

Pastor Ken Hilston - June 2, 2024 Norwood
“Thou Shalt Covet Time, not Space.”

Each faith situation and moment is UNIQUE. Not totally repeatable! What TIME, is it? FOR WHAT!

We all remember that **one** task, **one** milestone in our life we struggled hard to accomplish; then when it was accomplished, there was that one thought- NOW what do I have to do? What seemed to promise a great relief, goes into the next, new, chapter in life. What I was looking forward to, now has to be **put aside** to prepare for **the next, whatever!**

On and on it goes, throughout life. At times it feels like our punishment for living. Why can't we **bask in the glory of each moment?**

Abraham Heschel looks at it when referencing the Sabbath: we are to **covet each** moment of TIME we have with God, **not** a particular space, achievement or **object**.

Throughout the history of the faith, people frantically fought to find some **“thing” permanent to fall back on in life.** Then they thought they found it, like the **Temple**, the Laws, they **froze, embalmed, made it** a “thing” they **could lean on**: the **answer to life** to be **zealously protected** from anyone who might tarnish or **contaminate** it. They became the **guardians of truth**, for the good of us all.

THE usual ANSWER to life. If you **tinker** with it, you might break it. Precious. A Holy PLACE, a Holy physical space!: A way to thank the Lord God for this gift. But, all buildings are just **solid THINGS!**

Slowly but surely, as with all precious gifts, it became easy to smother, **sucking the spirit out of it**. It taught them to look backward in the faith: the **revered past: (3) a thing, but not a living life: NOW!** They tried to **capture, protect, and surround** it with some 600 plus rules: **to be sure!**

They meant well.

A picture, captures ONLY a moment in time: sort of! This was an answer to a reverent faith life they **must protect**, their very faithful attempt to insure its **solid sacredness**.
328

But in some ways, unfortunately, **we cannot capture life**, nor any THING in life. They wanted to INSURE faithfulness and REVERANCE: good motives for sure. Faithful intentions! BUT!!!! Unnecessary! THE answer??

Why didn't Jesus **ever** stay put, or **say** the same words to different people? Why didn't Jesus make a faith museum? He didn't write a *book of rules* to fit all situations? Why did the disciples **always have to scratch their heads**, every time Jesus opened His mouth? They **jealously** looked at the marvelous Temple of the faith, while they sat at a fire by the

side of the road: **what gives?** I'm **confused!** And, **Jesus didn't say the same thing**, to different people???

Is Jesus just **sloppy** or **inconsistent**? Do faith **rules** change each day? But each day **changed** life! I'm sure they were glad they never had to take a confirmation test! Yes, they did have **tests**: what do you do **today** to be faithful to each NEW, and **different living situation**?

Faith was never a true or false test. Is there anything in life we can **just lean on**? **Memorize? Take to the faith bank?** When can I take a faith snooze? What faith page are we on today? I better not take a faith snooze: life might be upside down when I wake up, ie: because of it, I might be upside down if I don't **adapt** to what unique happens: NOW!.

BUT: if you play an instrument, don't you have to tune it each time you use it? Conditions always change. **No day is the same**, especially in the faith! Why can't we store up, and put things aside for a rainy faith day? PLAN??

Yes, but **each** faith day is different. **Each** faith storm is different. We need to plan to adapt to changes!

Confusing yes, but it is life! But, **why** do doctors have to keep refreshing their learning, to keep up on new healings? **Why** do all of us have to keep up on all kinds of new things?

The Temple, was, but did not have to be, nor a church, stuck on **one thing!** A certain rule! Abraham Heschel points out: even the **faith life is fluid!** The faith laws were an attempt to **make sure** people lead faithful lives NOW: guidelines were provided, and many are good.

However: life is **not static**. It seemed the Pharisee-type people wanted **to be sure** they were faithful, but **somewhat choked** the **life** out of the faith. They didn't want to THINK!

