

# God's perfect timing (Quality: Good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ] In dependence upon the Lord, I ask your prayerful attention to Psalm 105, and especially verse 19.
- But to give the context, I'll read from verses 17 to 20. In Psalm 105. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt with fetters.
- He was laid in iron until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.
- The king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
- But especially verse 19. Until the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him.
- [ 1 : 21 ] This morning we said a few things concerning time in connection with our text from the 10th chapter of Hosea.
- It is time to seek the Lord. But this evening, concerning time in a slightly different aspect.
- You hardly need me to remind you that last night we put the hands of the clock one hour forward. It did not shorten our lives by an hour any more than we lengthened them when we put the clocks back in the autumn.
- But nevertheless, these times we, as it were, change. But God's time is sovereign.
- And we cannot put the hands of our clock forward one second more than his appointed time.
- [ 2 : 36 ] Look at that perhaps more in a moment. But concerning the setting of these words, God had said to Abraham so many years before that his seed should go and serve a nation 400 years.
- And then he would bring them out. If ever there was an example of him 320 in the scriptures of God moving in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform, it was in the case of Joseph.
- Sadly, as we read in 37th chapter of Genesis, Jacob loved Joseph more than all his sons because, not because Joseph had the fear of the Lord, but because he was the son of his old age.
- And as you know, jealousy arose. His brethren could not speak peaceably to him. Then Joseph had those two prophetic dreams, which I want to come to later, that his brethren would bow down to him.
- It seemed unlikely in the land of Canaan. With him in prison in Egypt, it seemed impossible.
- [ 4 : 14 ] But the Lord so ruled that they would sell him to the Midianites, and they would sell him to Potiphar, and that he would be unjustly cast into prison.
- And just in passing, at the Croydon Educational Society on Friday evening, I was speaking of King Saul and David, mentioning, of course, among other things, David's great foe.
- What grace was given to Joseph to stand against the temptation that was placed before him by Potiphar's wife.

And yet David, the man after the Lord's own heart, succumbed to temptation and took Uriah's wife. One left on record for us as an example to keep and to emulate.

The other as an example to beware of. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. And so Joseph was cast into prison.

[ 5 : 29 ] We know he was there more than two years. He interpreted those dreams. He said to the chief butler, when thou art restored, remember me.

We can rightly, as it were, try the handle of a door that is closed against us, but we must not break it down if the Lord has, as it were, locked it against us.

So Joseph did not do wrong, I'm sure, in asking the chief butler to remember him. But did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

For two years. For two years. Then when Pharaoh had his dream, now often we've had to echo the chief butler's words, I do remember my faults this day.

And so Joseph was brought out of the prison, shaved his prison garments, changed, and interpreted the dream. And as we read here, the king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

[ 6 : 52 ] So much, as it were, for the setting of these words. Now, the Lord's people know much of prisons.

I do not mean, of course, physical prisons, though many, especially in past years, have known of them. But remember what prison set for.

No open air prisons in those days. Places of darkness. Confinement. Filth. Separation from loved ones.

How often we come into prisons. But why? But why? If we know our own backsliding hearts, we shall know it is with us, as in Psalm 107, such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound with affliction, and on, because they rebelled against the words of God, and condemned the counsel of the Most High.

Therefore, he brought down their heart with labour. They fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and so on.

[ 8 : 17 ] The majority, I say, of these times we come into such places are because of our own backslidings. But not always.

It wasn't so with Joseph. It wasn't so with Peter, cast into prison. It wasn't so with Paul and Silas at Philippi.

It wasn't so with John the Baptist. He had faithfully reprov'd Herod for taking his brother Philip's wife, Philip still being alive.

Why did they come into prison? Well, of course, those in Scripture are left on record for our instruction, but for their souls personally, was it not to deepen the work in their hearts, just as it was with Job and his great trial?

He was able to say after the trial was sanctified to him, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now, my night, seeth thee.

[ 9 : 31 ] How much more we know of something when we see it as distinct from hearing about it. And what was the effect? Wherefore I abhor myself.

Previously he abhorred his three friends and said sarcastically to them, no doubt wisdom will die with you. And they ceased to answer him because he was righteous in his own eyes.

But now I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. And so, it is often with the Lord's people that he deepens the work through the path of trial.

