

Brethren, the time is short (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] Fearing so much to need the Lord's merciful and gracious help, I must venture this evening in directing your thoughts to Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians chapter 7 and reading verses 29, 30 and 31.

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But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.

As I left our home this afternoon to travel to Tented Inn, I left home without a text, and yet had been asking the Lord that he might get me one to come with here this evening.

But I had an experience as I've had only once before in this same way. We hadn't left our home very long, when I noticed young people who were evidently walking back wherever to, from their college, and seeing them.

[2 : 34] And I'll say no more than this, you would all know how things are in these solemn days in which we are living. The standard that is couched in the Word of God is being more and more cast aside.

And in its place, we have very much of this, and it was this partly that arrested my attention the latter part of verse 31.

For the fashion of this world passeth away. And I'm sure that it is right to say that godly parents who really fear God are finding it more and more difficult with regard to their children and all that is going on in this day in so many different ways.

and how we have seen in our life a continual dreadful effect of sin in our lives and in the world.

the standards of God's Holy Word as I have said are being cast aside made light of thought nothing of and therefore it is first of all with very real feeling I trust regarding parents and those of us that are now grandparents we look on in a different way than when we had our children around us.

[4 : 42] It was in that way and as I looked at these young people and thought about them and thought of the children and young people and the ever increasing difficulty that parents have and how constantly there is the need to make decisions and I remember an occasion when our children were little and how often we were very burdened parents that love their children are very concerned about them and they're aware of their difficulties and all that it means and I remember once particularly the word of God affecting my soul and it was this let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering for he is faithful but promised well I trust then that it was in that way and it happened once before and it seemed to in a moment

I felt that I must venture with this subject but you will know how it begins in verse 29 but this I say brethren the time is short I believe I can say from my heart that there are those here this evening that are through the mercy and grace of God my brethren and sisters in the Lord and therefore I believe I can speak to you in this way with some feeling one of the meanings of the word brethren is that real brethren in Christ and I emphasize that they all have one father there's only one father of our

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I can remember my own dear father and the Lord knows all the sad things that happened in his case and others but I remember him giving out that hymn I think it's 1013 one Lord's day here and it says doesn't it there is a family on earth whose father fills the throne and that is sad and in whatever way we might consider it looking out right through the world and the Lord's people wherever they are if they are real Christians if they are true followers of the meek and lowly Jesus it is true to say that they all have one father God the father and the hymn says as I mentioned there is a family on earth whose father fills the throne father

I'm just going to refer because I remember that occasion particularly in my own personal feelings that hymn 1013 I believe it is I hope I'm right yes it is but what so touched my heart that day in this chapel and I used to try and lead the singing but it was this the last verse no they will tread while here below the path their master trod content all honor to forego but that which comes from God and I believe I was humbled in the dust under a sense of the truth of that verse I believe I did take the lowest seat and there's no better seat for any poor sinner or any pastor minister deacon church member those that fear

God there is no better place on earth but that it is to sit at the feet of Jesus clothed and in our right mind so I believe then we can take up this word brethren but this I say the apostle Paul was speaking or writing yes speaking through his writing to the church at Corinth and I understand that the city of Corinth in those days the awful state that they were in is very much how it is in our own land at this very present time it was a city that had prospered it was a city that was full of wealth and yet it was full of sin and

[10 : 35] I'm sure that the dear apostle he was instrumental in forming the church at Corinth wealth but here he writes to them in this way under a sense of their need and while I venture with this subject I can say this that I am first needing seeking to speak first of all to my own soul but this I say brethren the time is short I believe that that is true as we even think in the world and some of us here this evening heard the solemnity of our time set before us in Heathfield Chapel by the

Lord's servant and he spoke much of the last days and perilous times he pointed out something of the awful state that the world is in that the churches are in and our great and solemn need under a sense of the ever approaching of the day of Christ and he said this yesterday I take it up again this evening that time is short we know not how soon the Lord Jesus will return to this earth with power and great glory and all the holy angels with him the trumpet will sound and he will send his angels to gather together his elect from the four corners of the earth so that in that way this word is very true we know not how short

I could have ventured to have read in Mark's gospel to you but I felt just now in the vestry that I must read those two chapters that I did but in Mark's gospel and while this was mentioned yesterday I believe it needs mentioning every day and we all need to hear such truth as this every day of our life but of that day and that hour knoweth no man know not the angels which are in heaven neither the son but the father take ye heed watch and pray for ye know not when the time is for the son of man is as a man taking a far journey who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to every man his work and commanded the porter to watch watch ye therefore for ye know not when the master of the house cometh at even or at midnight or at the cock crowing or in the morning lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping and what

