

February 28, 2021

# CELEBRATING EASTER IN A PANDEMIC WORLD

**"PREPARATION: TIME"**

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**JOHN 15:4-5 (ESV)**

**INSIGHT:** "All of us have been given a gift of time, at least time that is more ours to do as we please, than ever before...consider how easy it's been for us squander that time."

## **I. THE CHALLENGE OF TIME**

**QUESTION:** Did we use our time strategically in ways that served our emotional and spiritual health?

**QUESTION:** Can you honestly say that you have private, genuine worship at least weekly?

**INSIGHT:** It is the nature of this pandemic not to generate spiritual renewal, but spiritual drift.

**DECLARATION:** The times we are living in are no excuse to drift away from God.

**INSIGHT:** The temptation of days like this will always be to focus on the circumstances, rather than the time itself. Excerpt from The Divine Conspiracy by Dallas Willard: "We are concerned with the circumstances we are living under. But that isn't what the Christian lives under. We don't live under circumstances; we live under the Father!"

**INSIGHT:** The times of our lives are not meant to be influenced by circumstances of our days but by our Father.

**INSIGHT:** The difficulty level for you to continue in the fast is an indicator of the strength of your flesh and the weakness of your spirit...it also indicates that the last twelve months have taken their toll on you spiritually.

## **II. THE JESUS EFFECT**

**TRUTH:** Jesus was intentional in how He began every single day:

1. Set time
2. A solitary, quiet place
3. Prayer
4. Mark 1:35

**TRUTH:** Morning prayer and scripture time were part of the rhythms of Christ's spiritual life (Luke 5:16 NCV).

### III. THE IMPACT OF TIME WITH THE FATHER, Mark 1:35, 39 (NIV)

The impact of His morning time showed itself in three distinct ways, and prayer and Bible reading can have the same impact on your life:

1. Jesus became redirected, "Let us go somewhere else."
2. Jesus became refueled, "...so I can preach."
3. Jesus became resolved, "That is why I have come."

#### **"7 MINUTES WITH GOD":**

1. Set a time.
2. Find a place.
3. Come prepared.
4. :30 = preparation
5. 4:00 = Read the Bible.
6. 2:30 = Pray.

#### **"HOW TO PRAY"**

Follow a well-known acrostic: A-C-T-S:

"A" = Adoration

"C" = Confession

"T" = Thanksgiving

"S" = Supply

**Samuel Chadwick:** "It would revolutionize the lives of most people if they were shut in with God in some secret place for half an hour a day."

**PRAYER:** May 2021 not be remembered as a year of loss and grief, but God's blessings. May 2021 be a year spent under the Father!