



Truth for Today

January 17, 2021

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Don't Miss The Opportunity

by Robert Shouse

Jeremiah 46:17 "They cried there, 'Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a big noise; he has let the appointed time pass by.'" Jeremiah reveals God's prophetic word against the nation of Egypt. The universal God had lessons and instructions for all people. There was a window of opportunity in which Egypt and the rising Babylonians could have merged and worked together. But Pharaoh drug his feet. The window closed. The opportunity passed. Now, Egypt would be struck down by Babylon.

In our passage we find this powerful expression: he has let the appointed time pass by. Others express it this way: 1) ESV: one who lets the hour go by; 2) KJV: he hath passed the time appointed; 3) NIV: he has missed his opportunity.

The idea of missing the opportunity is sprinkled throughout the Bible. Think about the days of Noah and while he was hammering on that ark, he was also preaching. Matthew tells us that they were eating, drinking and getting married up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the rain fell. Missed opportunity.

The rich man in Luke 16 is another example of this. Poor Lazarus was at his very gate. Everyday he could have seen Lazarus if he only looked. Everyday he had the opportunity to do good, if he wanted. Then he died. Missed opportunity.

Paul used the very word opportunity in his letter to the Galatians. Let us do good, he said, as we have opportunity. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Opportunity.

There is an old blacksmith term, "strike while the iron is hot," that we often use in reference to opportunities. The blacksmith would have a rod of iron in the hot, burning coals. He'd pull it out and put it on the anvil. With a mighty swing of his hammer, that red hot iron would bend. Back into the fire and then back on the anvil, it would go. Until, the blacksmith got the shape he wanted, then he'd put that rod of iron in a barrel of water and it would sizzle and cool down. When he brought it out of the cool water, his hammer could no longer bend it. He had to strike "while the iron was hot."

Let's look at some thoughts about opportunity:

First, opportunities often do not work according to our schedule. The person who wants to talk with you, catches you on a busy day. Your desk is covered with papers, you've got emails waiting your reply and here stands that person who wants to know if you have a minute to talk. That minute quickly turns into an hour. A soul is opening up. A heart needs help. Or, you have a Saturday all mapped out. It's going to be a busy day, but someone needs you. Now to push these things to another day, often is to miss the opportunity. It took some courage for the person to reach out to you. To pass them off because you are too busy makes them feel that you are not interested. Then they easily conclude that no one is interested.

Second, opportunities often do not come announced. They just happen. I believe this is true of the pandemic we are work-

ing through. There has been some golden opportunities for congregations to reach more through videos and livestreaming than ever before. Those that saw that and were ready excelled. The Gospel is reaching people in their homes who would never come to a church building. I've known stories of people who sitting in surgery waiting rooms striking up conversations with other people there. Jesus is talked about. Bible studies are arranged. An opportunity was seized.

Third, being prepared helps us meet opportunities. Think about young David taking food to his brothers on the front line of the battle. And, there stands the giant, challenging and taunting. David sprang into action. There is a tiny detail that we often overlook here. He went to the brook and gathered five smooth stones. He ran toward the giant and brought him down by the power of God. But do you know what David had to accomplish that? He had his sling with him. How different the story would be if David had to run home and get his sling. How different it would be if David told Goliath, "I'll meet you next week. The opportunity was now. David was ready. I know a man who keeps a hundred dollar bill tucked away in his wallet. It is his sling. If an opportunity arises and he can do some good, he is prepared. I wonder how many opportunities slip by us because we are not prepared. Could you, on the fly, talk to someone about the Bible? Could you do that without a hour's preparation and an armful of papers to guide you? That chance may come up at work...or the doctor's office...or in the airport...or in the neighborhood. David had his sling. He was ready. Are you ready.

Fourth, and sadly, once opportunities pass by, they often do not surface again. The opportunity to talk to that one person. That opportunity to do good. That opportunity to let your light shine. And, when that door closes, it often stays closed. Sometimes those opportunities begin very innocently, such as helping a neighbor clean his yard, or a friend to move into a new house. There is a haunting hymn that is not sung too often. I think no one really wants to lead that song. It makes us drop our heads in shame. So many faces cross our memory as that song is sung. The song? "You never mentioned Him to me." I don't like that reminder. It's true. There have been people that in times past I never mentioned Jesus to them. They have gone their way and I've gone me and we never met again. Opportunity lost.

Pharaoh missed his opportunity. We don't want to do the same. The greatest lost opportunity is that of walking with the Lord and spending eternity with Him. Nothing else equals that. To miss that is to miss it all. All around us are opportunities to know, grow and become as the Lord wants. Bible reading programs. Blogs. Podcasts. Videos. Worship. Layers and layers of opportunities to learn, serve and help the people of God. It's a banquet feast before us. All we have to do is pick up a fork and enjoy.

Pray for the Lord to put opportunities before you this year. Opportunities to teach. Opportunities to lead God's people. Opportunities to let your light shine. Opportunities for you to grow.

And don't be like ole' Pharaoh who missed his opportunity!

