

## Taking Advantage of Opportunities

A week ago, Eli, Regena and I were in Bowling Green. We had taken some “things” to a storage unit and upon finishing that job we talked about what to do next. It was too early for lunch so Eli and I decided to head back to the farm. Upon arriving at the farm, Eli received a text message from Jon (our son in-law) wanting to know if we wanted to have lunch. Unfortunately, we had just left Bowling Green and an hour drive back there, so we missed the opportunity. I think we were all a little bummed at missing out on seeing Jon and Tommy (our grandson).

This made me think about “opportunities” in the Bible. Specifically, the usage in Galatians 6.10 “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” The first ten verses in this chapter deals with personal responsibilities of Christians and the opportunities that are present.

The word “opportunity” can be used for both good and bad. After all, Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus, see Matthew 26.14. In order for David to sin with Bathsheba there was an opportunity to do so. Usually we associate the words “sin, trials, and temptation” with this sort of opportunity. On the other hand, opportunities are often to do good, as said in Galatians 6.10. In which case they are valuable as they are beneficial to ourselves and others. The person who needs a ride to the doctor’s office receives a benefit when another takes them. A person without food and warmth is helped when another provides such food and warm clothes.

This brought another thought, opportunities are limited. Time often is a limiting factor in the sense it soon passes. **“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4).** When driving baby girl or boy home from the hospital, the time of having them in the home seems limitless. However, the fact is parents have but a few years to teach their children and mold their character. Afterward it is too late. Circumstances can limit our opportunities. Satan is credited by Paul in limiting his opportunities to go to

Thessalonica. **“Therefore, we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:18)** Religious persecution and riots limited Paul’s time at places such as Corinth and Ephesus. We might be limited in the future by restrictions placed on us by the government. Will preaching on certain social issues be outlawed? No one knows but it could happen.

One’s health or even death obviously limits the opportunity to obey the Gospel. I once had a Bible study setup with an individual in the hospital. He actually promised before going in he would study with me once he got back home. While in the hospital, he had a massive heart attack and died. I think of those who suffer strokes or other health issues which make it impossible for them to communicate which limits their ability to obey God’s word.

All of this should bring us to the conclusion that we need to take advantage of our opportunities in life. Use our “doors of opportunity.” **“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 2:12).** As individuals and as a congregation there are many opportunities to do good, spread the Gospel, teach our children, help the needy, etc.

Beware, opportunities do have cost associated with them. Seldom are they convenient, in fact most come at inconvenient times. The phone call for help or a Bible study, seldom comes when you have nothing to do. But they also have great rewards when used properly. In the parable of the talents the five and two talented men were both faithful. **"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'** (Matthew 25:21). The one talented man did nothing with his opportunity and heard the following words, **'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'** (Matthew 25:30) The cost of not using opportunities is greater due to the punishment by God. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith. – Dennis Tucker

