

Text: I Peter 5:6-11

Theme: God's Perfect Moment

May 28, 2017

Have you ever found yourself in the right place at just the right time? Ever been where you needed to be when you needed to be there or encountered a moment when everything seemed to come together at just the right time for your benefit? Most of us likely find ourselves saying, "Maybe once; possibly twice, but I sure wish it would happen more often. What I wouldn't give for the perfect moment!" As we look at our text, we're assured that there are perfect moments, that, in God's proper time, great things always happen.

I. At this moment, God is preparing us for His next perfect moment. A. But we often forget that He is preparing us. 1. We forget because we encounter suffering. We don't like suffering; we'd do almost anything to avoid it. Along with its pain, suffering is the great distracter. When you smash your thumb with a hammer, doesn't it distract you, interrupt your focus, and derail you from the task at hand? Like it or not, it happens and, as it occurs, we become brain dead to the facts we've known since we were kids. As that occurs, we find ourselves in a fog, unable to realize or remember that God is preparing us for His next perfect moment.

2. We forget because we are overwhelmed with anxieties. Why does Jesus encourage us to cast all our anxieties on Him? Is it because our lives are almost perfect and getting rid of those few anxieties would make life great? Absolutely not! If anxieties could be measured in pounds, how many pounds would any one of us lose if God suddenly removed all our anxieties? Talk about a great weight loss program! We'd be amazed at the weight we would lose. Jesus calls us to cast all our cares on Him because He knows we are carrying a bucket load of cares and those cares create interference by leading our brain to focus on us instead of God's plans.

3. We forget He is preparing us because the devil is continually tormenting us. Suppose you could see the devil, that God would allow you to see every moment the devil uses in a single day to test and torment your faith. How many events would you see? One or two, a handful, or more than you could list on a sheet of paper? The devil doesn't care about you, your well-being, or your faith. His only goal is to destroy your faith. Because the devil is constantly functioning in destruction mode, it's easy for us to get distracted, to forget what we know, to believe that God isn't going to come through for us when we need Him most.

B. Although we are forgetful, what does God promise to do in His perfect moment? 1. He will restore us. Peter writes, "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace will Himself restore you." How many of you have restored an old car or tractor or a piece of furniture? God is in the restoration business. His most important restoration work is to provide assurance of forgiveness. As God says, "I forgive you," He enables you to pick up the pieces, to refocus on living, to move beyond the pain caused by the words and actions of others, and to set aside our burden of guilt. As that occurs, we will see the benefits of His next perfect moment.

2. In God's next perfect moment, He will strengthen us. How many of you can lift a thousand pounds with one hand? When we speak of strength in that manner, we know all about weakness. The strength God offers is more valuable than

physical strength. He empowers us with strength to face our next challenge, our next encounter with the devil, our next imperfect moment, our next moment of frustration, our next heartache, our next confusing moment. Whatever is coming next, God's perfect moment will give you the strength to face it. That strength may not arrive when you think it needs to arrive, but God promises it will arrive at the perfect moment.

3. In God's next perfect moment, He will confirm His eternal promise. How frequently do you need someone to remind you that you are doing something right? By nature, we need encouragement and assurance. Because that's true, God assures us; God steps into our lives and says, "Eternity is still waiting for you. Get through your present struggles because eternity will arrive in the not-so-distant future." When it seems like what we do doesn't matter, that no one cares, we need God's confirmation, God's assurance from His next perfect moment that every promise now and in eternity is still in tact and available for our use.

4. In God's perfect moment, He will enable us to take the next step. Suppose you were standing on the top of a staircase and it was pitch black, that you had no idea how far down the next step was or if there even was a next step. How many of you would be reluctant to take that next step? Life has its share of moments like that. Yet, in God's perfect moment, which occurs more often than we realize, He will encourage you, empower you, and enable you to take that next step. Because He knows where the next step will take us, He nudges us forward until we step out in faith and realize that, when God is in control, it's safe to take the next step.

C. All this leads us to ask, "How do we prepare for His next perfect moment?" 1. We prepare by humbling ourselves. But we have a problem because we connect humbling with humiliation. When we humble ourselves before God, we do a great thing. We stand before our God as we say, "Lord, here I stand. I cannot take the next step, cannot get through this day, cannot endure the next challenge without You. Step into my life and show me Your power for without You, I can do nothing great." Humility is God's greatest preparation tool. As we humble ourselves, we put God in control and when God is in control, something great will happen.

2. We prepare by entrusting ourselves to God's care. Peter writes, "Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good." But what does it mean to entrust ourselves to His care? Peter gives us further instruction as he says, "cast all your cares on Him for He cares for you." As we unload each care, each worry, each fear, each heartache onto His shoulders, we give God permission to care for us as the perfect loving Father cares for His children. As God prepares His next perfect moment, our best move is to give everything to God and prepare to go.

3. The right place at the right moment - it seldom happens by coincidence. But when we place our lives completely into His hands, we will be in the right place for His next perfect moment. Amen.