

Introduction

That's the first sermon bumper video that's ever gotten a round of applause. That's amazing! (Laughter) Guys... Are you just amazed at what God is doing? Isn't that great to see all those people come to faith in Christ? That's awesome. If you have your Bible with you... I hope and you do... I want to invite you to open it up with me at this time. We're going to be in the Book of James today. We're going to do our sermon at the beginning of worship today because we're going to have live worship music taking place in each of our worship rooms at the conclusion of each service, so I'm going to teach at the beginning and then there will be live music in each of our areas today. If you have your Bible, turn with me to the Book of James; we're going to be in chapter 4. We're going to start in verse 13. Let me pray over us, and then we'll jump into that together.

"Lord Jesus, how good it is to celebrate Your saving power. Father, we are thankful that You gave Jesus... that you rescued us... that You showed us grace. God, thank You for Your Word. We ask now, God, that Your Holy Spirit would come and move in our hearts and help us to hear from You today. Lord, we love You and we're grateful for You. We pray these things in the Name of Your Son, the Saving One, Jesus. Amen."

James chapter 4, let's start in verse 13. We're doing a series right now entitled "Bless This Mess." It's a little different. So if you're typically with us, what we normally do is we walk through a Book of the Bible over several weeks... so we'll do Genesis or Ephesians, or whatever... but right now we're talking about the messy areas of life and what Scripture has to say about those. Last week we started the series. We talked about marriage. Today, we're going to talk about schedules... about how it is that we get a handle on our schedule. Let's read James chapter 4, starting in verse 13: *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit'—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."*

If I go up to you right now and say, "Hey... How's it going?" there's a pretty good chance that if you don't say, "It's going great," you might say, "Busy... Man, so busy." Right now, people are always consumed with how busy they are. In a lot of ways, when I think of it from a spiritual perspective, there's this attempt to create significance for myself. I matter; I'm important. I'm doing things that matter; I'm indispensable to my family, to my organization... to whoever it is that I'm around. Busyness is sort of a weird form of idolatry where I idolize how important I am to my organization or to the people around me. In some way, busyness is my attempt to displace God with myself.

1. Time Is A Gift

In the same way, busyness is the thief of intimacy. It's the thief that prevents us from being immediately present with those individuals around us. I want to be very clear whenever I say this: busyness and work are not synonyms. You might be busy at work but busyness is not the same as working because work is something that is God-given where busyness can often be a distraction. We could do a sermon like this but it really wouldn't be a sermon. I could give you time-management tips. I could say things like, "Well, you know, when you get home, get a little basket and put it on your counter... put your phone in there and walk away from it." We could do that. Or I could say, "Hey, you know, you should just decide at a certain

point you're not going to do any activities," or "You should go outside and spend time with your family or have a better schedule." We could do all of those sorts of things; those are great things, but that wouldn't actually be a sermon because we wouldn't be responding to the Gospel of Jesus. You see, today I want you to know that this is not a time-management talk; this is instead a sermon about understanding why it is that the time that has been given to us is actually a beautiful and powerful gift that has been handed to us by the God of the universe. At the very beginning of verse 14, you read this: *"...yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring."* Whenever you read this verse, James is saying... very simply, very succinctly... "You do not know the future. You can't know the future." Now, on the flipside, implicitly it assumes that actually God does know the future. So the place that we have to begin today is with the One who knows what time is and how time is created and that is God. God is outside and beyond time.

Thomas Aquinas, one of the most famous theologians of the Church, is one of the scholastic, medieval, middle-aged theologians. He popularized a form of theology in his day known as "apophatic theology" which is a fancy way of saying he said what God was not. He was always explaining who God was not so that we might better understand who God was. As he was attempting to explain God's relationship to time and eternity, he said, "Envision this: A tall tower... and in that tower, there is someone at the top of the tower who is able to look down upon a road. And, in looking down upon that road, that individual at the top of the tower can see travelers at the beginning of the road... he might be able to see travelers at the end of the road, and he can see travelers at every point in between." Aquinas says that that is something like God's relationship with time. He is not in time but nevertheless He can see all of time. He's outside of time. Now, maybe you're not an apophatic theologian... if you're not one who says, "Yeah, I read Aquinas in my spare time..."

