

5:16 Make the Most of the Time

THE TIMES ARE HOSTILE TO BELIEVERS. JOHANNES BUGENHAGEN: This means that as believers you must seize whatever opportunity you get to do good and attend to the things of Christ, so that in every circumstance you may advance the cause of Christ and the work of godliness, because the days are evil, not only because they are full of external persecution but much more because godliness and the word of the gospel are being undermined and hindered. The devil tries by every means to impede the work of the gospel. This is why Paul says that the days are evil, just as in [2 Timothy 3:1](#) he calls them dangerous. In the Scriptures there are also days of salvation, of destruction, of wrath and so on, not because of the times themselves, which were created by God and are therefore good, but because of the things that happen to people at those times. ANNOTATIONS ON EPHESIANS.

PEOPLE HAVE MADE THE DAYS DANGEROUS. LANCELOT RIDLEY: The days are called evil because of the malice of people, which is done on days, for the days are good, for they are the creation of God and so are good. COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS.

THE GOSPEL STIRS HATRED AGAINST THE TRUTH. ERASMUS SARCERIUS: To redeem the time is to consider the time in such a way that you are not unduly influenced by heresies, sects, bad habits, dangerous scandals and other evils that usually arise when the gospel is preached and start to doubt the Word and the salvation you have received, abandon it and go back from the works of light to the works of darkness.

The days are especially evil at times when the pure gospel is being preached, because this destroys the kingdom of the devil and uncovers the ungodliness of the world. Therefore the devil and the world are stirred up against it, from which arises riots, revolts and any number of other evils. Not to be deterred by them is to redeem the time. The fruit of this redemption of time is the preservation of imparted salvation together with the works of light. The opposite is the evil fruit produced by not redeeming the time but letting ourselves be deflected to the aforementioned evil ends. This redemption of time is also a redemption of doctrine, behavior and feelings, both internal and external. It is also a gift of the Holy Spirit. You only have to look around you today, alas, to see that the days are evil. ANNOTATIONS ON EPHESIANS.

AVOID SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION. JOHN CALVIN: Everything is full of scandal and corruption, which makes it difficult for the godly to remain untouched by it. Since the present age is so corrupt it appears as if the devil has seized control, so that time cannot be dedicated to God without in some way being redeemed. What does this redemption involve? It means withdrawing from the enticements of this world, extricating ourselves from its cares and delights, and in sum, renouncing everything that would hinder [our spiritual growth]. COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS.

TIME IS PRECIOUS. MARTIN BUCER: Time is a most precious thing and must be made the most of, something that most people cannot understand. Therefore every moment, every opportunity of our life must be given over to things that are part of our duty so that we dedicate ourselves completely to them and do the works of salvation. It is for this reason that life, fortune and reputation are brought into danger and destroyed. Much time is lost in silly childishness and in unbridled youthfulness where depraved desires dominate. Satan never sleeps but is always well armed and besieging us as our chief enemy. How then do we redeem

the time? If you give yourself totally to the crucified one, you will place your whole life and soul in the hands of Christ.

“The days are evil.” How can something that comes from God be evil? They are evil because of the wickedness of people, as is generally understood. Or else they are evil because God allows Satan and his slaves to do many evil things on those days, because of the sins of human beings. In contrast to that, some days are called good, because they are times when God gives good kings and prophets. In the time of the apostles ungodliness of all kinds, wickedness, tyranny and the persecution of good people dominated the scene, and for that reason the times were evil, but because of the saving light of the gospel they were also good. Our times too are also partly good and partly evil. They are good because of the light of truth that has been revealed in them, in which our happiness is found, but they are also evil because of the fire and sword that are the lot of those who come to that light. LECTURES ON EPHESIANS.

SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION COME TO US ALL. WOLFGANG MUSCULUS: We have explained elsewhere why days are called evil in the Scriptures. In themselves all days are good because they have been created by God, yet they are accidentally rendered evil. Thus all the days of our life are evil for two different reasons. First, in respect of human suffering, which lasts from birth to death and is common to us all. Second, with respect to true godliness, which makes godly people in this world subject to many evils. Note what David said: “Many are the tribulations of the righteous, but God delivers them from them all.” In this verse the apostle mentions the particular wickedness of his own times when he says “because the days are evil.” Today we also talk not about common everyday things but about the exceptional and great wickedness of our times, when we find that we have come on evil times. I shall not attempt to list them individually. I am overwhelmed by the enormity and multitude of the things that in recent times have afflicted the entire Christian world and especially those who want to live a pious life in Christ Jesus. These evils are particularly serious because they are not susceptible to improvement, nor can they be borne for very long. COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS.

DROP EVERYTHING ELSE AND DO GOOD. JEAN DIODATI: [This means] seeking and taking any occasion of doing good and therefore leaving all other worldly employment and delight. Or, endeavoring at the present to do so many good works that they may supply that wherein you have been wanting in times past. A vulgar kind of speech that ought not to be taken according to the letter, for people are daily bound to do well and never abound so much in good works at one time as to fill up what has been wanting therein. ANNOTATIONS ON THE BIBLE.

DO GOOD AS MUCH AS YOU CAN. DAVID DICKSON: They should not suffer their time to be spent in idleness and pleasures and to pass unfruitfully, but with the loss of pleasures, or of sluggish idleness or unprofitable business, they should take hold of and as it were redeem opportunities of well doing: He gives the reason, because the times are full of dangers, through the malice of people who (no one knows how soon) may take away their liberty, goods, yes, life itself, and deprive them of all opportunity of doing good. EXPOSITION OF EPHESIANS.