

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, November 28, 2010 – 11:00 AM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

One Moment in Time – Galatians 4:4

Introduction: (Pause for a minute.) A minute of silence seems like a long time doesn't it? But if you're doing something you enjoy, or when you're in a hurry, it's not long at all.

For your information, there are 25 left days until Christmas. That's 612 hours or 36,720 minutes. Now for the child who is looking forward to unwrapping those presents under the tree, those minutes and hours and days seem to stand still. But for those who have to cram decorating, buying & wrapping presents, partying, cooking, and all the other stuff that needs to be done along with their work and school schedules; for them, time travels faster than two people racing to grab the last iPhone from shelf. It all depends on your perspective. So, as we enter into the Christmas season, it's a good opportunity for us to consider the significance of one moment of time. First, let's consider:

1. The Importance of Good Timing

Have you ever thought about how important good timing is? For example, would Thanksgiving be a good time to start a diet? Would January be a good time for David Vaughan to plant a field of corn? Would February be a good time for the Children's Committee to have an Easter egg hunt? Would it have the same effect if the choir did the Christmas musical in July?

Think about the importance of good timing in sports. If a quarterback throws the ball a second too early or late, he won't complete the pass. If a batter reacts a half a second too slow as a 100 mph fastball is coming at his head, it's not going to be pretty.

Think about the importance of timing in our daily lives. Have you ever been late for work because you left on time, but you got caught in traffic? And if you're the parent of a preschooler, you know what can happen if you turn your head for even a minute. That child can be gone before you know it.

One minute – one brief moment of time can make all the difference in the world. If you don't believe it, just think about those who made it out of the World Trade Center just minutes before they collapsed. Good timing is important because one moment of time can make all the difference in the world.

Now during this time of the year, it's easy for us to major on the minors of Christmas. I'm talking about how we put so much emphasis and importance on trees and tinsel – on shopping and sales – on presents and parties. But in my next point, I want to point us to a truth that helps turn our focus away from the sideshow of Christmas and onto the miracle of the moment of Christmas. Our Scripture passage for today underscores:

2. The Importance of God's Timing

Galatians 4:4 (NIV) says, *“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son....”* This one moment of time emphasizes the importance of God's timing because at just the right time in human history, God chose to send His Son into this world.

Can we just stop and let that soak in this morning? Can we just pause and consider the life-changing significance of that one moment of time? I pray that we'll not be like a certain newspaper editor was back in 1903. I'm referring to that moment in time when two Dayton, Ohio bicycle makers, named Orville and Wilbur Wright, turned their dream of human flight into reality. On December 17, 1903, the Wright brothers flew four short flights over the sandy beaches of Kitty Hawk, NC in the world's first airplane that worked. Understanding the significance of what they had just accomplished, they walked 4 miles into town and sent the following telegram to their father:

“Success four flights Thursday morning all against twenty one mile wind - started from level with engine power alone - average speed through air thirty one miles - longest flight fifty nine seconds - inform press home Christmas.”

Their father took the telegram to the editor of The Dayton Journal, but he refused to carry the story. He said the flights were too short to be important. That editor failed to recognize the magnitude and the miracle of that one moment in time.

I pray that we won't miss the significance of that moment when *“the time had fully come”* and *“God sent his Son”* into the world. But the reality is, most people back then did miss it. Other than a young peasant couple,

a handful of shepherds, a few wise men, King Herod, and a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, most of the rest of the world failed to recognize the significance of this one baby's birth. For them, there was too much other stuff going on like paying taxes and making a living. Most people were too busy with their own lives to pay any attention to a young girl from Nazareth giving birth to her first child in a stable in Bethlehem. Most people of that day missed the moment.

But at just the right time, Jesus was born. It was not just a matter of chance or a coincidence. Jesus' advent into human history was part of God's divine plan established before the foundation of the world.

Warren Wiersbe gives us some insight into what "*But when the time had fully come...*" means when he wrote, "*Historians tell us that the Roman world was in great expectation, waiting for a deliverer, at the time Jesus was born. The old religions were dying; the old philosophies were empty and powerless to change men's lives. Strange new mystery religions were invading the empire. Religious bankruptcy and spiritual hunger were everywhere. God was preparing the world for the arrival of His Son.*" (Be Free, p 90).

And from history we learn that the Roman Empire had unknowingly helped prepare the world for the birth of Jesus. The phrase, "*All roads lead to Rome*" referred to the fact that the Romans had built roads that connected city to city making travel much easier. The world was at relative peace as Roman laws protected the citizens and Roman soldiers guarded the peace. Latin and Greek were the predominant languages spoken across the empire which made communication easier. And when you consider that at this moment in time, all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus' coming had been completed; you have everything in place and for the right time for God to send His Son. That is one of the miracles of that first Christmas - the miracle of God's perfect timing in sending His Son into the world.

