

“Redeeming The Time”

“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15). In vss. 6-14 Paul commanded the Ephesians that they were not to be deceived with empty words; words which would deny the consequences of being involved in filthy talk and ungodly behavior (vss. 3-7). They were urged, *“Be not ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were once darkness but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light”* (vs. 7f). By no means were they to have *“fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”* They were to rather *“reprove them”* (vs. 11f). And to folks in a stupor he said, *“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon you”* (5:14).

Thus the apostle’s appeal, *“Look therefore carefully how ye walk,”* is just an additional reminder to these brethren that they must avoid engaging in wickedness, whether in word or deed. And, they were to redeem the time. The appeal to *“redeem the time”* in Ephesians is likewise found in Colossians where there Paul wrote, *“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time”* (Col. 4:3).

There are many similar words in the New Testament which have the same root meaning as this word *“redeem.”* We have *“redeemer,” “redemption,”* and *“redeem.”* These words, while the same English word, are often translations of different Greek words, but which words carry the same idea. Jews were *“redeemed”* from the law, styled there (but seen also in Peter’s language) a bondage. The most common idea contained in the word is that Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin (Tit. 2:14; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15). In our Ephesian text the idea is not release from sin, but making the most of our time, using every opportunity that life presents to us. This command says in essence that which Solomon wrote, *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with all thy might”* (Ecc. 9:10). Certainly one who is asleep is not sensible to opportunities which might open to him. The apostle does not deny the need for sleep; he warns against those who sleep at the wrong time, who because they are asleep cannot redeem the time. We will never live this day again. Therefore, make the most of it!

The days are *“evil.”* Do not understand Paul to say that the day is evil. God created the day, the world, and man. At the conclusion of his work, He said, *“It is very good.”* As David urged, each of us should exult in another day of life. *“This is the day that the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it”* (Psa. 118:24). Why then does Paul say, *“The days are evil”*?

Solomon wrote of evil days when he urged, "*Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come and the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*" (Ecc. 122:1). The "evil days" of which the "preacher" warned were the days of old age when declining strength and almost universe failure of body organs and propensities made life a burden and caused the weary, worn out one to long for release from the bondage his aged, infirm body keep him captive in. However, Paul's "*the days are evil*" is no reference to Solomon's "*the evil days come.*"

In our text, the days are evil because the world around us is given over to lust and sin. Temptations and seductions stand beckoning on every street corner, urging us "turn in here." Many are the slain who fall to the siren call of the world. Unbelief, disdain for holy things, anger when godly lives reflect upon the gross perversion and wickedness of ungodly lives lead ungodly ones to lash out, sometimes in a violent way, against the good example which show the ungodliness of their own lives. We do live in evil days. We should use our time wisely and well and be on constant guard lest we fall asleep and are mastered by the evils which surround us!

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