

A serene night landscape with a full moon, silhouetted trees, and a body of water reflecting the moonlight. The sky is a deep blue with wispy clouds, and the water in the foreground is calm, mirroring the moon and the dark shapes of the trees and mountains in the background.

When Blessed with Opportunities

Carpe Diem

# 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 into English prose by Christopher Smart of Pembroke, Cambridge 1756)*

# When Blessed with Opportunities

- 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 - “Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit; 14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

# When Blessed with Opportunities

- Psalms 90:9-12 - “For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh. 10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. 11 Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. 12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

# While We Have Opportunity

- 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 - “But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

# While We Have Opportunity

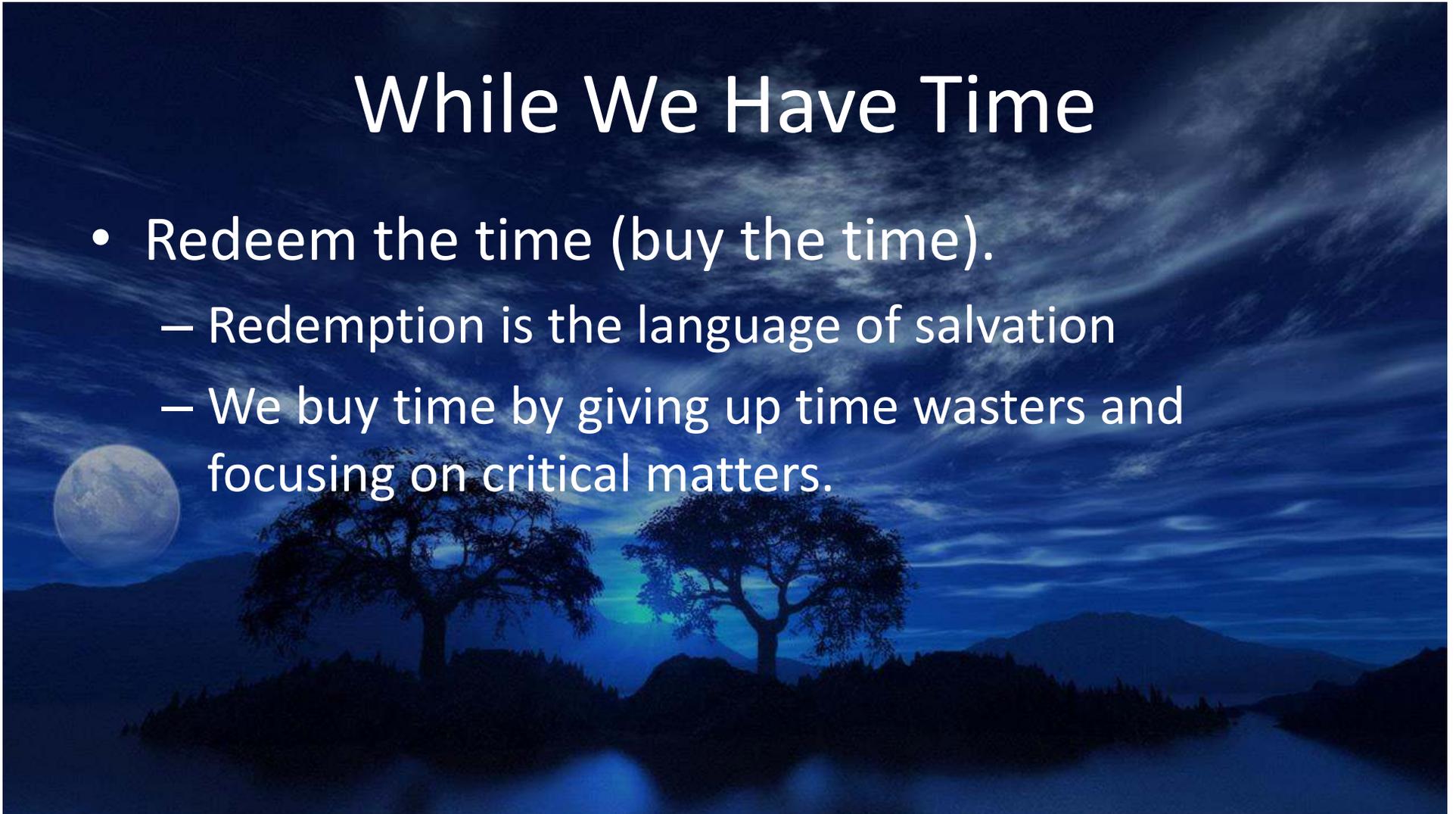
- Do good as the opportunity presents itself. We aren't guaranteed a better or even another occasion
  - Gal. 6:9-10 - “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

# While We Have Time

- Eph. 5:15-17 - “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”
- 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.

# While We Have Time

- Redeem the time (buy the time).
  - Redemption is the language of salvation
  - We buy time by giving up time wasters and focusing on critical matters.



