

# No Time to Spare

Dear Friend,

For two nights in a row this past week, I have woke up in the middle of the night, with the words “**no time to spare,**” crying out within my mind. I reflected on what these words might mean in a world that is becoming increasingly indifferent to the needs of the poor, the elderly, the fatherless, widowed, the refugee and the homeless.

As I reflected on the words, “**no time to spare**”, I considered all the time I had wasted that could have been spent in praising God, reading God’s Word, and helping others. I thought of those who were crying out for help that need to know that God loves them and had a plan for their lives.

When the realization strikes that there is “**no time to spare**”, it’s easy to run around in meaningless activity, that is ineffective and unproductive. For that reason we must realize that, “*His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in His divine nature. We are able to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (2Peter 1:3-8)

There is “**no time to spare.**” That is why we need to get serious about the things of God, and let His divine power flow through us. Then, by faith we must, in spite of the circumstances, hang on to the precious promises of Christ, who tells us, “*I am with you always even to the end of the age*” (Matt. 28:20).

Knowing that the divine power of Christ is in us, we must add to our faith in these promises, goodness. This is manifested through acts of compassion to those in need. Such compassionate acts helps to develop the knowledge of who we are in Christ Jesus. Such knowledge gives us the self-control we need to make every day count for the glory of God.

When faith, knowledge and self control works in our lives it frees Christ’s divine power to enable us to persevere and maintain a godly life. Knowing there is little time to spare we will lift one another up in prayer and love one another as Christ has loved us. If we do this we will be effective and productive in our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

There is “**no time to spare**”. That is why each day we must strive to be effective and productive. *I Peter 4:7* tells us that “*the end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.*”

In these last days, as gun violence becomes a daily occurrence, it is the ability to pray that can mean the difference between life and death. The politicians don’t have the answers, that is why, it is essential that

attention be given to the direction provided in *Psalms 146:3-9*. There we are told *“Do not to put your trust in the politicians (princes) who can not save.... But in the Lord God, the creator of heaven and earth”*.

The fact is, God cares. He really cares about the cause of the oppressed. God cares whether the hungry are fed, the prisoners are freed, the blind see, or the down trodden are lifted up. While others may give up helping those in need, God demonstrates His love through direct action. That is why Jesus, in His great teaching on prayer, found in *Luke 11*, challenges us in *verses 5-8* to be effective and productive through prayer and direct action.

Jesus said, *“Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. Then the one inside answers, ‘ Don’t bother me. The door is already locked and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”*

In this lesson on prayer we see that we can approach God with the confidence that He is our friend. This is not only illustrated in that part of the verse which says, *“Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,”* but in *Hebrews 4:16* which declares, *“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (NIV).

The basis for such confidence is found in the two preceding verses (*verse 14 and 15*) which says, *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin”*..

In the same way as Jesus is able to sympathize with our weakness, even so, we must ask God to give us a heart for the poor. As this happens, and we begin to earnestly pray for the homeless, the Holy Spirit will unlock the unlimited love of God to flow through us.

Prayer is the key to the very heart of our compassionate God. When that key is used by an intercessor, who is a friend of the needy, the unlimited is unlocked. This is clearly illustrated in the Scriptures through the lives of great intercessors like Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah and many others. Their compassion illustrates that as we become a blessing to those in need, we can specifically count on the blessings of a loving God.

There is **“no time to spare”**. Gaining the knowledge that God is close to the brokenhearted gives us the power to engage in the kind of prayer that unlocks the unlimited. *Psalms 34:7* declares, *“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their trouble. The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken”*.

Over and over as I have worked with the poor and needy during the past 47 years, I have seen this promise fulfilled. At moments, I have felt so crushed in spirit that I didn’t even think I could get out of bed in the morning. The very people I would try to help would betray me. Others who I trusted would lie and steal from me. People in the community would level their accusations against me. Knowing there was **“no time to spare”**, when I felt completely destitute in spirit, I would find myself gripping that three stranded cord which unlocks the unlimited. This cord is found in *Luke 11:5-8*.

There we see it involves first of all, recognizing that poor and hungry friend on the journey of life. These are the people who are alone and urgently need help.

The second cord is the realization that God is telling me to be a caring friend to this person, I must then be willing to take my eyes off of my own problems and seek help for this friend who is suffering.