I say unto you I say unto all watch and hear friends they are the words of the Lord Jesus but this I say brethren the time is short and this is why I venture to read from Paul's epistle to the Romans particularly as in chapter 13 and that knowing the time that now it is high time to wake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed the night is fast lent the day is at hand let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light and the exhortation that follows and the exhortations that we have read and they are couched as in these three verses but this

I say brethren the time is short and in a more personal way that is in seeking to speak first to my own soul and then to yours some of our friends have been this afternoon or today to a funeral and the lady who was buried went to the house of God last Lord's Day morning returned home prepared a meal and then collapsed and died oh how we need this truth to be born home upon all our hearts but we may remember how short our time is in comparison with a never ending eternity our little day will soon be done oh to be prepared but then great

[16 : 58] God prepare my soul for that great day oh wash me in thy precious blood take all my sins away another word that we must just lay before you is in Peter's first epistle and in the fourth chapter he penned this but the end of all things is at hand be therefore sober and watch unto prayer and above all things have fervent charity among yourselves for charity or love in action shall cover the multitude of sins I remember the late

Mr. Mulvey preaching from this subject in Hawker's chapel years ago now and the solemnity of that occasion and the feelings of my own soul but this I say brethren the time is short if we should live to reach a hundred years in this life in comparison with a never ending eternity it is but for a moment we in our full and sinful state we cannot begin to comprehend what a never ending eternity really is but it will be forever and forever what a solemn thought it is that it will be to be either in heaven and glory with

Christ eternally shut in or it will be to be in hell oh what solemn truth these are may the Lord then send us all home with this we need to be reminded of it continually but this I say brethren the time is short my thoughts seemed to go to my own brother Matthew who at the age of 19 came into this chapel for the last time the late Mr.

George Baldwin was preaching some of you may remember the occasion and yet it was felt that the Lord put his hand on my brother that Lord's day he was in the army and the following Thursday he perished he died in what is term an accident he was in the army they were on what was called wireless operations he was in a Bedford truck two soldiers in the front my brother and another in the back they would have been wearing earphones and this truck turned or tipped over down the side of Dumpton Hill near

Petworth in Sussex one soldier was killed in the front and my brother was killed in the back well he was nineteen and he was here on the last Lord's day of his life and one of the things that I shall never forget about it was this you see I was only fifteen at the time and I had no concern whatsoever about my soul I shall ever remember his funeral day the soldiers that came the last post but he's brave here Mr.

[21 : 42] Gibb took the service we sang the hymn in the Sunday school hymn book when blooming youth is snatched away by death resist his hand our hearts the mournful tribute pay which pity must demand now I had no concern about my brother's soul but when I believe the Lord in mercy touched my soul then of course my thoughts went back to my brother and I began to feel Lord how was it with him and one day I was talking to dear Mr.

George Jensen and I felt really humbled because the dear man said this he said I've never felt a greater sense of the safety of an immortal soul in death than I did of your brother and Mr.

Dennis now that was a testimony and the dear man had been burdened about my brother and he was a man who had deep concern for the young people right through to the end of his life you see these thoughts have come and I have expressed them perhaps the Lord may use them but just to remind you that he was 90 he was only 90 a fine young man but oh you see it was felt and dear Mr.

Jensen evidently felt it but that day the last Lord's day on earth it was believed it was felt that he was called by grace in this house of God so how true then this subject is for all of us let me say this with great reverence but dear friends none of us know if we will meet together in this house of God again or in any other so how solemn then is the subject but this I say brethren the time is short I must go on as helped and all of this very searching and I can only hope that the two chapters that we've read which were full of solemn exhortations you see dear friends it is one thing to make an open profession of the name of

Christ it is of course a real thing to make any profession of the name of Christ to come and go to the house of God to make an open profession but it's another thing to walk it out in our lives oh it is how we live how we move how we act but really feel this increasingly solemn because it is one thing for me to stand before the people and to try to preach the word of God but it's another thing for me to live in it and to walk it out oh how searching then these three verses are but this I say brethren the time is short it's a mercy for us to be aware of it it really yes because really we've not one moment to call error every breath we draw is one more breath given and the day will surely come the only thing that would change the scene is the second coming of Christ when those that are alive and remain if they are indeed his will be caught up together with him in the air and so shall we ever be with the

[26 : 13] Lord but now these exhortations but this I say brethren the time is short it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none and how searching this is for those of us who have been blessed by God with a dear God-given wife or a dear God-given husband and what a favour that is and any here this evening that have not been blessed in that way but this is the teaching this is the subject what does it really mean but this I say brethren the time is short it remaineth but both they that have wives be as though they had none what does that really mean surely it means this our great need to put

Christ first to put Christ first now that doesn't mean that we shall not love our wives or our husbands or our loved ones it doesn't mean that at all I prove this as a most unworthy under shepherd and at times over the years I've been privileged to baptize husbands and wives together and oh at times with them I remember how they said this that when the Lord brought them to himself burdened their souls with putting on an open profession Christ was put first but what did he do for them a number of them have said over the years we've never felt closer together than we do now now this is the wonder of it when we are enabled to put

