

- I. Procrastinating Application; Sunday, November 16,  
2014 (Sunnyslope)

Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be  
pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

- A. "Good morning, church!"
- B. In our house, our home, we have a main level, a front room you enter into from the front door
1. And there's a staircase just inward of a hallway that leads to a downstairs area
    - a) Along the top edge of the staircase is a flat area, a ledge, that's several inches deep and several feet long
    - b) I'll come back to that ledge in a minute
  2. The downstairs area has several rooms
    - a) Sharalyn's office
    - b) Our rec room
    - c) And the library
  3. The upstairs front room has several windows, 4 of which are in the ceiling
    - a) So there's a great deal of natural light on sunny days
    - b) As a result, reading in the upstairs front room is often preferred to reading in the library, which is often dark
    - c) So books often find themselves upstairs
  4. Because the house's front door enters into this upstairs main room...
    - a) Quite often there would be times when we would come into the upstairs room carrying mail that needed to go to Sharalyn's office

- b) Other times people would be reading books when dinner time approached, and so the books would need to go back down to the library
- 5. In the interests of saving a little time, papers that should go to Sharalyn's office and books that should go to the library were deposited on that ledge by the stairs
  - a) The problem is that the papers and books wouldn't usually leave the ledge
  - b) Papers and books would pile up
  - c) It became a place to dump things
- 6. And so initially as a joke, I started calling it the "Shelf of Procrastination"
  - a) And the name stuck
  - b) As a family, we had to work hard to change our habit of using the Shelf of Procrastination
  - c) It was just too tempting to drop something there instead of taking care of it properly right away
- 7. We used the Shelf of Procrastination as a way to avoid having to take care of things in the moment
  - a) Our faulty thinking was that we'd take care of the things later, when we were heading downstairs anyway
  - b) But rarely did this actually happen
  - c) Instead, the shelf was just an excuse to avoid getting things done that needed to be done
- C. When I was a child, I loved to read fantasy stories from authors like C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien

1. One such story was about a band of adventuring youngsters from a medieval country that traveled north...
  - a) ...out of the lands inhabited by humans...
  - b) ...and into the lands inhabited by elves
2. Along the journey, the band encountered dangers and snares...
3. ...and so by the time they reached the elven lands, they were in need of provisions and repairs to their swords and shields
4. One member had broken his sword and needed it mended
5. Now in this story, the elves lived for thousands of years (as the norm)
  - a) You might think this would make the elves very wise
  - b) Very helpful, compassionate
  - c) That in seeing this rag-tag group of youngsters in desperate need, the elves would leap to their aid
  - d) The elves, being able to live so long, of course developed great skill at sword-making and restoring
6. But as it turns out, at least in this story, the elves, being that they lived so long, were extremely gifted at procrastination
  - a) Why do today what could be done tomorrow?
  - b) We live for thousands of years, what's one more day going to matter?
  - c) Consequently, the sword restoration master, upon examination of the broken sword, said he might get around to fixing it in a few months

7. The elven kingdom, far from being a utopian community, was in shambles

a) Most elves just sat around all day

b) Nothing much ever got accomplished

II. Sometimes I wonder if we aren't too much different than the elves in that story: Do we think we live for so many days that we think there's no real negative consequences of procrastination?

A. I wonder if we hear wisdom, things that we should do to make our lives better...

1. ...and think, "Yes, that's true; that's correct; I should do that or do something about that"

2. But then we don't do anything; we don't follow-through

B. What are some things we procrastinate on?

1. USA Today once reported on a series of things people typically procrastinate on:

a) House chores/yard work: 47%

b) Holiday gift shopping: 43%

c) Making doctor/dentist appointments: 35%

d) Changing oil in the car: 29%

2. Do we also procrastinate on the application of wisdom?

a) Do we read Scripture, notice a lesson we should apply, perhaps even think to ourselves, "yes, I should apply that principle," but then never seem to get around to it?

b) Do we come to church Sundays, listen to a sermon, maybe (just in the rarest of cases) we hear something that reminds us of something we should do, change, apply...

c) ...but then we drive home, and we fall victim to distractions

C. Is our problem that we don't have access to wisdom, that we don't hear wisdom, that we don't read wisdom...?

1. ...or is our problem that we don't apply the wisdom, that we don't follow-through?

