

Articles and Sermons :: "The Time Is Short!" By R. A. Torrey

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There is nothing of which any of us has less to spare and yet of which most of us are so prodigal and so wasteful as time. Happy, yes, thrice happy, is the man who not only believes but feels the truth set forth in the short, solemn, and startling statement, "The time is short" (1 Cor. 7:29).

The word translated "time" means time of opportunity, time for doing the thing that needs to be done. The word translated "short" means "drawn together," "contracted," that is, exceedingly limited, and therefore, in great need of being conserved and improved to the uttermost. And the time of opportunity at our disposal for doing the many things of tremendous importance that clamor to be done before we go into eternity and meet God, is exceedingly contracted.

If any of us will stop to think how many things of the highest importance there are that we must do before we can satisfactorily shut our eyes upon this world and pass out to meet God in judgment in the next world, his own reason will cry with powerful tones, "The time is short!"

The average man and the average woman seem to think that whatever else may be scarce, there is plenty of time. No, no, no. "The time is short!" The day of opportunity is flying more swiftly than a plane. Lost people think there is plenty of time to repent and be saved. The Christian thinks that there is plenty of time to get ready for the coming of the Lord. The one who would save souls thinks that there is plenty of time in which to do it. But to one and all, God thunders the words of the text, "The time is short!"

We shall look first at the things for which the time is short:

Short Time for Salvation

First of all, the time is short in which we must be saved if we are to be saved at all. Do I need to say how infinitely important it is that we be saved? We all know that the difference between an eternity of joy and honor and beauty and glory, and an eternity of sorrow and shame and moral hideousness and utter degradation and blackest despair, depends upon our being saved. Yes, we all feel in some measure at least that we must be saved sometime.

But alas, many think that there is plenty of time in which to be saved. There is not. "The time is short," exceedingly short. If anything is to be done to secure our salvation, it has to be done quickly. If not done quickly, it will not be done at all. If you are not saved soon, you will never be saved.

Just how short the time may be in which any one of us can be saved, none of us can tell. It may be measured by a few weeks, it may be measured by a few hours, or a few minutes or a few heartbeats, but at the very longest, "the time is short," very, very short.

Time Short to Grow for Eternity

In the second place, the time is short in which to make adequate preparation for eternity. Preparation for eternity does not end with our being saved. After one has received, through faith in Jesus Christ, full pardon for all his sins, and has been born again and has become a true child of God, there is still to be wrought a great work of moral and spiritual preparation for heaven, for eternity, for eternal companionship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

The development of a Christlike character is not the work of a day. We have not one hour to lose.

How Short the Time to Save Souls!

In the third place, the time is short in which to save souls. Oh, the vast importance of saving souls, saving every man, woman and child we can from sin and its awful temporal and eternal consequence! Oh, the urgent cry of God, "The time is short!"

Do you realize of what immeasurable value a single soul is in God's sight? Do you realize the awful degradation and agony of a soul that is lost, eternally lost? Do you realize the unutterable joy and the inconceivable glory of the soul that is saved? That is the most royal of all occupations, saving souls, and it is open to us all. But the time for doing it is short, exceedingly short.

Not a year to lose, not a week to lose, not a day to lose, not a moment to lose! There are souls to be saved on every hand, and the time to do it is short. Let us be up and at it at once. If you are not saved yourself, get saved today in order that you may get at this glorious work of saving others at once.

Time Is Short to Pray

In the fourth place, the time is short to pray. I have often spoken to you of the mighty power of prayer and of how to pray with mighty power. But the time for this wondrous and mighty work of prayer is short. There are some great things that can be wrought by prayer, that must be wrought today or never. There were great things that you might have wrought by prayer yesterday, but you did not seize the opportunity. The time was short, and it is now gone forever.

And today will soon be yesterday and its opportunities also will be gone forever, and so with tomorrow and all coming days of the brief span of life. All gone forever! Oh, do you not hear God shouting to you, "The time is short! The time is short!"

Let us consider why the time is so short:

Death Rushes After Us

First of all, the time is short because death is fleet-footed and is swiftly, speedily pursuing each one of us. The fleetest runner will soon be overtaken by death. We may run away from death for a while, but death beats us all on the home stretch. Death seems to you very far away today, does it not?

So it did a few days ago to that man who was carried in a coffin to the cemetery this afternoon. Death is not very far away from any one of us. "There is (always) but a step between" any one of us and death. We may not enjoy that fact, but it is a fact nevertheless, and we might as well look it square in the face. It is only the fool that shuts his eyes to facts because they are unpleasant.

Christ May Come Today

In the second place, the time is short because Jesus Christ is coming quickly. The very last thing our Lord Jesus Christ says in the Bible, found in the next to the last verse in the Book, is "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20). Just how quickly the Lord Jesus may come, of course, I do not pretend to say, I do not know. No one knows. But whenever that day may come, it will take many of us by surprise and overwhelm many of us with dismay; and the time of His absence and our opportunity will seem short indeed, and we shall say, "How quickly He came! Why did I not believe His Word, 'Yea, I come quickly'?"

If you knew that Christ would come tomorrow, would you waste time as you have been wasting it this last week? He may come tomorrow. Yes, He will come tomorrow—some tomorrow.

Capacity to Serve Soon Gone

In the third place, the time is short because of the near approach of the loss of capacity and power. Even if Christ tarries and death lingers, there are things which we have a capacity for doing today for which we shall not have a capacity in a short time. How many men there are who once had a power that is now gone, and who look back with bitter regret over their wasted years! They themselves still linger here, but the old-time power has vanished and they can only idly stand and watch others do what they could have done, but did not.

There are many of you who have a voice or some other gift that you could use for Christ, but listen! the time is short. Put off the time of using your talent, and the talent will be gone forever. Many a one has had rare gifts as a preacher, but has squandered them in preaching the silly trash of the popular pulpit and not the simple but mighty Gospel of the Son of God, and now his gifts are gone, gone forever.

Opportunities Soon Pass

In the fourth place, the time is short because of the loss of opportunity. Christ tarries. Death lingers, powers continue, but opportunities are gone. Each day carries many golden opportunities into the bosom of the fathomless ocean of the past. The time is short indeed. The opportunity is today. Strike now, or you will never strike at all. How fast the clock goes!

O, men and women, there are opportunities open to every one of us today that will be gone, and gone forever before another day dawns. The time is short!

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