Christ first and our exercise is in that way when we are enabled to live a little at least in the words of Jesus and so that I do not misquote them they are these in Matthew chapter 6 verse 33 but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you but you know left to ourselves it's a complete opposite isn't it and of course in a right sense we have the exhortation regarding married life to do all we can for our dear ones and that needs much grace to live in it and walk it out oh when we are brought when it's

Jesus first others second ourselves last and oh what grace is needed I read didn't I to you this evening again let me just read it so that I do not misquote it I shall never ever forget going to preach in Nuggan down chapel one Sunday evening some years ago with these words now listen first but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof I think I could say that to the glory of God that evening the Lord spoke to do to dear souls who had to go and tell what the

Lord had done for them his word it found them they were there they were exercised with that very subject of believers baptism friends it's the Lord's way to his table it's his way to his table it's the channel but trying then to come again to these three verses but this I say brethren the time is short it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none I believe I have a feeling it will serve all our hearts here this evening to those of you that are not married to those of us that are but oh this is God's word and to just put it in simple yet profound words

[31 : 41] I believe it's this and what grace we need in everything to put Christ first when the Lord enables his dear people to do that you'll find this you'll love your dear ones more than ever and that's the Lord's way you'll love them more than ever it's his way because you're honouring Christ he is being put first in your life and he will ever honour it oh those wonderful words are still as true today as ever for them that honour me I will honour and I'm sure there are those here this evening you've already been proving it haven't you but it may be a word for someone here this evening friend you need grace to put Christ first in your life and the

Lord says doesn't he I've just read it to you but seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added according to the will of God the Lord will make a way for you he will provide for you and some of us here this evening have to say with one who said not more than others I deserve but thou hast given me more when we are made aware of it oh we have to put our mouth in the dust and say why me oh blessed God why me who must forever lie in hell were not salvation free but this I say brethren the time is short it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none of course it can be put the other way but both they that have husbands be as though they had none and they that weep as though they wept not and they that rejoice as though they rejoice not and they that buy oh what need we have I think of the word of truth in the prophecy of Jala let the priests and ministers of the

Lord weep between the porch and the altar and let them say spare thy people oh I do not want to misquote the precious word of God if I could just read that to you in the prophecy of Jala let the priests the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar and let them say spare thy people oh Lord and give not thine heritage to reproach but the heathen should rule over them wherefore should they say among the people where is their God and the exhortation perhaps I must convey it to you gather the people sanctify the congregation assemble the elders gather the children and those that suck the breasts let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber and the bride out of her closet and they that we oh to know that real weeping that real weeping

Hezekiah wept sore but oh the Lord sent Isaiah to him didn't he and this is what he had to say perhaps the Lord will say it to someone here this evening I should ever remember I was working in the garden at Holden House and I was burdened about a dear soul before God and these words I believe were given in relation to this I have heard thy prayer I have seen thy tears well here it is then and they that weep as though they weep not as though the Lord would say you can't weep too much and they that rejoice and what a mercy when we can the Lord has favoured you here with a time of rejoicing in what the Lord has been pleased to do among you and yet and they that rejoice as though they rejoice not as though there is no end to these things and they that buy as though they possess not as searching these exhortations are whatever we may have the means to buy in our life and yet here is the exhortation and they that buy as though they possess not but oh to know this that all things are yours all things are yours and to know this in our hearts that whatever the Lord has given to us we are but stewards of it we have a solemn responsibility with whatever the Lord has given to us oh to go then to do our buying this search is my heart

[38 : 35] Jesus in that very sacred intercessory prayer in John 17 how does he pray I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil oh we shall join with Jabez in his prayer and that thou wouldest keep me from evil but it may not grieve me oh friends to be in the world but not of it and it needs falling and falling and falling and over the last few years even more and more so and you know dear friends if we're not preserved we can get taken up with it you know dear Mr.

God is upon us well I leave these three verses with you but this I say brethren the time is short and it is it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none I believe this will send us home searched in our hearts and there are those of you here this evening your loved ones are at home and you'll go back home this evening I could only hope that those of you dear ones might say well what have you heard this evening and if any of you have to go home and tell them what you've heard well isn't it this that we need and they that weep as though they wept not and they that rejoice as though they rejoice not and they that buy as though they possess not and they that use this world as not abusing it for the fashion of this world passeth away the last thought I've had recently

Hanover 807 hymn number 343 if Jesus is ours we have a true friend whose goodness endures the same to the end our comforts may vary our frames may decline we cannot miscarry our aid is divine a moment he hid the light of his face yet firmly decreed to save us by grace and though he reproved us and still may reprove forever he loved us and ever will love hymn number 343

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The End The End The End name of Jesus. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God with the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.