I think, though of Bunyan's pilgrims, we read how the way became rough and they saw a stile that led over into a meadow where the grass was soft and easy to walk upon and they thought, let us go over into there and when the way is not so rough, we'll rejoin it.

But while they were in the by-path, meadow darkness came upon them and giant despair and held them safely in doubting castle.

[ 11 : 06 ] Think of these things spiritually. And there they were until Christian found the key of promise. And he found that promise opened all the doors.

And so they rejoined that narrow way. Joseph was sent before Jacob and the brethren and their families.

And of course, as Joseph said to his brethren, it was not you that sent me hither, but God, that life should be preserved.

He did not in any way blame his brethren, though they were, of course, guilty. But Joseph looked beyond the appearance and saw that it was all God's work.

No doubt being familiar with that promise to Abraham years before. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.

[ 12 : 25 ] His feet they hurt with fetters. He was laid in iron. Until, until the time.

The time. The time. Not Joseph's time. Joseph's clock was two years fast. Two years fast.

How fast is your clock and mine? We want some blessing to come before God intends to give it. Or we try and put the hands back to defer some trial.

But God's clock keeps perfect time. But how many of the Lord's people have fallen into the error of trying to hasten things up.

Abraham had the promise that in his seed should all nations of the earth be blessed when he was 75 years of age. Already an old man. 11 years passed and still no sign of a son.

[ 13 : 37 ] So it's Sarah's instigation Ishmael was born. 14 more years had to pass when what had seemed unlikely now seemed impossible.

And then Isaac was born. Moses at 40 years of age as Stephen makes clear was quite ready to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt in his own strength.

He thought they would have understood. He was sent to bring them out. But after 40 years in the desert and no doubt that was overruled in instructing him in the paths of the desert then when God sent him Moses felt his insufficiency said I pray thee by him whom thou wilt send I am not eloquent neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant but am slow of speech and of a slow time.

God's time. But notice this important fact and what a wonderful example Joseph's life is to us.

We read at 30 years old he stood before Pharaoh. He could now have sent an army to fetch his brethren and make them bow down to him.

[ 15 : 16 ] But he did not put his hand to him. He waited God's time. Seven years of plenty passed two years of famine and then the brethren came to Joseph and we read they fell on their faces before him did obedience unto him answer.

It was the Lord's time but Joseph had patience to wait for the Lord to fill his word.

He was not permitted to put his hand to it to try and hasten it up. What an example for us.

But as we have left on record here until the time that his word came. The word of the Lord tried him.

He had had and given those prophetic promises all those years before at about the age of 17. 22 years now passed thereabouts and no sign up to that time of their fulfilment.

[ 16 : 50 ] Surely his faith in those promises being given him of God was tried. Indeed do we not read the word of the Lord is a tried word.

And if the Lord has given you a word it will be tried. It may be perhaps in a certain direction.

I think of the disciples. The Lord said to them let us go over unto the other side of the lake. Four of them at least were fishermen.

might have seen the signs of an approaching storm. But they all obeyed. But the wind was contrary. Even in a path of obedience.

And of course was it not so with Jacob. God appeared to Jacob in a dream and said return to thy father's house and I will be with him.

[ 17 : 57 ] Laban pursued after him and would have brought him back and not God prevented him. Esau coming to meet him with 400 men. Trouble with the men of Shechem though that was his fault in building a house there and not continuing in that path of obedience for a season.

But all in the path of obedience. Some have said to me if you only do what the Lord tells you all will be smooth and easy.

Well I have improved it so and neither did the Lord's people in the scriptures and neither were you. And these things try our faith.

Try our faith as to whether that was a commandment from the Lord or whether it was a promise from the Lord that we have not yet seen fulfilled.

And it does so often seem significant to me that Satan's first words in the scripture were when he tried to cast doubt upon whether God had spoken.

[ 19 : 17 ] Satan's first words in the scripture were yea hath God said yea hath God said and if the Lord has given you a promise or a commandment don't be surprised if Satan will say yea hath God said.

Are you sure you didn't dream it? Are you sure it wasn't wishful thinking? We are not ignorant of his devices concerning a certain promise concerning a loved one.

That word in the 119th Psalm is often in one's thoughts and prayers. Remember thy word.

Remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou has caused me to hope. Yes the word was given and we believe the Lord gave us faith to hope in its fulfillment.

Remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou has caused me to hope. this is my comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me until the time that his word came the word of the Lord tried him tried him.