# While We Have Time

- Use our time wisely toward those outside the church
  - Col. 4:5 - “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.”
  - 1Thes. 4:9-12 - “But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”

# While We Have Time

- 2Thes. 3:7-8, 11-12 - “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you... 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.”

# While We Can Work

- Ecc. 9:10 - “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”
- Rom. 12:11 - “Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”

# While We Can Work

- Secularly, work as if the Lord was our employer
  - Col. 3:23 - “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men”
  - Eph. 6:6-7 - “Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men”

# While We Can Work

- Do not squander what we have been given
  - Prov. 18:9 - “He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.”
- Be self-motivated
  - Prov. 16:26 - “The person who labors, labors for himself, For his hungry mouth drives him on.”

# While We Can Work

- It is even more important that we apply ourselves to every opportunity in the Lord's work
  - John 9:4 - "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."
  - John 4:34 - "Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

# While We Can Work

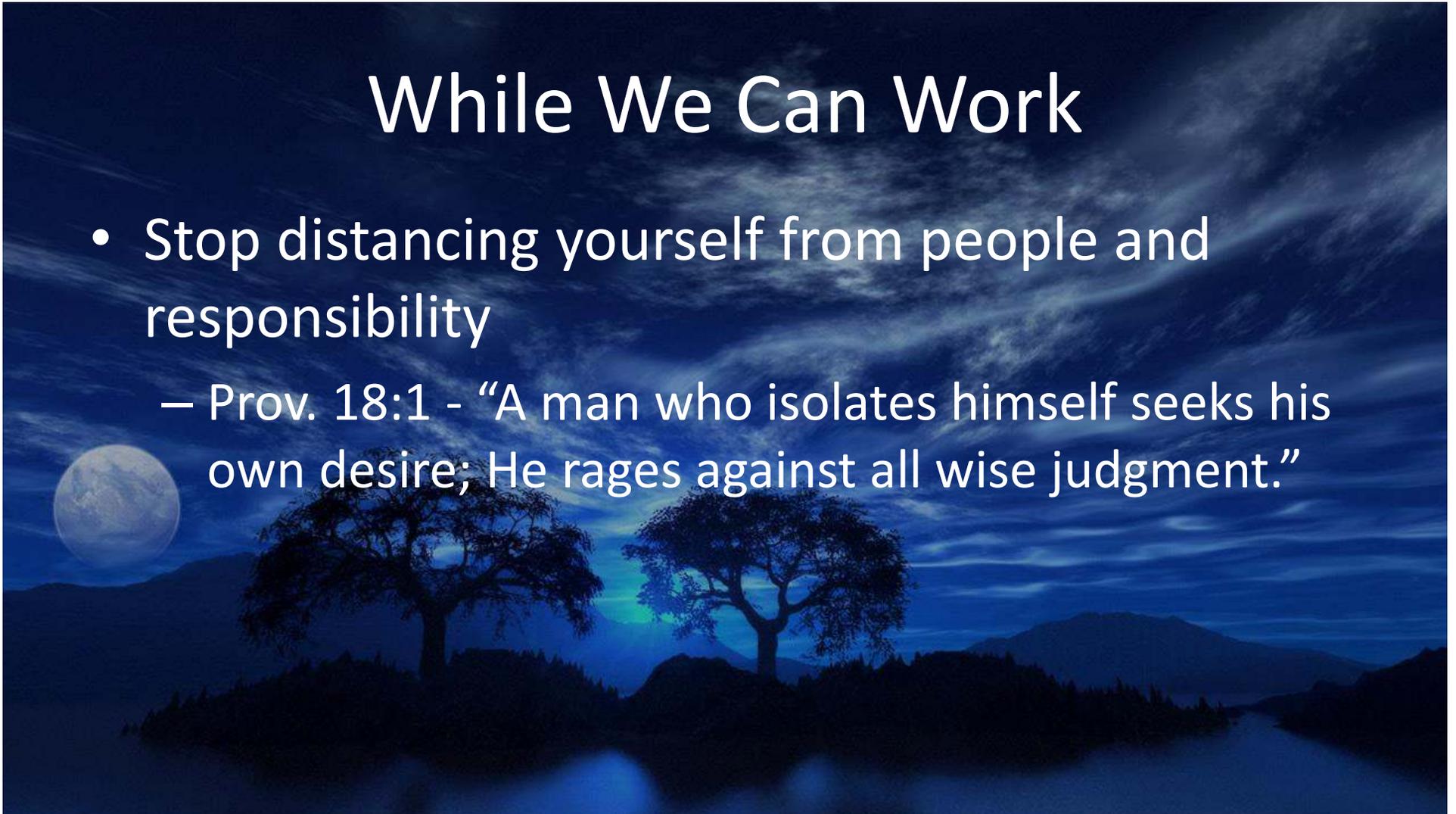
- Run as if you are competing to win the only prize
  - 1Cor. 9:24-27 - “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

# While We Can Work

- Stop making excuses
  - Prov. 26:16 - “The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can answer sensibly.”
  - Luke 9:59-62 - “Then He said to another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house. 62 But Jesus said to him, No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

# While We Can Work

- Stop distancing yourself from people and responsibility
  - Prov. 18:1 - “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.”



