for your prayerful consideration.



With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him for His kingdom to expand.

Please make your **tax deductible** contribution to:

**Tending Ancient Paths (TAP) Fort Wayne**  
5907 West Wallen Road,  
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Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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