Maybe you've seen the movie "Interstellar." If you saw the movie "Interstellar," at the conclusion of the movie, in what is one of the most bizarre scenes in any film ever made, Matthew McConaughey's character is sucked into a black hole and ends up mysteriously inside of a bookcase. And inside of that bookcase, he then is able to float through time as a material object in order to look at every point in time and history at the same bookcase. So he's floating along in this weird maze, and he can go and he can see what the room looked like on March 17th. And he can go a little bit further and say, "Okay, I want to look now in December at this same place." As weird as that seems, both Aquinas and Nolan (the director of Interstellar) are onto something because physicists today, well after the day of Aquinas, actually argue that time is something that is, in a weird way, something that is material. It is something that exists in a weird connection with the material universe.

Well, this makes sense. We know that God is the Creator of time because in Genesis 1:1... *"In the beginning, God..."* Psalm 90:4: *"For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night."* God's relationship with time is not the same as mine or yours. It's not a literal translation of saying, "One day is like a thousand years." It is instead this idea where the psalmist says, "A thousand years might be like a day. It might also be like a watch in the night." God's relationship with time is not the same relationship that you and I have. Job 38:4: The Lord speaks to Job and says, *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me if you have understanding."* What's my point? I'm glad you asked. (Laughter) The point is that time itself is a material thing because time cannot exist without the material universe being measured by it. So whenever God created the universe, He also was creating time. The point is that time is a creation of God's. You're like, "I just came for the hotdogs!" (Laughter) Time is a creation given to us by God. Here's the thing: God is literally time-less because before the universe existed, there was no time but God exists before time. In other words, time is not something in which God exists.

God chooses and pleases to create time and so He does. If that doesn't amaze you at the power and grandeur of your God, I don't know what might. So God has created time.

So then look at the second half of that same verse, verse 14: "...*What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*" Okay, quick... what's the name of your great great grandmother? You probably don't know, do you? Do you know the name of all four of them... and not just their last name but their first and their middle name? Now, this is a little bit insulting when you think about it. You're only here because of that woman. Right? (Laughter) Those four women, if they didn't exist, you don't exist. And you don't know their first, middle, and last name. (Laughter) You're like, "Wow, that's personal." What's the point? The point is that you will be forgotten in three generations as well. That's not to hurt your feelings... (Laughter) ...those are just the facts. It doesn't matter, probably, what you do or how incredible you are... two hundred years from now, people not only will not know your name, they won't be able to drive to your house. They won't know anything about you. Pictures of you... if you print some out... pictures of you will be discovered on the internet or at garage sales, and they'll say, "Odd man holding a device to his ear... circa 2015." Right? This is what your destiny and history most likely is. The point that I want to make with that is... very, very simply... that you are a vapor in relationship to God. And that is as it ought to be. The time that you have has been given by God.

Ludwig von Zinzendorf... another great name, another great theologian... Zinzendorf has a great quote: "Preach the Gospel, die, and be forgotten." (Laughter) ... And you think, "Wow... that guy could have used a party or something." (Laughter) This was his point: You live your life for one reason, and that is to glorify Jesus Christ. It's not to build your name up for yourself.

The Book of Psalms says: "Our days are numbered." Job says, "God has set limits on our lives." The point is... you already know it, we just don't talk about it... you're going to die one day. You have a limited amount of time on this planet and in this life. Every breath that you have... if Scripture is true in that God has numbered your days and Job is right is that there are limits placed on your life. Every time you drawn in a breath (breathes in deeply)... that was a gift from God. Right there. Every single breath is a gift from God.

2. Time Ought To Be Used As God Designed.

I want us to start with these two things: time was literally created by God. It is not something that existed and then God entered into. No. God created time itself so that in the Incarnation, whenever Jesus enters into time, that is a magnificent cosmic event. So time is created by God; and then secondly, if that is true, every moment I have, since it has been created by God, in the same way that I go, "Oh, those mountains..." those are a gift of God. "Oh, fried chicken..." that's a gift from God. In the same way, every moment that you have, literally, is a gift from God. So, if time has been created by God and if time is a gift from God, then this is the point today when it comes to blessing the mess of our schedules; time ought to be used as God designed.

