

November 2017 Article: "Two Ways of Telling Time"

As colorful and expressive as the English Language can be, there are certain biblical concepts that it cannot fully express in the way that the original languages of the Bible are able to do. Take, for example, the word that we translate as "time". Biblical Greek has two different words for this. The first is *chronos*. This word describes how time unfolds in a successive order of seconds, minutes, and hours; days, weeks, months, and years. From *chronos* we get English words like chronic, chronicle, and chronology.

But then, there is the second word: *Kairos*. This word speaks of a right, proper, and favorable time for an event to take place. In Mark 1:15, Jesus said, "The time (*Kairos*) has been fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God draws near. Repent and believe the Gospel." This Gospel message has brought to us, as 1 Peter 1:5 says, "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (*Kairos*)"—that is, when Jesus comes again in glory.

In the chronological month of November, we traditionally focus upon the portions of Scripture that speak of the events leading up to that last time and Our Lord's glorious return. With each passing year, that *kairos* moment grows ever closer. Many, in view of the events of our turbulent world, believe that we are on the very doorstep of Jesus' return. But the disciples in the first century and Martin Luther in the 1500's also believed in an imminent return of Christ.

The truth is, as Jesus Himself said, we do not know the day or the hour of His return (Matthew 24:36). We also don't know of the day and the hour when each one of us, as individuals, will be called from this present world and into eternity. As our appointed readings for this coming month will show us, we are all called to be watchful and ready for that *kairos* moment—both for the world and for each of us—that is known to God alone. Our lives are to be one of continual response to Jesus' call to "repent and believe the Gospel."

In the chronological unfolding of our partnership of pastor and congregations we will do many things together. There will be worship services and Bible studies. There will be meetings, social interactions, and personal visits. But however long our *chronos* together might be, may we live and act in that *kairos* that we share amongst ourselves and that we hopefully bring to many others. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Behold, now is the acceptable time (*kairos*)! Behold, now is the day of salvation!" May we live in and share this great salvation that Christ has first brought to us!

Your Brother in Christ, Pastor Bill