[ 21 : 11 ] Peter speaks in his first epistle of that trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes though it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ whom having not seen ye love and son.

There is that need before a season to be in heaviness through manifold temptations.

I often have thought of that text when we've looked at an engine a car engine or tractor engine seeing the induction manifold or the exhaust manifold many branches as it were from one place manifold temptations and that word tries the soul but I want also to look at this aspect concerning being in spiritual presence had time permitted I would have read psalm 142 the psalm we are told of David when he was in the cave Saul and his army came also into the cave and David and his men hid at the sides and in that psalm it concludes bring my soul out of prison why when you and I may feel to be in darkness in lack of liberty separated from loved ones and so on we long to be brought out but why why always look well to your motives if we have the right motive our motive will be that of

David's bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy name that I may praise thy name for having mercy upon me and for bringing me out of darkness into light following from that I remind you of the case of Lazarus in John 11 Lazarus the Lord said plainly Lazarus is dead and the Lord said roll away the stone Martha said by this time Lord he stinketh he had been dead three days said I not unto thee thou if thou was believed thou should see the glory of God the hymn writer put it like this and though in massive fetters bound to

God's free grace of foe the gospel has a joyful sin lose him and let him go Lazarus in that tomb and without doubt amongst the dead it was a remarkable thing specifically recorded in the case of the Lord that he was buried in a tomb wherein never before man had been laid so often we read a person was buried with their fathers the bones of course afterwards were gathered and put in an ossery as we saw in the land of Israel without doubt others would have been in that tomb but the word was to one person only not all of you come out but Lazarus come forth light you see had now shone in that tomb when the stone was rolled away and is not that the first thing that we read in the first chapter of Genesis that followed the moving of the spirit upon the face of the waters

[ 25 : 57 ] God said let there be light and there was light how it sets forth the work of grace in the newborn soul if you and I had been there that first day and looked about us what would we have seen we would have seen no sign of life no animal still less mankind not a tree not a blade of grass we would have seen no sign of life and yet for us to be there and to see the deadness proves that there was life there or we would not have seen the deadness and so it is when that light shines into the soul the soul then feels their deadness but for them to feel their deadness proves they are alive for the dead know not anything but the work of grace once begun is carried on

Lazarus come forth and he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot and his face covered with a napkin what a miracle that he came forth though in that condition he was now revealed to those who loved him how we would rejoice for those we love and pray for to see them brought forth from the abode of the dead though they may still be bound hand and foot though they still may not see Christ as their savior but then the command is given loose him and let him go and so Lazarus removed from his bonds could walk his napkin removed from his face he could now see

Jesus he could now feed and so on indeed in the next chapter we read how Lazarus was amongst those that sat at meet with the Lord Jesus before the Passover as you know there was that triumphant entry into Jerusalem and that prophecy in Zechariah had to be fulfilled and the

Lord sent two of his disciples and said ye shall find an ass and a colt with them loose them and bring them unto me and if any man shall say unto you say ought unto you ye shall say the Lord hath need of them and straightway he will send you say they could not come to the Lord in their own power until the Lord through his disciples caused them to be loosed and brought to him the Lord said in John 6 no man can come unto me except the father which hath sent me draw him again we read in one of the minor prophets of being drawn with the threefold coin often think of it when we see a frayed rope invariably made of three strands natural reason of course for it but does it not set forth the work of the trinity all used in the drawing of souls to

Jesus Christ bring them unto me the Lord hath need of them until the time that his word came but let us look a bit more closely at his word the Lord's word with the word of a king there is power in those days of course especially when the king had absolute control over all his servants could appoint one as Pharaoh did to his butlership and cause the other to be hung his word how the words of men decay and be yet forgotten but as we read in

[ 31 : 59 ] Isaiah quoted of course in Peter the grass withereth the flower fadeth but by contrast the word of the Lord endureth forever notice the small print it doesn't just say the word of the Lord will continue forever but endureth forever the thing may continue even if it has no opposition but where we read the word endearing means continuing despite opposition the word of the Lord endureth forever and this word of the Lord is a tried word it is his word that is used for the most part in the calling by grace of his dead elect and convincing them of their sins such as thing as the soul that sinneth it shall die

