

Kairos—The Time is Now!

**Mark 1:14-15 Luke 12:54-56 Romans 5:6
2 Corinthians 6:1-10 Exodus 20:12**

Who's your daddy?

Who's your grand daddy?

Are you a daddy?

Are you a daddy's daddy? A mommy's daddy?

If you are—I hope you get some love today!

And if you have a daddy, will you please give your daddy some love today?

And if your daddy has passed, I hope you can find some way to find him today, inside yourself.

Do something he would do.

Say something he would say.

Think something he would think.

Even if things didn't go so well between you and him—is it possible?—it is time for you to forgive him?

For whatever he did or did not do.

Heal. Let the hurt go—between him and you.

How many of us—men and women—have lost a father in one way or another—and had to find the father inside ourselves?

Can I get an Amen?

Who's your daddy?

Hey! Be happy! All you Daddy's!

Although I had a mixed bag relationship with my own father, I wish I could talk with him today.

I did learn some important things from him.

One of the most important things I learned from him came when something I really wanted was withheld from me due to favoritism and nepotism.

It isn't important what it was.

I just remember being hurt.

My Dad took me aside, and he said, "Just wait, Scott. Your time will come."

I took his guidance to heart. I have never forgotten what he said.

I have applied it over and over in so many situations in my life.

He was right.

The time did come!

I re-tell this fatherly lesson as a way to segway to another layer or dimension of today's message.

The time is come!

Here is a commonly repeated thought throughout the New Testament, and especially in the thinking and teachings of Jesus.....The time is come!

When we read those passages and hear them as Josh read them today, we hear that word "**time**".

But every time you heard the word "time", you were really hearing a Greek word "Kairos", which is a special kind of time.

Kairos is not chronological time, like you see on a clock, a watch or your phone.

Kairos is the time when **what will be** breaks into **what is.**

Kairos is when **the world that will be** breaks into **the world that is.**

The world to come!—suddenly becomes visible and possible!

In spiritual language, this kind of time is called "God's time".

It's "*Seize the Time*"—time!

It's that unplanned for, unrepeatable time when something becomes possible!

It's that moment in a race when—lagging behind the people in front—you decide to pass them by—and right then, as you accelerate, you know it for certain!—

Nobody can catch you!

Current illustration: For many years, the Missouri Arts Council has said they would not fund the Kids Team Up for Art program here in the Westport Center for the Arts. MAC does help to fund our concerts, our plays, our art exhibits, but they cited what we felt was a “nit picking” rule that prevented them from funding KTUFA. This week, I called them and was talking with a leader there about the grant we received for the coming 12 months. In mid conversation, as we discussed how the pandemic is preventing so many art organizations’ live performances, including the ones we had planned—I suddenly said, “Hey, we have a plan to turn Kids Team Up for Art into Kids Spread Out for Art in the parking lot, starting a week from now. I described it to him, then said, “How about, this year, letting us use money we can’t spend on live performances for KSOFA?”

After 8-9 years of “No!” there came an immediate reply: ”Yes!”

Kairos! Seize the time!

In this single, brief moment, something special can happen—or not!

If—in Kairos time—you accelerate—no one can catch you.

An ancient parable from what is modern day Iran adds a layer to this idea.

It’s called the Parable of the Persian carpet.

This is a carpet that is made on a vertical frame.

The experienced weaver-artist sits on one side of the frame and does the weaving, while on the other side, sits the young apprentice weaver making the knots.

When the apprentice makes a mistake or more than one mistake, the experienced weaver artist doesn’t have him change it or correct it.

Instead the weaver takes the opportunity to alter the overall pattern.

Kairos time!— is God’s “Seize The Time”—TIME!

In our world and nation, we are in such a **TIME!**

We have an opportunity right now—to bring an end to the original sin of anti-blackness in our culture. Listen to that scripture againL

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvationwe commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and

distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God.”

Paul could be writing of our struggle today.

We must look in the mirror and ask ourselves these questions:

If the man sleeping in the drive thru at Wendy’s in Atlanta two Friday nights ago had been a white man in a suit and tie who had a few too many, would he have ended up on the ground shot in the back dead? And his children made fatherless?

I don’t think so.

Now it is clearly understood that resisting arrest is a problem, but would this situation have even gone that far had this man been, for instance, me, or you?

Somewhere in the 40 and more minutes of reasonable talking the police should have just taken Rashard Brooks home and given him a summons to appear in court.

At the very least, they should have let him walk to his sister’s house.

I believe anti-blackness led to this tragedy.

A second question: How many of us have been arrested, handcuffed and put on the ground for jaywalking lately?

That’s what happened to two black teenagers last week. They were walking in the street in a frontage like road with no sidewalks. Police officers arrest them.

The officers’ Body camera videos contain this segment:

“Get off me! I can’t breathe! I can’t breathe! I can’t breathe!” the teen shouts.

“You can breathe just fine,” the officer replied. “You’re fine.”

“Sir, he has handcuffs on. What is he gonna do?” said the other teenager, who later got handcuffed but was sitting on the curb.