But the miracle of God's timing doesn't end there. There's one more thing: Not only do we need to know that God came at just the right time then. We also need to consider:

3. The Importance of God's Timing Today

God not only sent His Son "*when the time had fully come*" then. He sends His Son at just the right time today.

If I could put this message into one short sentence, (and I know that some of you wish I would have!) it would be this: "*God comes to us at just the right time with just what we need for the moment!*" He may come in the midst of a worship experience such as this. He may come in the form of a co-worker in the break room or a classmate at school. He may come to you as a simple gesture – a smile, a hug, a handshake, a card in the mail, or an email in your inbox. God can come to us in many forms and in many ways, but if we're too busy, we'll miss Him. If we're too preoccupied with the everyday activities of life, we may not recognize the moment. If we're looking for the spectacular or the sensational, we too may say like that newspaper editor said, "*That's not important enough to be God.*"

But when God comes to us with what we need at just the right time, that's how we experience the miracle of that first Christmas all over again. When He sends His Son to us at just the right time, that's how we experience the miracle of light that overcomes the darkness in our world. That's how we experience the miracle of hope that dispels the feeling of helplessness that overwhelms us. That's how we experience the miracle of salvation that forgives our sins and makes us into a new creation that is fit for heaven. That's what God wants to do for us when He sends His only begotten Son to us. And that is good news!

The truth is, a lot of people could use some good news this holiday season. A lot of people need a miracle in their life. And God wants to give it to us, but are we seeing it? God comes to us at just the right time with what we need for the moment, but are we aware of His advent into our lives?

Listen to these promises from God's Word. Notice His perfect timing and His care for mankind. **Psalms 145:15 (NIV)** says, "*The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.*" **Deut. 11:14 (NIV)** says, "*Then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil.*"

At just the right time God provides exactly what is needed for the moment. He knows exactly what you are going through right now, and He knows exactly what you need. And at just the right time, He will come to you and provide what you need for the moment. His timing is always perfect.

Part of the miracle of Christmas is the miracle of the moment. God's timing is always right, It's is never off. He not only came into the world at just the right time, He comes into our lives at just the right time today. Just when we need Him most, He is there.

Romans 5:6 (NIV) says, "*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*" Let me ask you - When do you need a miracle the most? Isn't when you're powerless and helpless? Isn't it when you're at the end of your rope - when you're options and your resources have run out? Isn't that the moment you need a miracle from God? Well, by sending His Son to us, He's fulfilling His promise to come at just the right time and provide just what we need for the moment.

Conclusion: Maybe you've been waiting for just the right time to make that commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord. Maybe you've been waiting for just the right time to recommit your life to Christ, or to join the church, or to give up that bad habit, but something keeps telling you to wait. If this describes you, then listen to what Paul told some people in another church in another day a long time ago.

In his second letter to the Corinthian church, Paul was writing to some people who apparently had not understood fully the concept of God's grace, and were in fact in danger of embracing a watered down substitute of the gospel of Christ. He reminded them of God's promise expressed through the prophet Isaiah that God's day of grace had in fact, already come and was still available. He said in **2 Corinthians 6:2 (NIV)**, "*In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.*"

Well, that day of salvation is still available today. God's grace is still on the table. The Bible says that today is the day of salvation. So right here, right now is the right time for you. Jesus said in **Mark 1:15 (NIV)**, "*The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News!*" This is the right time to make that commitment to Christ and receive God's gift of salvation. There's no better time to join this fellowship of believers. This is the right time to make a change in your life, or recommit your life to Christ, or recommit your marriage and family to the Lord. This is the right time get closer to the Lord!

One single moment of time can make all the difference in your life and in eternity. Right now is such a moment. If you've never asked Jesus into your life, I invite you to make that commitment today. This moment can change your life forever. This moment can be your Christmas miracle – when God comes to you at just the right time with exactly what you need.

If you recognize this moment for what it is, and you want to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord, then repeat this prayer quietly in your heart along with me as I pray. Pray with me:

Dear God, I don't want to live one more moment without you in my life. I ask your forgiveness for not recognizing your great love for me - for living my life without you. I believe Jesus is your Son, who left heaven and came to earth to die on the cross for my sin. I believe He rose from the dead and is alive today. He came at just the right time just for me. Today, I want to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Today, I ask you to forgive my sin, cleanse me, and fill me with your Spirit. In this moment, I'm asking you for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. In this moment, I receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Now, if you prayed that prayer, I'm going to ask you to come during the invitation song and I'll give you the opportunity to make your public profession of faith. Even if you didn't pray that prayer, but you have some other need – to join this church, or to recommit your life to Christ – whatever the decision is, God is here right now – in this moment of time, waiting to give you whatever you need.