The third cord in *Luke 11:5-8* reminds me, I must always remember that *the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit*” (*Psalms 34:18*). I can pray for others standing on the promise of this Scripture knowing as I pray, God is also working a miracle in my behalf and the personal needs I am facing.

Today as people find themselves encountering problems that were unthinkable just one generation ago, it becomes more imperative than ever that we can unlock the unlimited power of prayer. The nuclear family of the twenty first century cannot survive without it. The epidemic of AIDS, homelessness, drug addiction, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, mass shootings, etc, should put all of us on our knees in earnest prayer each and every day of the week.

Unless we are advocates before God, we are not only incapable of truly helping others, but we eventually won't be able to even help ourselves. What tragedy neglected prayer is, in the midst of so many needs, and in the light of promises such as *John 15:7*, “*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.*”

There is “**no time to spare**”. This is why we must immediately tap into Jesus' healing power. It is this divine power that will allow us to unlock the unlimited with the same courage that caused Paul to declare, “*I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me*” (*Philippians 4:13*) [NKJV].

Jesus refused to put bandages on social cancers and use His unlimited power to advance Himself. He went straight for the cause, and unlocked the unlimited. How many in the church have drifted so far from their biblical and historical heritage that they feel such action is too radical? Such individuals need to read *Isaiah 1* and see how God detests worship that is removed from the hurt and pain of our fellow human beings.

In *John 5*, we have the example of the man at the pool of Bethesda. That man had laid there crippled for 38 years. No one cared enough for him in that 38 years to help him into the pool. But Jesus was different. He cared and unlocked the unlimited healing power of God as “*He told the man to pick up his pallet and walk*” (*John 5:9*). At once, the man did.

It wasn't long and everyone knew that Jesus had dared to break a Sabbath rule of not working. The establishment didn't care about that lame man being there for 38 years. They just wanted to get rid of this trouble maker, Jesus.

It was not a mistake that Jesus asked this powerless man to pick up his bed and challenge the rules of an establishment that needed to be stirred up. This community had become a stagnant selfish society that was content to leave a crippled man lying on the side of the pool for 38 years. Jesus not only healed the man, but asked him to break the Sabbath rule. As a result, the authorities decided that Jesus had to die. The fact is death did not eliminate Him.

Instead, a resurrection followed and unlocked the unlimited opportunity for all of us to spend an eternity in the presence of God forever.

Even though there is “**no time to spare**”, death itself is not something to be feared. The reason for this is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as *1 Corinthians 15:54-57* says, “*Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where O death is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

It is by faith that we experience this victory. Faith sees the invisible, believes that which has been historically validated, and receives that which has been promised. Spelling out the word faith in our lives and unlocking the unlimited power of God involves: **F**-orsaking, **A**-ll, **I**, **T**-ake, **H**-im.

Since there is “**no time to spare**”, we must live lives of faith, forsaking all, and following Jesus. Today the people helping business is not a popular business. If you refuse to eat at the trough of the politicians, they will turn on you and consider you a troublemaker. Other gentrifiers, who are determined to drive the poor and homeless out of their neighborhoods, will attack you if you try to directly help those in need. That is why it is so essential that we unlock the unlimited love of God daily through prayer and engage in acts of faith and compassion.

In *1 Corinthians 15:57*, we are told, “*Thanks be to our God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

These words are especially true for the unsung heroes who day by day are caring for the poor and the homeless. *1 Corinthians 15:58* says “*Therefore stand firm. Your labor is not in vain.*”

At this point, you may be saying, “Why bother to try? Why should I go on, I can’t take it anymore.” Remember, “...Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord because you know your labor is not in vain.

There is “**no time to spare**”. Those you help may not appreciate you. Someone who you share the Gospel with may scorn you. Don’t become disillusioned, burned out, or bitter. Look towards heaven, and let God unlock His limitless power within you. As this happens, you will experience the divine love of Christ flowing through you.

There is no “**time to spare**”. At this very moment, Jesus is extending His healing hand towards you. He wants to heal you in those areas in your life in which you have been paralyzed, when it comes to serving Him to the fullest extent. Jesus will also open your heart and mind, so you can by faith see the unlimited love God has for you both now and for all eternity.

Receive that love and go forth knowing that the Christ who lives within you, is greater than anything the devil or the world can throw at you.

There is “**no time to spare!**” Remember, “*the end of all things is near. Therefore be alert... so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in it’s various forms.*” (*1 Peter 4:7-10*).

Yours in Christ,



Larry Rice