

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: IT IS YET DAY

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 64:5

Behold, now it is called today (until the coming of the Son of Man), and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned (at his coming); for after today cometh the burning: this is speaking after the manner of the Lord; for verily I say, Tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today.

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It is yet day when all can work. The night will come when for many of my people opportunity to assist will have passed. *DEC 142:5b*

Robert Service makes use of an old proverb in one of his poems to exclaim:

Ah! the clock is always slow  
It is later than you think.

No matter how long we live, there never seems to be quite enough time to complete all the things we want to do. Even when the body becomes old and worn, and no longer responsive to the will of the spirit, most men and women wish that they could finish just one more project, take just one more trip, do some one more thing which they have always wanted to do, but never yet found time to do. The longer we live, the more things we see to be done and the less time we have remaining to do them. The longer we live, the better we know how to do the things we want to do, but still the time in which to do them becomes less and less. Many philosophers have observed that by the time we have gained enough experience to know how to live, our time is up, and life is gone.

The amount of time we are allotted on earth is not important. Some men have done more with twenty or thirty short years than many others have done with seventy or eighty or ninety. We all know that we could use more time that we know we will get. The important thing is how we use the time we have. The use we make of time indicates our capacity for using eternity, and determines our worthiness to receive eternal life in which there shall be unending opportunity to complete all the unfinished tasks of this earthly life.

This life is a probationary state, a time to prepare to meet God; it is a time to prepare for eternity. But if we do not use our day of preparation, then when the night of death comes wherein there can be no labor performed, our day of opportunity is passed. This life is our time of probation. Whether long or short, it is the time which we repent of all the sinful tendencies which we inherit with the flesh, in which we learn to live happily, productively, and harmoniously with God and with our neighbor. We are to be judged in the final judgment according to the works done in the flesh during this time of probation. When the night of death comes, there will be no further opportunity to change the record of our lives, or of our works. On that record hangs our eternal destiny. One of the Book of Mormon writers expresses the plight of the procrastinating, unrepentant man thus: "As he has desired to do evil all the day long, even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh." (Alma 19:68)

If you procrastinate the time of your probation, the time lost can never be devoted to good. It is gone, lost forever, wasted, mis-spent on evil or on frivolity which has no lasting value. If you spend the days of your probation growing tares, you will never have a harvest of wheat. If you postpone repentance until tomorrow, an ancient Jewish rabbi has said that you have one more day to repent of, and one less day in which to repent. The man who does not repent until he is forced to do so by the imminence of death, probably would not repent

then if he could postpone the process any longer; and therefore he is not repentant at all. He does not show a quality of life which is worthy of being perpetuated through eternity.

God will temper justice with mercy for those who do the best they can with what they know and have. When men do not know his law, or when they have never had an opportunity to accept the salvation of his Son, a just and merciful God will provide opportunity for them in the spirit world to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, if they have lived up to the best light and knowledge they have, and manifested a desire for a better life. But even those who have opportunity to accept Christ through preaching to the spirits in prison cannot change the record of their lives on earth -- the deeds done in the flesh-- the use they made of their days of their probation before the night of death came. For those who have known the law of God, who have had opportunity to accept Christ as Savior, and have willfully and rebelliously rejected him, can there be a second chance? Again the Book of Mormon has a word of warning: "Wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God .... and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state." (II Nephi 6:56)

Even for Jesus, the time of his earthly probation was short -- shorter than for most of us. He recognized the shortness of his earthly day in this saying recorded by John (9:4) "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work." We have no record in scripture of Jesus wasting time, or evading duty, or postponing until tomorrow what ought to be done today. He made wise and full use of every moment of his period of probation here on earth, with full realization that time is limited -- that we work during the day because a night is coming in which no man can work.

Not only for individual men, but for nations, and for the world, time is also limited. The clock is always slow. It is always later than you think. There is a tendency among evil men and evil peoples and nations to believe that they can go on indefinitely in their evil ways --that

time is unlimited. But evil has within itself the seeds of its own destruction. When peoples or nations, as well as individual men, continue long enough in evil, the evil destroys them; the night of destruction comes.

Ever since the close of World War II statesmen, churchmen, educators, scientists, military men, philosophers, and historians have been warning us that it is later than we think -- that men now possess the power to destroy the human race -- that the time is short in which to make the decision which will save the world or plunge it onward to ruin. For there is a point of no return in the affairs of both men and nations -- a point when the night descends, and when all opportunity for repentance or turning back is passed, when no further work can be done. A boat drifting down the Niagara River towards the falls can be turned back -- up to a certain point; but at that point the power of the river becomes greater than the power propelling the boat; the river current takes over control and drags the boat inevitably towards the falls and certain destruction. Has our own civilization gone too far? Is there yet time to turn back? Or is the night drawing near, when it will be everlastingly too late?

In the scripture which we have read from the Doctrine and Covenants, "today" is used to mean the period until the coming of the Son of Man in glory and in judgment. As long as Jesus delays his coming, we may yet work; we may yet repent and change our ways, individually and nationally. When Jesus comes, it will be too late for repentance. It will be too late to begin the processes of righteousness that after due time bring a ripening of the fruits of righteousness, because men do not plant seeds and reap the harvest next day. At Jesus' coming the fruits of long continued wickedness will be burned as tares, or as stubble. It will be too late to weed them up and plant good grain and wait for its harvest. "Tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of hosts; and I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today."