# While We Can Work

- “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)

# While We Can Work

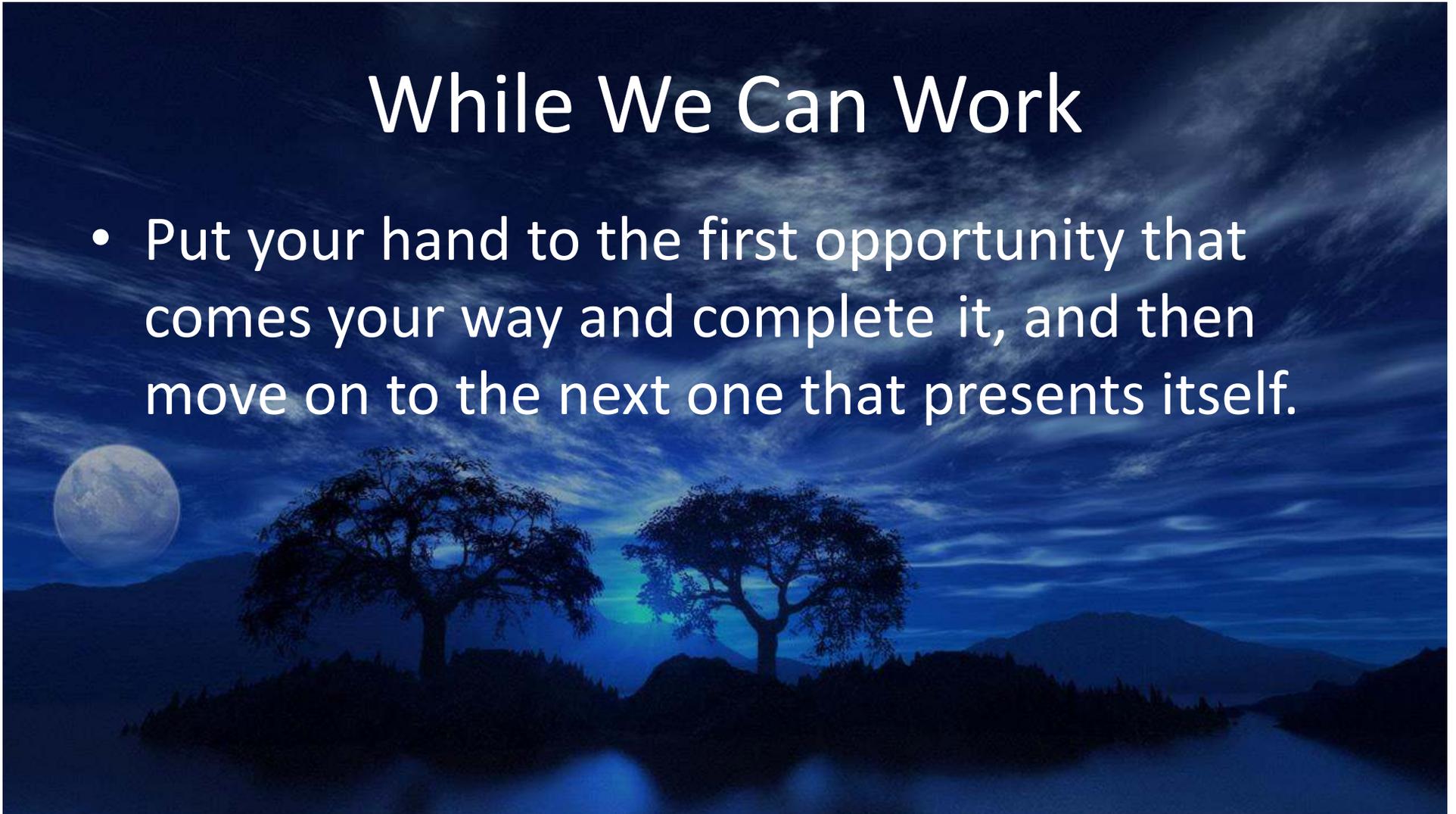
- Stop wasting time on the past
  - Phil. 3:13-14 - “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

# While We Can Work

- Don't be self-indulgent
  - Heb. 6:11-12 - “And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

# While We Can Work

- 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.



# While We Can Praise

- Psalms 118:24 - “This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.”
- Isa. 38:18-19 - “For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth. 19 The living, the living man, he shall praise You, As I do this day; The father shall make known Your truth to the children.”

# While We Can Be Saved

- Rom. 13:11-14 - “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

# While We Can Be Saved

- Heb. 3:12-13 - “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”
- 2Cor. 6:1-2 - “We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”