So back to busyness: Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, says, "The most pervasive disease in North America is busyness." Now I would say... this is just me making conjecture... that there are at least two primary sources for this busyness today. First of all, Americans are wealthier now than they were two or three generations ago. In some ways that has created a really beautiful form of social progress, but in other ways, it has created an odd form of imprisonment.

The truth is simple: The more stuff that you have, the more maintenance than you have to do on that stuff. So you have a larger house. Well, guess what? It requires more repairs... more cleaning. Oh, you have two cars now; that's good... you can go to the shop even more. I'm glad that you have more money. That more money now will lead you to actually imprison yourself with more busyness because you'll say, "Oh... well, I can join a sports league"... "Why wouldn't I have nineteen trips to Redbox this week? I have enough money to do it." "I make more trips to Academy for my kid's soccer league that I couldn't afford until I got that raise... More trips to the field for those games." George Carlin, the famous American comedian, famously had a great standup routine where he noted Americans' obsession with our stuff. The funny thing about stuff: The more you have, the more it rules you. Additionally, the crazy thing is that because of the wealth increase in America... literally, this is true... currently, we live in the wealthiest nation in the history of humanity. There has never been a wealthier nation than this nation today. My great grandparents could never have imagined some of the things that I have had the opportunity to do... Not because they wouldn't have wanted to do them but because they wouldn't have had the financial means necessary to do those things. We think of them as things that we're entitled to get to experience before we die.

In addition, to the increased wealthiness, there's an increased digitization of our age. Everywhere we go, there are digital notifications dinging and pinging and ringing. That's why I can show you a picture like this, and you look at this picture and whenever I show it to you it's poignant. So look at this picture that we're going to put up here on the screen. You've lived that picture. You've seen that picture. Why? ...Because we have allowed our wealth to lead into a place where the digital world has become one with our own physical world. So between our wealth and an endless set of notifications dinging, pinging, and ringing, we have a nonstop buffet of digitally designed web surfing because all the cookies are following you on your trail to the internet. Therefore the thing that you looked at on Amazon yesterday now shows up as an ad on the sidebar of the news article that you're reading because they're tracking you, they're knowing you, and they're tailoring to your every whim and your every desire. I read this week that pundits are predicting that live television... television that we currently know... will actually be dead in twenty years, and instead vehicles like Netflix will have taken over. Then you can say, "Well, you know, I don't have time to watch a show every week, but I can watch an entire season in one weekend," and we can fill that in. Some of you guys are like, "I already do that." That's great. (Laughter) But here's the thing: Between our increased wealth and our digital creep, do you know what's happening? We are filling every last moment of our lives, and we have no more margin... we have no space. You know this, right? You don't know what to do when you don't have something to do. No wonder everyone is stressed out all of the time.

There's this overwhelming presence now of digital stimuli, activity, and increased wealth, and it has led most of humanity to tend toward two opposite poles regarding time. Now both of them, I think, are temptations we ought to avoid, but let me tell you the two temptations that are out there. Number one: I think the first temptation is hyper-organization. You know these people, right? They're the ones that are always checking their calendars; they're always setting appointments. You may be one of these people. How do I know if I'm one of these people? If you find yourself wondering why the world is not a more efficient place... (Laughter) Do you do this? You go into places and say, "Why do they do it like this? If they did this-and-this, then 'boom' this thing would be running a lot smoother." You have a problem. We're here to lovingly tell you that you have a problem. Those people have produced the "not-quite" science of a thing called "time management." Time management did not exist, as we know it, years ago. Now we have seminars and people that are designed to teach us how to maximize our productivity so that we can fit as much into our lives as possible.

True confession: This is who I am, left to my own natural devices. As a young man... when I say young, I was 20... I actually went to a Franklin Covey seminar. I know... that's embarrassing that at the age of 20 that I did that... other people were going to the movies, but that's how weird I was. I definitely love my time to be personally organized. The problem, of course, is that whenever we tend to become hyper-organized, we start to believe that actually we control our time in the first place.

