

“Forsake foolishness that you may live.” As incredulous as I was, I had difficulty pulling myself away from watching the daredevil stunt. I had come across a series of videos that I presumed were doctored, but only realized later were very real. They depict individuals climbing onto construction cranes of skyscrapers over 1000 ft. tall, scaling abandoned smokestacks and other edifices, without safety gear, and even dangling from the edge, and in one case, hanging from just one hand.

I was speechless, until another helped me understand this phenomenon—they are addicted to adrenaline rush. These twenty-somethings, talented climbers though they may be, are thrill-seekers. One young man was even philosophical in his self-defense. “I did not go up there to die; I went up there to live.” It suddenly became clear. For these select people, life is effectively and functionally a series of experiences. And as the experiences become more and more dangerous, they need new fuel, new experiences, in order to keep the adrenaline flowing.

I was not surprised to learn that the man from whom I quoted above went “offline” You Tube for a period of nine months, his fans wondering what happened to him. No, he had not died, but finally shared about his depression and that he needed to step back and re-evaluate his life.

I say this by way of a long introduction, not to call out any individuals, but rather to reveal what is beneath the surface, sometimes, just below the surface. From where or from whom do we derive ultimate meaning? How do we define ourselves? Where do we find meaning?

“Watch carefully how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most out of opportunity, because the days are evil.” St. Paul clearly advises us to capitalize on our opportunity. What might he mean? Biblical Greek has several words for time. The one used here is **καιρόν** “kairon” which essentially means a particular moment in time, a fitting season or opportunity. It is definitely something other than mere

chronological time. It is a “seize the moment” kind of time. The context implies “redeeming the time,” that is, “buying back the time.” This implies that somehow our key moments in time are trapped unless we allow the Lord to release them through His grace.

Think about it. The average American has the television turned on for approximately 24 hours per week. I understand that at times it is merely in the background while you are doing something else. However, that is still nearly four hours per day. That is time you will never get back. It is not time spent reading a good book, meditating on Scripture passage, praying a decade of the Rosary, engaging your spouse in a discussion, etc.

How do we manage the *Kairos* times, the opportunity, that moment in time that will not return again? In his commentary on this passage in Ephesians, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that on certain occasions someone “redeems his property by offering a gift or something else for it; for instance, someone is said to compensate for a grievance he caused by offering a gift or money.”

In this sense then, St. Paul would be saying: “The whole of time is now a time of deception, hence you should be *redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*”<sup>1</sup> He is exhorting his readers to avoid the depravity of the days, and seize the moment for God here and now, without delay. In other words why waste time?

Reputable surveys show that men spend more time in socializing and communicating than they do in religiously based activities.<sup>2</sup> This is quite revealing. Granted, these other activities are important, especially for our health and well-being. There is nothing wrong with these activities. However, when activities that are related to our faith are so much farther down the list, our priorities speak volumes.

Only when we truly understand the will of the Lord in our lives, do we begin to find lasting meaning. This takes effort on our part. It takes work.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on Ephesians, Chapter 5, Lecture 6.

<sup>2</sup> American Time Use Survey Summary-Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017 annual averages: socializing and communicating (1.81 hours) and exercising (1.73 hours) vs. religious activities. (1.54 hours)

It also takes quiet time before the Lord to hear His voice, to discern His will for our lives.

There is too much at stake. We should use the precious time we have for good, for it is fleeting. I saw a chart indicating that 71% of Americans (and 84% of the world's population) are younger than I am. Time is ticking. What are we waiting for?