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## **“The Wise One Who Makes Full Use of Opportunities”**

Ephesians 5:15-17

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by Senior Pastor Hong Poonghwa

### **Ephesians 5:15-17 (PowerPoint presentation)**

#### **Preface**

A pastor whom I respect very much became ill with cancer a short time after he retired from the ministry.

It started out as lung cancer, but over the next three and a half years it metastasized to prostate cancer and thyroid cancer.

I was nauseous, vomiting, hair loss, tasteless, and living in a constant state of exhaustion while undergoing cancer treatment, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually.

I searched YouTube videos and books to learn about cancer treatment, and the more I filled my days with knowledge about cancer, the more my soul withered.

He remembered that when he was working as a pastor in a church, he used to be encouraged, rejoice, and enjoy the words of the Bible that he used to preach at the early morning prayer meeting every morning.

He said, “This life may not be long anymore. I cannot end up being filled with cancer. I will not waste this life that has been given to me, but I will make the most of it and live a blessed (better and richer) life. He began to broadcast the preaching of the Word of God on YouTube every morning at 5:30 a.m. I sometimes watch his broadcasts.

I sometimes watch his YouTube videos, and just recently, he celebrated the 5th anniversary of his YouTube preaching.

During that time, he had been fighting a difficult illness, but in the middle of last year, he received a doctor’s diagnosis that he was in complete remission, and he continues to preach the Word of the Bible daily with joy.

During the most difficult time of his life, he encountered the words of today's scripture, Ephesians 5:15-17, which came to him as a new voice of God.

The words that came to him as the voice of God were, "Do not be foolish, but be wise, not as those who lack wisdom, but as those who have wisdom, and make full use of your opportunities.

He then said, "I cannot stay like this. I must pay close attention to how I am walking now, not as one without wisdom, but as one with wisdom, realizing what the Lord's will is from the words of the Bible, and making full use of this opportunity.

Being angry, frustrated, and depressed will only make my relationships with others worse, and it will take time again to recover them, and it is frustrating to lose precious life time to such things. So, God, please let me not be frustrated and irritated.

## Part One

This pastor was told by God, "As a wise man, make full use of your opportunities.

I think that we have grown up hearing the words "opportunity" and "chance" as a kind of precept that we should not miss out on opportunities and chances.

I think I have heard this from my school teachers, and I think I have also heard it in some church service sermons.

I think I heard it in a church service sermon somewhere: "We all get three big chances in life. But the ones we have are long and full in the front, but the back of our head is peeling, and when we try to grab the back of our head, it's too late and we can't grab it. So, when the opportunity comes, let's make sure we can grab it and hold on to it.

Oh, that's right. I also have to seize those opportunities," I thought vaguely, but when I looked at today's scriptures and God's words, He says something different.

He says, "Make full use of the opportunity," assuming that the opportunity is already there.

He says, "Opportunity is not something that must be seized and captured; it is already there. Opportunities are given to us.

I felt as if I was given a deep enlightenment.

In other words, the “opportunity that will disappear if not seized, the opportunity that must be seized, the opportunity of only three times,” is a fake, a falsehood.

Our life is not determined by only three opportunities.

Nor are opportunities something that must be seized.

Opportunity, chance is what the Lord God continues to give us, all the time, all the time.

If I were to use this as an analogy, I think I could compare it to the water tap in your house.

Whether it is a dam, a river, a lake, or a reservoir, it is connected to our home tap on a pipeline that carries water. How long does it take for the water to come out?

This question itself is a strange one.

It comes out immediately. As soon as you turn on the faucet, the water comes out.

What does that mean?

It means that water is choked and flowing without interruption from the big place where there is water, whether it is a river or a dam, to the end of the tap in our home.

It means that the one true God is continuously filling our lives with His grace, blessings, and opportunities, without any part of it.

In the English Bible, the word “grace” is translated as “grace,” but it is also translated as “unfailing love.

It is God’s grace that is “never failing love, unceasing love, continuous and never-ending love.

So, opportunity is not something that we have to wait and seize, but is always ready to come out if we just twist the faucet.

And yet, I think that perhaps we are wasting opportunities with the faucet turned off.

It seems to me that we are told, “To be wise enough to take full advantage of opportunities so that you can live happily, abundantly, and better, don’t wait for the back-of-the-back-of-your-head snore opportunities that you must seize, but take full advantage of the opportunities that have already been given to you.”

