

# When Blessed with Opportunities

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Carpe Diem (Seize the Day) is a saying popularized in the movie Dead Poets Society and recycled on posters with children jumping into the air.

1. "Carpe Diem" was originally written in a poem by Horace written in Latin. It means "seize the day."

Ode 11 from the First Book of the Odes of Horace

Inquire not, Leuconoe; it is not fitting you should know,

How long a term of life the gods have granted to you or to me.

Neither consult the Chaldean calculations.

How much better it is to bear with patience whatever shall happen!

Whether Jupiter have granted us more winters, or this is the last,

Which now breaks the Etrurian waves against the opposing rocks.

Be wise and abridge your hopes in proportion to the shortness of your life.

While we are conversing, envious age has been flying;

Seize the present day, not giving the least credit to the succeeding one. (Translated literally into English prose by Christopher Smart of Pembroke College, Cambridge 1756)

2. The point of the poem is that one does not know what the future holds, so he should make the most of what he has at the moment.

B. For a Christian, it is not so much that the future is uncertain, as it is that we are not certain how much future we have - James 4:13-15; Psalms 90:9-12

## I. WHILE WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY

A. James is not merely telling us to avoid depending on the uncertain future, but also to take advantage of the present - James 4:16-17

B. Do good as the opportunity presents itself. We aren't guaranteed a better or even another occasion - Gal. 6:9-10

## II. WHILE WE HAVE TIME

A. Eph. 5:15-17

1. Walk carefully (circumspectly). We don't have time to waste in sin. Nor do we have time to experiment to determine for ourselves whether it is better to serve the Lord. Self-determination does not require us to reinvent the wheel

2. Redeem the time (buy the time).

a. Redemption is the language of salvation, the purchase or ransoming something that is precious, fragile, and easily lost

b. As there is far too much trouble in the world distracting and robbing us of time, we must be extra vigilant to carefully spend what time we have remaining to us

c. In other words, we buy time by giving up time wasters and focusing on critical matters.

- d. Persons who focus on physical needs to the neglect of spiritual needs are like someone changing burnt out light bulbs in a house that is burning down
  - e. We must use our time to know and to perform what God wants us to do, first.
- B. We must use our time wisely toward those outside the church - Col. 4:5
- 1. Behave properly to those within and without the Lord's Church
    - a. 1Thes. 4:9-12; 2Thes. 3:7-8, 11-12
    - b. One never has a second chance to make a good first impression.

### III. WHILE WE CAN WORK

- A. Ecc. 9:10; Rom. 12:11
- 1. Secularly, work as if the Lord was our employer - Col. 3:23; Eph. 6:6-7
  - 2. Do not squander what we have been given - Prov. 18:9
  - 3. Be self-motivated - Prov. 16:26
- B. But it is even more important that we apply ourselves to every opportunity in the Lord's work - John 9:4, 4:34
- 1. Run as if you are competing to win the only prize - 1Cor. 9:24-27
  - 2. Stop making excuses - Prov. 26:16; Luke 9:59-62
  - 3. Stop distancing yourself from people and responsibility - Prov. 18:1
 

“When men take a pride in separating themselves from the sentiments and society of others, in contradicting all that has been said before them and advancing new notions of their own, which, though ever so absurd, they are wedded to, it is to gratify a desire to please themselves alone. He seeks according to his own desires, and intermeddles with every business, passes a judgment upon every man's matter. He is morose and supercilious. Those generally so are opinionated, and they thus make themselves vexatious to others.” (Matthew Henry's Commentary)
  - 4. Stop wasting time on the past - Phil. 3:13-14
  - 5. Don't be self-indulgent - Heb. 6:11-12
  - 6. Put your hand to the first opportunity that comes your way and complete it, and then move on to the next one that presents itself.
- When the second atomic bomb was dropped on the industrial city of Nagasaki, Japan in 1945, a doctor was walking to a patient's home and passed behind a large stone monument just as the bomb went off. He was partially sheltered from the worst of the blast, even though he was stunned, knocked to the ground, and badly burned. After a moment, he stood up and looked around at the carnage that stretched to the horizon. Everywhere his eyes fell, there were persons severely burned, blinded, in tremendous pain and fear, and crying out loudly for help. For brief time he stood there in complete despair overwhelmed by the vast number of persons needing help, and there he was: just one doctor with a small medical bag and suffering from his own injuries. After heaving a great sigh, he knelt down at the side of the nearest victim, opened his bag, and began to treat him. Just Get Started!
- a. It isn't about the lives he couldn't save; it was about the ones he did save. In this world, it isn't about the souls we couldn't reach with the Gospel; it is about the souls we reached with the Gospel

- b. The Adversary wants us to look at how big the job is, how long it will take, how much it will cost; God wants us to look at the task right in front of us today.
- c. The Adversary wants us to be overwhelmed by all of the opportunities we lost in the past; God wants us to rejoice over the opportunity we have right now

#### **IV. WHILE WE CAN PRAISE**

A. Psalms 118:24; Isa. 38:18-19

#### **V. WHILE WE CAN BE SAVED**

A. Rom. 13:11-14; Heb. 3:12-13; 2Cor. 6:1-2