

“Enough...The Hour Has Come!”

And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. (Mark 14:41a)

Will you pray with me...Heavenly Father, come to us in this moment and quiet our minds, still our hearts and make us attentive to Your Word. In the name of Christ. Amen.

Dear Friends in Christ,

It's called an hourglass, though you can buy them in shorter segments of time. I thought I might turn it over and use it as my stopwatch for tonight's sermon, giving me at least an hour to preach! The first hourglass, or sand clock, actually goes all the way back to the 1300's, and found its place as an accurate way of keeping track of time. The hourglass was used on sea-faring vessels, because neither the water's humidity nor the ship's bobbing waves interfered with the steady movement of the sand. Hourglasses were very helpful in setting aside important blocks of time, like the canonical hours of prayer in a monastery, or charting the time between the critical watches on board a ship. Hourglasses were a poor person's timepiece – no iPhone alarms back then - a kind of clock for everyone, and by the end of the 14th century they were used in workplaces, churches, and kitchens. Interestingly, the hourglass also became a universal symbol for death, a metaphor for the inevitable “*running-out-of-the-sands-of-time*” when a person faces “*their last hour!*”¹

Perhaps an hourglass would have been helpful to the disciples that night in the Garden of Gethsemane; something to keep them focused, alert, awake, watchful and praying as the

sands of time moved Jesus closer and closer to His “*hour!*” Our Redeemer’s conflict in that Garden was indeed a troubled, overwhelming and stressful time, Jesus praying as usual - preparing not only His soul, but His disciples for the journey ahead. No wonder He was disappointed to find them sleeping instead of praying because shortly they would give in to the very temptations predicted - one betraying Him, one denying Him and every one of them deserting him and fleeing when the going got tough! Indeed, “*the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!*”

But the third time Jesus finds them sleeping, he simply says, “*Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough, because **the hour has come!***” Typically, we preachers harp on the “*enough*” as though Jesus was still an angry, frustrated, and ticked off mentor; his followers failing this prayerful test of loyalty and faithfulness. We make Jesus sound like an exasperated parent yelling at the kids who are so hard to wake up in the morning: “*Enough of this laziness, now get out of bed right now, no more sleeping or you’re going to be late for school and grounded forever!*” Yet Mark alone uses the term “*enough*” in the Gethsemane text; and it’s not a scolding word, but a declaration from the Son of God: “*It’s time. It is enough, no more delay, because my hour has come!*”

Jesus had spoken about this “*hour*” many times before, first to his mother, Mary at the Wedding at Cana, when she said, “*They have no wine.*” Jesus made it clear to her that the Son of Man was more than a miracle vintner of wine, saying: “*Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.*” (John 2:3-4) When the Jews were seeking to arrest Jesus because of His teachings as the Son of God, John’s Gospel records: “*But no one arrested Him because his hour had not yet come.*” (John 8:20) Right after Palm Sunday, when Andrew and Phillip told Jesus some Greeks wanted to see Him, Christ answered, “*The*

hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" (John 12:23, 27-28a)

That conflicted; troublesome, raw and real experience in the Garden of Gethsemane was, you see, the final interlude to the Passion of Jesus, God's love for the world so great that He would give His Son to die on Calvary's Cross, redeeming us from sin and death. It was for boastful, sleepy, inconsistent, questioning, doubting, weak, sinful and timid followers who could not "*watch with Him one hour*" that Jesus was led away from the Mount of Olives, fulfilling the Father's will and glorifying His Name. The impact is captured so powerfully in the lyrics:

*Deceived by a friend, a follower gone amiss
Abandoned by all, betrayed by a kiss,
Denounced and rejected, Shrouded in loss
Jesus must now face the cross*

*The day has arrived, the time is at hand
The moment is waiting for the Son of Man
Betrayal, rejection, God's will to be done
Behold the hour is come.²*

I can no longer look at this hourglass, or set my alarm for the hour to awake without a deeper awareness of what Jesus has done to save me from my sins. His journey to Gethsemane's Garden, Calvary's Cross and Golgotha's Hill was not easy and how clearly we see our Redeemer's Conflict in this season of Lent. I am identified with those disciples – as are you - alerted to our failure to watch and pray; convicted of a weak spirit and willing flesh; sin revealed; reminded how quickly and easily we give in to temptation. We cannot do enough praying, enough

watching. We will never be good enough to merit the grace and mercy of God, which should make us so grateful tonight that Jesus declares to His sleepy followers: *“It is enough; the hour has come.”*

Again, I’m reminded of a hymn:

*My faith has found a resting place,
Not in device or creed;
I trust the ever-living One,
His wounds for me shall plead.*

*I need no other argument,
I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died,
And that He died for me.*

We never know, do we, when the inevitable *“running-out-of-the-sands-of-time”* comes, and a person faces *“their last hour!”* Our community is in mourning at the tragic, accidental death of a young teenage girl; our nation is filled with outrage, chanting *“no more”* as another senseless school shooting sparks anger and overwhelming grief; our world is shocked at Syrian bombs and toxic gas raining down on innocent children and families; our own march to doctors, specialists and hospitals we pray might keep us alive longer, but one day *“your hour”* and *“my time”* will come!

“Thanks be to God,” we do not face such *“hours”* alone - no matter the tragic intrusion, painful grief or lingering loss of death. *“We do not sorrow”* the Bible teaches, *“as those without hope,”* because Jesus said, *“It is enough; my hour has come!”* We are, as Paul writes in the Epistle lesson, *“Heirs of Christ, having received [in our baptism] the spirit of adoption as his children, by whom we cry “Abba Father!”* Jesus the Good

Shepherd has already been “*through the valleys of the shadows of death*” for us and promises to be “*with us*” no matter the hour or day or circumstance! Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the World has lived the perfect life we couldn’t, dying on Calvary’s Cross to defeat sin; rising on Easter morn to overcome death, promising everlasting life to all who believe! So, let there be no sleepers in this Garden we call Hope tonight...only believers, “*saved by grace through faith*” in Christ...and Christ alone!

Oh, and one more thing, [I’ve still got some time!] whether young or old, tell your spouse or parents, or children/grandchildren, friends and family that you love them; and make sure before you go to bed tonight that you pray. This one, learned as a child still works well:

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord, my soul will take.*

Or, the version I like to recite:

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I KNOW the Lord my soul will keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I KNOW the Lord, my soul will take...because Jesus that night in the Garden, said: “It is enough; the hour has come.”*

AMEN!

¹ Adapted from Balmer, R. T., The Operation of Sand Clocks and Their Medieval Development, *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1978, pp. 625-632

²Lyrics by John Parker, words by Lloyd Lawson, Copyright 2002 by Brekenhorst Press. All rights reserved.