I remember when only a small child I cannot remember what I had done wrong but I remember my dear mother saying to me be sure your sin will find you out it had done on that occasion and no doubt has done many times since the word of the Lord like arrows piercing to the heart or rather as we read in Hebrews 3 or 4 where the word of God is quick meaning of course living the old English word for living is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword a two-edged sword can of course penetrate and pierce sharper than a single-edged sword but we might liken it of course to matters in providential matters and to spiritual sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit of the joints and marrow and is a designer of the thoughts and intends the motives of the harm in that connection

I think of that occasion in the book of Judges where we read of Ehud the judge at that time of the children of Israel and he went to Eglon the king of Moab and he said I have a message from God unto thee and he thrust in the sword and Eglon could by no means draw me down one feels that often sets forth that word of conviction that the Lord uses with his people in killing them to all hope of salvation in their own works Ehud's sword could not be drawn out often when that word of conviction enters the soul that person may as I touched upon this morning endeavour by their own good works to obtain salvation or they may be tempted to fill their lives with the worldlings pleasures to drown it as it were or other things in intoxicating liquor and so on but if it is a word from the

Lord it cannot be withdrawn and it will kill them in themselves the apostle writing to the Romans writes I was alive without the law once thinking his salvation would depend upon his own works but when the commandment came sin revived and I died died to all hope of salvation in those own works of which he speaks elsewhere until the time that his word came the word of the Lord tried him now this pilgrimage journey is a pilgrimage journey more or less of trials most of the while life indeed as

Bunyan writes in the pilgrim's progress Christians say scarce one trouble hath him left another doth him seize but is it not true that trials give new life to prayer lay us low and keep us there the poet put it this way it was a time when I had to remain silent I had not proved how treacherous the calm was but we proved since he was right more the treacherous calm I dread than bellows bursting all my hair but I say more or less this pilgrimage journey will be a journey of trial until the king sends and loses us from this poor dying world and the king sent and loosed him even the ruler of his people and let him go free made him lord of his house and so on we read of those kings of those thrones that are laid up for the lord's people and those crowns it is true of course as in revelation they will cast those crowns before him guess but they are loosed from all these things here below but in these things as the apostle writes are we thankful for our trials do you think as

[ 39 : 08 ] Joseph looked back over his life when he gave by faith commandment concerning his bones do you think he wanted one thing ordered do you think he really wished that time in prison had been one day less than he was and of course it was in all what change in one day from being bound in the person to being the second ruler in the kingdom all in one day all in one day but would he want one thing old I'm sure Joseph knew that which the apostle wrote to the Romans all things not just the smooth and pleasant but the bitter the trials the chastening all things work together for good not for all mankind but for them that love

God who are the called according to his purpose but what faith is needed in these things have you noticed in Genesis when we read of the nine brethren for Benjamin had not gone down Simeon was left bound and Joseph was of course in Egypt the nine brethren returned and said they would not go down to Egypt again except they took Benjamin with them Jacob said his name had been changed from Jacob to Israel years before but the Holy Spirit left on record on that occasion that it was Jacob not Israel Jacob speak the old nature for the moment gained the upper hand unbelief rose up Joseph is not

Simeon is not and he will take Benjamin from him all these things are against me that's how they looked but later in Egypt when Joseph brought his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh to their grandfather who were speaking then not Jacob but the new man of grace Israel said I had not thought to see thy face and no God hath shown me also thy seed he is able to do far more abundantly than we are able to ask or even think but what grace is needed to thank him for our trials the apostle writes we glory in tribulations also knowing that tribulation worketh patience patience experience experience hope and hope maketh not a shame because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts well we leave these thoughts what a mercy if like

Joseph we have grace to wait his appointed time but waiting in faith nothing doubting that in the Lord's time not in ours but in his time it will be fulfilled by you and I lay to heart this example of Joseph may he forgive anything amiss Amen hymn number 300 tune 219 300 how simple are thy children Lord unskilled in all in what they pray full off they lift a hearty word yet know not what they say hymn 300 tune 219

Amen. Amen.

[ 44 : 50 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 49 : 02 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. God, may we have that faith and patience so needful in this pilgrimage.

May the time come when thou, the King, will send and lose us, and that we may be immediately in thy presence forever and forever.

Do forgive anything amiss. Be with us as we go our various ways. Spare us to meet together again in the appointed time, if it be thy will.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, the communion of the Spirit, be with us.

Amen.