NEWS & NOTES

UPDATED PRAYER LIST

- **Paula Dobbs** is some better but still having breathing concerns.
- **Bill Hooton** passed away last Thursday. A graveside is scheduled at the Christine City Cemetery (6th street, Christine, TX 78012) on Saturday, 1/30, 1:00pm. Info is available at www.carrowayfuneralhome.com
- **Amanda Allison's** grandmother is under hospice care.
- **Tony Clark's** mother, Alberta Hurn ("Burt"), received an optimistic biopsy report that the tumor, if there is just one, can be resolved through radiation. More tests this week.
- **Dwight Osteen's** mother, Elizabeth, is home and recovering from her cancer surgery.
- **Patsy Lindsey's** daughter, Cynthia, passed away Tuesday night. Arrangements are pending.
- **Mickey Chandler's** mother, Judy, was admitted to a Phoenix hospital last week with a positive COVID condition but is improving.
- **Lindsey (Preuss) Richard's** grandfather died suddenly Wednesday. Conner's care, an earlier passing grandfather and now this, prayers needed.
- **Jenica St. John's** father was matched with an organ donor.

MEETINGS, EVENTS, SINGINGS & STUDIES

- **2:52 Kids Class [2-12]** | TBA.
- **TEEN BIBLE CLASS [12-18]** | 2/7
- **TEEN HOME DEVO [12-18]** | TBA .
- **YOUNG ADULTS HOME STUDY** | 1/31 at 5:00pm at the Reed's home.
- **ADULTS HOME STUDY [30/40]** | TBA.
- **BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES** | 2/7, 4:00 pm
- **AREA-WIDE SINGING** | (the elders have determined that while COVID issues will likely still persist, we will postpone this year's singing.)
- **GOSPEL MEETING with Ed Brand** | TBD
- **VBS** | 6/22-25* (*Tue-Fri)
- **YOUTH LECTURES with Caleb Churchill & Andy Harrison** | 8/7-8
- **GOSPEL MEETING with Mike Wilson** | 9/26-29
- **WOMEN'S DAY BIBLE STUDY** | 10/9
- **MEN'S DAY BIBLE STUDY** | 11/6

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS** See the Monthly Assignments and let Barrett Blankenship know if you cannot fulfill an assignment.
- **Willing to TEACH?** We now need teachers for Spring quarter. **Please contact Brian Clark if you are willing to teach.**
- **WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE?** See Leo Betancourt.
- **HOSPITALITY?** Maureen Chegin and Cecelia Neel will coordinate food for members who need assistance during an extended recovery period after surgery or for the family at a funeral.
- The **FLOWER FUND** is in need of donations. Please see Stacie Bohanan if you are able to contribute to this that provides flowers for funerals of the immediate family of members.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

- Contact Brian with updates or if you need a PDF of the directory.

THROUGH THE NT IN 2021

JANUARY

- 17 | Pray and reflect
- 18 | Mark 12
- 19 | Mark 13
- 20 | Mark 14
- 21 | Mark 15
- 22 | Mark 16
- 23 | Pray and reflect
- 24 | Pray and reflect

Attendance	In Person Average Last Month	Virtual Average Last Month	In Person Last Week	Virtual Views Last Week
Sunday Classes	58	19	73	17
Sunday Worship	88	43	96	52
Tuesday Adult Class	6	15	N/A	N/A
Wednesday Classes	48	12	58	23

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM - 1/17	10:00 AM - 1/24	CONTACT INFORMATION
Foyer 1-Welcome	Craig Preuss	Jay Dulin	<i>Elders</i>
Foyer 2-Ushering	Leo Betancourt	Jonathan Chandler	Keith Arrants 936.499.2812
Song Leading	Adam Bohanan	Norman Davis	George Chapman 832.764.2151
1 st Prayer	Harvey Goble	Leo Betancourt	Norman Davis 832.326.2966
Scripture	Ross Randow	Chris Chapman	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Scripture Reading	Isaiah 63	Colossians 3:1-7	<i>Deacons</i>
Communion Lead	Stuart Jones	Brian Clark	Adam Bohanan 281.798.1093
Preaching	Don Hooton	Don Hooton	Brian Clark 281.513.0706
2 nd Prayer	Les Cockrell	Adam Bohanan	Gary LeBlanc 281.292.0262
Announcements	Norman Davis	George Chapman	Craig Preuss 832.477.0578
Sanitize-Bathrooms After	Betancourt	Chegin	<i>Evangelists</i>
Sanitize-Pews After	Ford	Haas	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Building Open/Lockup	Haas	Bohanan	<i>Website</i>
Sound 1	Chris Latson	Chris Latson	www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org
Communion Prep	G&L Chapman	G&L Chapman	<i>Office Phone</i>
Counting Contribution	Norman Davis—Willie Ray	George Chapman —Al Suarez	281.367.2099
WEDNESDAYS	7:00 PM - 1/20	7:00 PM - 1/27	<i>Church Email</i>
Song Leading	Leo Betancourt	Keith Arrants	woodlandschurchofchrist@gmail.com
Invitation/Talk	Jay Dulin	Hayden Clark	
Prayer	Nathan Shows	Lyn Ray	
Announcements	Norman Davis	Don Hooton	