What is the difference between, time and a sacred space? The people wanted a space, to **stop time**, and give it **solidity-firmness, assurances!** ANSWERS! SOLID GOLD PRECISE ANSWERS! Or, this nation has a constitution, **but** it had to allow space for the spirit of democracy to **adapt** to new days: a living constitution, WITH amendments, and courts to see the spirit of the constitution! 730/806

Jesus looked at **living people** who needed guidance. What supports LIFE, and what tries to smother it with rules to shore up, and mostly support the leaders!

The religious leaders wanted **strict guidelines** to protect their needs, but **still** be somewhat faithful, still it was **tilted** too much in their direction, to protect their jobs, 700 some rules tried to correctly assess **all** avenues of life, TO BE SURE!

They wanted something **sturdy to lean on**. Cover all bases so no one crossed the faith line. It was almost like how strange it would be, though understandable, if a prospective spouse wanted specific assurances before marriage: SOLID GOLD PROOF! Asking for proof, **kills the spirit** of the marriage.

Or, when is anything grander than a **spontaneous** thought, **love** or **deed** of **mercy**? We will never know what **exactly**, precisely is needed, ahead of time. We want goals to aspire to, but **deeds of love cannot be totally assured ahead of time**. Yes, but we also know how tempting it is to be the one to decide FOR SURE, what is right, or not! We want **faith bound to knowledge**. Again, SOLID.

Here is my best stab at it: a solid faith. Think: who knows what is **exactly** right? We have buildings filled with books of knowledge. Even if the book is somewhat good, it can never capture the **spirit of truth**: PRECISE truth is illusive.

Most of you drove to church. From your car window you saw life, that mostly looked solid. Life looks solid. But, it is always changing, because **we** are moving, changing. We were in different places. There are no exact answers. We keep moving. Emmanuel is not the same as it was when I was here before, or even yesterday.

The faithful leaders at the times of Jesus, just wanted to get it right, be as faithful as possible. However, **too precise rulest** seem to say, “this is right,” but life changes. Faith life changes. Look at all the ways our Lord **adapted** to the pains He was called to heal. How many legal books are filled with all the past strange circumstances of life, real life?

Jesus did the best He could to show everyone how the Holy Spirit is needed to help guide us in an ever-changing, perplexing world. **What** answers we know today, change tomorrow? Did Jesus ever know what He would meet, ahead of time. **Each** faith situation is different! **Each** day is different. **Each** person is different.

And the next day, different again.

There was a strange tale told about a catholic youth dance, where the chaperone supposedly said to a couple dancing too closely: “you need to leave room for the Holy Spirit.”

We all need to give room for the Holy Spirit to **challenge** our faith, each moment. Rules are at times, too easy fit any situation. Each moment is but a “snapshot in time.” It is neither good or bad: it just **is!** Can we find the Holy Spirit in the midst of our life choices?

And at times we think we can use the Holy Spirit as an Ace in the hole, to bail me out of ANY and EVERY tight situation.

At the time of Jesus, life was **murky** when most people looked for some kind of **solid “faith”** A lifeboat in the storm. It seemed easier to have rules **set in concrete**.

But it is truly hard to be faithful without specific rules. But, those rulers, just wanted to feather their own nest: “baptized” by the Holy Spirit.

Something in all of us lets us know when: “I’m taking advantage of the Holy Spirit **excuse.**” We find, we can always find laws to “baptize” whatever I want to **do** and **believe.** Just shop around for the “correct” faith answer, **I want.** Don’t forget to cross your fingers, when you do it!

Time is baptized, **not things;** not even good things! Not one “thing,” Each faith **moment** is precious!!!

What faith TIME is it, NOW, for What? Life never stops changing! What is not changeable, cannot be faithful! There is no CONQUEST of time through power or space! We use time to be faithful! As Heschel said: “To have **more,** does not mean more!” “There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have, but to **be;** not to own but to **give;** not to control, but **share;** not to subdue, but **be in accord.**” “To have more, does not mean **more!**” AMEN 1570

Thanks to the book: “**The Sabbath,**” by Abraham Joshua Heschel