D. But why? Why would we know what we should do, and yet we don't?

1. Is it because we don't have a sense of urgency?

2. Is it because we, like the elves, think there's no real harm in doing tomorrow what we could do today?

3. The problem, though, is that the work that's always postponed for tomorrow never happens; which means the rewards and blessings that result from that work never arrive

III. Let's take a look at a verse that, in a way, calls us away from procrastination, away from the idea of procrastinating the application of God's wisdom

2 Corinthians 6:1-2

<sup>1</sup>As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

A. Look first at verse 1 wherein Paul instructs not to receive God's grace in vain

1. What does that mean?

2. What is God's grace?

- a) First, it means that we are saved through the justifying atonement of Christ despite our never being able to earn it

Titus 3:4-6

<sup>4</sup>But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

- b) Second, we will be receivers of God's wisdom, if only we would ask, despite our never being worthy of it

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

- c) And third, we have access to being with God, God indwelling within us, even now, right now, in this life, this very moment

Romans 8:9

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ

- 3. What does receiving God's grace in vein mean?
  - a) Could it mean that we, as created humans, have access to these 3 blessings (and many more)...
  - b) ...and yet we procrastinate applying for these blessings?

- B. Now look at the very last phrase from the 2 Corinthians reference

2 Corinthians 6:2b

I tell you, *now* is the time of God's favor, *now* is the day of salvation.

- 1. Do you hear the sense of urgency in Paul's writing?

2. *Now* is the time of God's favor
  - a) *Now* is when we can be richly enveloped by God's love
  - b) *Now* is when we can receive God's wisdom
  - c) *Now* is when we can walk with God like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden...
  - d) ...because *now* is when the Holy Spirit is available to us
3. *Now* is the day of salvation
  - a) *Now* is when we can be transformed by the power of God
  - b) *Now* is when we can be lifted from the wages of sin, which is death
  - c) *Now* is when we can live a life that's daily directed and informed by God's will

#### IV. Procrastination is a form a debt

- A. When we buy something on a credit card, we build up for ourselves monetary debt that we have to pay off with greater funds in the future
  1. When we procrastinate, we build up for ourselves work debt that we have to pay off with greater work in the future
  2. In the same way that financial debt can snowball and become overwhelming, so too can procrastination debt snowball and become overwhelming
  3. In both cases, we can find ourselves paralyzed by our debt
- B. What Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 6 is the truth that *now* is the time of God's favor
  1. Blessings are available *now* to us, if only we would not procrastinate on putting the wisdom we have from Scripture into practice

2. When we put off the application of God's wisdom, when we procrastinate following God's call, we add to ourselves a form of spiritual debt
  3. And that spiritual debt can snowball and become overwhelming
  4. We can find ourselves paralyzed spiritually
  5. Stuck in a place where we no longer feel comfortable following God
- C. We of course need to be *constantly* in communion with God, always seeking after Him, never procrastinating, thinking we'll pray maybe tomorrow
- D. What sort of things do you procrastinate on?
1. Things around the house
  2. Projects
  3. Appointments
  4. Relationships
- E. What about things of a spiritual nature?
1. Are there lessons, wisdom, teachings from God that we know are good and right for us to do...
  2. ...but we just haven't devoted ourselves fully to doing these
  3. Not so much because we don't think these things are good and right for us to do...
  4. ...but rather because we've just procrastinated
- F. Why wait any longer?
- G. Why receive God's grace in vain?
- H. Why procrastinate and delay the rewards, the fruits, and the blessing that come from the application of God's wisdom?

I. I tell you, *now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

J. Amen.