C.S. Lewis has a fantastic quote and I love this quote. This is what he says: "One of the reasons that we get annoyed when it comes to our time being interrupted is because we have yet to realize that that time never belonged to us in the first place." You see, you're mad whenever you get interrupted or your schedule gets derailed or your appointment gets cancelled because you think that your time is yours to own. But don't we remember what we already learned? Time was actually created and it's a gift that's been given to you by God.

The other temptation is not this idea that we're hyper-organized. The other temptation, though, is on the opposite pole. Oh yeah... I was coming for you... you knew it was coming. (Laughter) The other pole is those individuals who find things like appointments and calendars are more like guidelines. You know, they're out there. Maybe we'll follow them... maybe we won't. There's actually a scientific word for these sorts of people: It's called "polychronic." That's true; I'm not making that up. Polychronic: They're operating on multiple different calendars. Their time and your time may not be the same. (Laughter) For instance... I'm going to help you identify yourself... if you're one of the people in this world who think being ten minutes late to an appointment or a meeting is being on time... you are polychronic. You're also driving me insane. (Laughter) I just want you to know that. Truthfully, though, there's a tendency among the first group to have an unhealthy drive toward productivity because you begin to idolize what you can make and create. In the second group, there's a tendency to have an unhealthy drive toward laziness where you actually idolize rest above a healthy perspective. This is the funny thing. Both of these groups of people would claim that they're busy; they simply handle it in different ways. They attempt to cram even more into their lives and to manage it with perfect efficiency, or they just throw their hands up and say, "Well... whatever happens, happens..."

The Gift Of Work

So the Lord has given us two gifts to counter these opposite poles. First of all, for those of us who struggle with laziness, God has given a very specific gift, and the gift that He gave is work. God gave Adam and Eve work in the Garden before sin. Work is not sinful. It is not fallen; it is not broken. In and of itself, work is a good thing. There was work in the beginning, and there will be work, honestly, in heaven. Some of you guys are like, "What?" (Laughter) You're not just going to float around on a cloud all day, no matter what the Tom and Jerry cartoon showed you. Alright? We will have things to do in heaven. One of the primary things we will do is worship. But if you look and you read you will see that into eternity there are vastly innumerable ways that we will experience and glorify God... not limited to music... but also in exploring and understanding the creation that God has given in the new heaven and the new earth. It's part of our intended purpose to work. Just a few verses:

2 Thessalonians 3:10: *"If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."*

1 Thessalonians 4:11: *"Live quietly and mind your own affairs and work with your hands."*

Colossians 3:23: *"Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men."*

Proverbs 13:4: *"The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied."*

In fact, the Bible is filled with exhortations to work hard. This is the crazy thing. Those of us who are supposed to love grace the most... that's us, Christians... who know that we cannot earn or work toward our salvation, also know that we have a great gift because graciously God has given us this time, so therefore we ought to work diligently and use it. So listen... you can work and you ought to work and you ought to do your job the very best you can because you are not working for men or women but instead for God. If you're a stay-at-home mom or a housewife, do it as unto the Lord. If you're a craftsman, build and dig and hone to the best of your ability. If you're a businessman, do that to the best of your ability. Work is good. Work is a gift. Work hard. Do not be lazy.

The Gift Of The Sabbath.

Then there's another gift that God gives. This is a gift that I think that most of us in suburban Houston actually struggle with. It's not laziness. Most of us struggle, instead, with overwork. The other gift that God gives us is something that we call "Sabbath." I did not come up with that word. It's actually in the Bible. In Exodus 20, starting in verse 8, we read about a day that is given by God to be enjoyed and a day that is not for work. Listen... *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."* This is one of the Ten Commandments. We certainly think that the other nine are valid, even today. But funny enough, we really struggle to believe in the validity of Sabbath. God says very clearly, "Work six days and then take a seventh day and don't work" Every seven days... Every seven days. Oh, and by the way... it's not just so that you can go to the lake. It's actually for the Lord. Did you hear that in verse 9? "It is a day given to His honor."