This does not happen to white teenagers in the suburbs.

This happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Not long ago, in Texas, Javier Ambler II was driving home in the early hours when a sheriff's deputy noticed that he failed to dim the headlights of his SUV to oncoming traffic.

Failed to dim the headlights!

Twenty-eight minutes later, the black father of two sons lay dying on a north Austin street after deputies held him down and used Tasers on him four times while a crew from A&E's reality show "Live PD" filmed.

Ambler, a 40-year-old former postal worker, repeatedly pleaded for mercy, telling deputies he had congestive heart failure and couldn't breathe.

He cried, "Save me," before deputies deployed a final shock.

His death never made headlines.

Failed to dim his headlights!

I do not believe this would not happen to me, a white man, or any white person.

This Father's Day, his son is fatherless.

The time is now—Kairos—to remove anti-blackness in our culture.

And you might say that something like that happened to a young white woman here in Sedalia, Missouri the other day, another terrible tragedy, and I would only say that while we need serve and protect policing—police unions now have too much political power—and so tragic abuses of white people occur as well.

Witness the filmed treatment of the 75 year old man in Buffalo or the tragic death by drowning of Brandon Ellingson while in handcuffs on Lake of the Ozarks.

I have no doubt that police are under great stress.

Many no doubt have PTSD. I imagine quite a few are war veterans.

They need our compassion and support in their multiple stresses.

We need police to protect and serve.

And they need more than 9 months training to acquire the power of life and death.

Still—as an organized group, police unions have acquired too much political power.

Here is what I mean by that.

Suppose there were a soldiers' union.

And the soldiers union included soldiers of the army of the navy or the air force, and that they had accumulated so much power over time that they were not accountable to the generals, the defense department, the President, the armed services committees in Congress, much less the public.

That is the kind of situation we are facing. The political power of the police unions combined with anti-blackness and the police officers themselves being on the front lines of many community problems that are beyond their control and should also be beyond their realm of responsibility or authority—is creating an explosive mix of violence and hate.

We are in a Kairos moment.

We have the opportunity right now and in the days and weeks and months ahead to deconstruct the 400 plus years fortress of anti-blackness and build a new world where black is beautiful. Black is brilliant. Black is brave. And brown is walking proud uptown.

I'm going to turn toward a close by sharing a story I heard at a banquet on the Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday.

The story was told by Reverend Samuel "Billy" Kyles.

Rev Kyles was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

"Dinner was going to be served at my house that night," Reverend Kyle later explained. "I had told him dinner was at five; we called my house from our suite in Rooms 306 and 307 of the motel, and my family said it would be ready at 6 instead of 5. This gave me the awesome privilege of spending the last hour on earth with him.

We walked out on the balcony at a quarter to six. 'C'mon guys, let's go,' I said. He was leaning over the rail. He was talking to Jesse Jackson who was standing down in the parking lot... I walked away. I got about five steps when a shot rang out. It was 6:00 p.m."

He was pronounced dead an hour later.

"I tell you, for a very, very long time, I was so troubled to live with it," continued Reverend Kyles, "that I was standing there next to my friend and the next second he was killed so violently.

Why was I there at that place at that time?

Why?

Why?

Why?

And then it was almost like a revelation: I was there to be a witness."

I was there to be a witness!!!

Today, via television, cell phone cameras, body cameras, computers, I-pads, you and I are witnesses.

We are all witnesses.

All of us living at this time have become witnesses to a multiplying set of converging events that make this a Kairos moment.

We are witnessing the explicit anti-blackness.

We are witnesses to the killings by police and other racists with guns.

We are witnesses to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is now predicted to kill 200,000 Americans by October.

We are witnesses to the sudden destruction of jobs, businesses, and incapacitation of cultural and educational institutions.

And then you are—paradoxically— also a witness to uprisings, primarily led by young people, aimed at transforming these social and economic conditions.

You are a witness to creative initiatives to transcend the tide of trauma

You are a witness to brave souls using all their intellect and experience and creativity to solve severe, crushing problems of physical and social disease.

And as a witness, you must find ways to speak and to act and to think in the situations and relationships in your life.

Wear a mask when you are around people. For your sake and for theirs.

Begin to become part of a new eco-economy that emphasizes meeting human needs, and creative entrepreneurship instead of purposeless consumerism.

Make a break with white solidarity. Dare to come up with thoughtful replies to the person who says to you “I was taught to obey the law.” “This wouldn’t happen if they respected the police.”

Enter into dialogues with statements such as “I treat everyone as individuals”. “I don’t care whether you are black, white, brown, or purple, we’re all the same.” “I’m color blind. I don’t see color

You are a witness!

This is a Kairos moment.

Mistake after mistake after mistake is being made. So—alter the pattern!

It’s God’s time.

Seize the time.

Accelerate right now.

Nobody! Nobody!—can catch you!

Amen.

Rev. Scott Myers, Father’s Day Sunday, June 21, 2020

Westport Presbyterian Church