A few thoughts on this day: First of all, the Sabbath day is a day that is given to tell the overly busy and the hardworking people of this world that they need a day... you actually need a day... to not do anything. Now you think that this is controversial today; think about it 4000 years ago whenever God gave it. Your literal existence and survival depended upon you, every single day, going out and farming and hunting and gathering for food that would feed you. And in this culture, the Lord gave a decree and said, "One seventh of your time will be given, instead, to not work. Now that seems to be a pretty awful strategy to survive, yet God commanded it. The weird thing was that those people that God gave it to, the Israelites, they were more productive and more blessed than any other culture around them. Weird, huh? Why is Chik-Fil-A closed on Sunday? Sabbath. Have you heard (I don't know if it's apocryphal or not) a story about Truett Cathy, the founder of Chik-Fil-A? I heard that someone who was one of his financial advisors came to him and made a presentation one day and said, "Mr. Cathy, if you will open on Sundays, we will make "X" more millions of dollars each year." ...Whatever that number was. Mr. Cathy sat and he listened to the presentation very patiently. At the end of it, he looked at the gentleman and he said, "You're fired." (Laughter) The man said, "I just showed you a way to make millions of more dollars." And he said, "Yes... but you clearly do not get what we're trying to do here. You're fired." You see, the thing that I think is really funny is that many believers, even today, don't understand that there is something intangible and good about not working one day. Now listen. Let's be very clear. Taking a Sabbath may require you to work harder during the week in order to create that space. I would guarantee you that our Jewish counterparts discovered this. If you know that you are taking off tomorrow, there's always more stuff that you have to get done, but it's a good space and it's commanded by God, so therefore you ought to take it anyway." I

heard it put this way once and I really like this: "Taking a Sabbath reminds us that we are human beings; we are not human doings." You see, you should take a day that you don't work. It does things inside of you that you may not fully appreciate or understand, but it's good to follow God's boundary because it's a grace gift given to you. The Sabbath tells us, very simply, that God is more important than your work, and God will provide for you... not you... so honor Him by taking a day to not work. Don't idolize your work.

A second thought about Sabbath: In our increasingly busy world, we've grabbed onto the notion of Sabbath as a day of rest, but we've moved away from the idea that I need to worship the Lord every seven days. Verse 9 is clear: "It's a day given to honor the Lord." Let me put it differently. We love the idea of going to the lake or getting away for the weekend with friends or family, but there's always a pull, whenever you go out of town on the Sabbath, to not worship the Lord. Let me be crystal clear on this. The Sabbath exists because God commanded it and God made it. Weekends do not exist because of labor unions. Now that's not what labor unions might tell you. But weekends exist because there was a Sabbath first, and God commanded it and God made it. When you get to that day, I want to tell you, "Go to the lake... Go on vacation... Go to your baseball tournament... Go wherever it is that you need to go... but whenever you get there, you better stop and take some time and give it to the Lord because the reason that you're at your baseball tournament, the reason that you're at the lake... the reason that you're there is because God created and gave you that day in the first place.

This would be the thing that I would love to see: Before baseball tournaments on Sunday start, people gathering to worship the Lord. Families that are on vacation, refusing to go into Disney World until they have read the Word, prayed, and sung a song together as a family. Families that are driving to grandma's house deciding that they will indeed worship the Lord. People pulling over and saying, "There's a church, it's a Sunday... let's go in and give an hour to the Lord because today is the Sabbath." We may not be at Houston Northwest, but we know that this day was given to us by God anyway. This is the point: If you take that day... if you take the Sabbath but you don't worship, you have simply replaced one form of busyness with another. You are idolizing your rest instead of your work, but you are still idolizing. Rest was given to us by God so that we can enjoy the greatest of all rests. And what is that? ...Resting in the grace of our God. Now, I know what you're thinking. You're like, "Oh, so you're turning worship attendance into legalism." No I'm not ...because worship was given to us as a way to respond to the very grace of God. If I don't carve out time to set aside and say, "This day belongs to the Lord" then what I am really saying is, "I have what I have by my own power and my own breath and my own work." In ancient times, we needed Sabbath to remind us that our work was not what was keeping us alive; the Lord was. Today we need Sabbath to remind us that our time away is not the reward of our labor. I didn't earn my vacation, but it's a gift given to me by God.

Now I know that this sounds weird, but I'm going to say it anyway. Did you know that I think that worship is both recreational and political? Let me explain. Coming to worship is recreational. Think about the word "recreation." It re-creates you. Right? When I come in here, my desires and my loves are reordered. I learn to rightly love the things that I'm supposed to love. I'm supposed to give my affections first and foremost to the Lord. It is a recreating activity whenever I bring my family and I go prostrate before the Lord and I say, "We won't do anything else today until we've given time and attention... and our best of it... to the Lord God." It's also a political act. Why is political? There's a lot of talk today about Christians being politically active. Yeah, you should go vote. You should be an informed citizen. I agree with all that. Democracy is a beautiful thing. But let me tell you why worship, whether you live in a democracy or whether you live in a fascist-ruled country, is actually one of the most political things that you do because every week we gather

together and we say, "There's One King that is supreme, and I follow no matter what my earthly rulers tell me to do." So it is always recreational and it is always political whenever we gather together. There is nothing more important that you will do this week than what you are doing right now. Open and prostrate yourself before the Word of God and then give Him your energy, your praise, your glory. ...Because in that moment you realize that the universe does not revolve around you, but instead it literally was founded and given by a gracious and good God. God created each of us.

This week I found out about an app that you can download to your phone; it's called the Legacy App. When you open up that app, you put in the birthdate of your child, and it gives you a countdown to their graduation from high school. So I have my boys plugged into it; I look at it and I see... okay, it's 353 weeks until my oldest graduates from high school. There's a timer down to the second... it's clicking. Do you know what it does? It creates a sense of urgency. I'm like, "Hey, I need to get with it... be a father." Here's the funny thing. There's a Legacy App that you cannot see that is ticking on your life right now. I don't know how many more moments you have. Some of us may die today. Others of us may get 100 more years. But I know this. (Fingers clicking...) It's clicking. Tomorrow you have one less day to live. How will you respond to the gracious gift of time that has been given to you by God? You see, this is the thing. The reason that we call time to be gracious is because we ought not to exist but we do. Why? ...Because God created us. We ought not to be alive but we are. Why? ...Because God created us. We ought to be in condemnation and judgment but we're not. Why? ...Because God chose to save us in Jesus Christ. When you know that you have been saved and rescued and loved by the gracious hand of God... when you know that... that ought to motivate you to use your time differently. How would you use it differently? You would say, "I'm going to respond to what God's grace is. I'm going to work hard when I should work. I'm going to rest when I should rest. I'm going to share the Gospel when I should share the Gospel. I'm going to praise God when I should praise Him because every moment that I have is a gift given to me to remind me of the good, beautiful, and gracious gift that has been given to me."

Christians believe that we will, if we place our faith in Jesus Christ, spend eternity... eternity—we'll go into that timeless realm... with God after we die. So how does that happen? It happens when, simply put, we recognize that the God who created time is the God who can give us a timeless existence. We recognize that we have been formed by His hands. We recognize that we broke the covenant that He gave, but instead of that judgment He gave us grace anyway through His Son Jesus on the cross, and we respond to it and we place our faith in Him. Then we recognize, "Now I get to enter into a timeless arena that God has created. And that arena is a beautiful one; it's called heaven."

So here's the thing today. What I want us to do is take just a moment and reflect on how we ought to use our time. I want us to think, "Do we realize that our time is a gift? Do we realize that the time that God has given us is a beautiful thing? Do we realize we ought to be worshippers? We ought to be those who love in the name of Jesus Christ. We ought to be those who give everything unto Him." If the answer is "Yes", praise God. If not, today I want to invite you to discover the God who is so big and so mighty that He made time, He gave you time, and He demands that you worship Him with your time. Think on these things. Let's pray.

"Lord, I thank You for the gift of time. Father, many of us are guilty because we think that the time that we have actually belongs to us but it doesn't; it belongs to You. You gave it. God, I want to just confess also that many of us today think that the time belongs to us because we've never actually pondered the truth that we are created and that we are only here by Your gracious will. So Lord, Jesus has decreed that we

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ought to be alive today and so we are. So God, I pray that we will turn to Him in faith. Lord, I want to pray right now for every person in this room... however they need to respond... that today would be their moment to respond. I want to pray this and I want to ask it in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."