However, when I think about it for a moment, this phrase seems to make sense, but it doesn’t make sense to me.

Is it an opportunity that is already there? Opportunities that have already been given? Is my life really filled to the brim with opportunities?”

I don't think it makes sense.

Because the pastor I mentioned earlier had three different types of cancer.

What is the opportunity in the disease of cancer?

If you are cured or in remission, you can say, “Another opportunity has come, and it has been given to me.

But what opportunity or chance is being given to you during your painful battle with cancer?

What opportunity is God giving me when I have failed in business, failed examinations, suffered accidents and calamities, and am in the midst of so much hardship, hurt, and difficulty?”

But this is different.

There should be nothing that God is going to lose, should there not?

Opportunities that already exist.

My life is indeed full of opportunities, and God has always provided a way out with trials, teaching me how to do it, and His will is for me to live through the problems I face.

## Part Two

When we ask ourselves, “How can we make the best use of the opportunities that we have been given? The important words are Ephesians 5:17, which says, “If you do not use the opportunities that have already been given to you, how can you use them well?

### **Ephesians 5:17 (PowerPoint presentation)**

I believe it is the phrase, “Realize what the will of the Lord is.

God is not a “one man” but a “one God” (or “one God”), and He is the one who is in charge of all things.

God never leaves any of us alone.

He speaks of this throughout the Bible from the beginning to the end of His Word.

### **Psalms 33:13-15 (PowerPoint)**

## Acts 17:25-28 (PowerPoint)

The Lord God is not one to leave anyone alone.

Even if you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, the Lord's rod and staff will go with you.

He speaks and teaches us in places like the valley of the shadow of death.

He shows us the way, the method that can solve the problem.

If you realize the Word of God and the will of God, you will know that a way of escape is provided for you in every walk of life, and you will remember your freedom.

Then the valley of the shadow of death will change and become an opportunity.

In the words of Psalm 119, "It was a blessing for me to be in suffering. I have learned your statutes through it. You are the One who is ever faithful and good."

When we suffer, when we learn God's word, when we realize it, we say that our suffering became a benefit and an opportunity.

If we always consider and realize God's will, everything becomes an opportunity.

As Romans says, "For those who love God, all things work together for good."

So we do not have to wait for opportunities.

If we realize God's will through His Word and do His will, even suffering will become an opportunity and a blessing.

When I am faced with a dark and difficult situation, when there is no one to help me, what I do is to put my Bible on my desk, put a pen and a notepad on it, pray a word of prayer as if I were waiting for it, open the Bible, and read it.

When I feel like I'm going to be crushed by anxiety and fear, with my head in my hands and nothing but groans coming out of me, I just open the Bible.

Then the words of the God I am reading come to me as if they were my own, and words from the Bible other than the one I am reading come to my mind.

Then I write. I remember.

Then a path appears.

“Go this way. God’s will is expressed, “Go this way and solve the problem in this way.

Then, will it be like a light shining here? Or will it be darker?

It will be darker.

Because my thoughts and ideas are different from God’s thoughts and ideas.

Because His will is to make us go down a narrow path, a path that makes us take up our crosses, right?

When I realize and search for this through the words of the Bible and through prayer, God says, “Here is the answer,” but when I see the answer, I say, “Oh, Lord. Do you want me to live, or do you want me to die? God showed me the path and opened it for me, but it is a narrow path, not a wide path, and I am dying.

But at such times, I believe in God.

I don’t try to understand God. And then I moan again.

I say, “Lord, I believe that You, the Lord, are right. But I don’t understand. You have shown me a path that is too painful and difficult, but this is the only path I should take. Jesus, let me follow this path. Please let me live according to this path.

As I continue on that path, I gradually feel the desire to “solve the problem I am facing as God wants me to solve it,” and I receive the grace that is appropriate for each moment.

In the Old Testament, Esther solves the problems she is facing in a way that realizes God’s will: “If I must die, I will die.

Then something amazing happens.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). But to all the children of Israel there was light where they lived” (Deut. 10:23).

Sorry, I don’t have time to give you a specific testimony, but there are many testimonies. I am sure you have your own.

What was suffering became a blessing.

It becomes a testimony, a blessing, and I realize that it becomes an opportunity for my own life.

### **Part Three**

Dearly beloved, are we living our lives waiting for opportunities?

Perhaps we are not making the most of our opportunities.

Opportunity, He tells us, is already there, always, in our ordinary, everyday lives.

There are hardships, there are adversities, there are successes, and there are failures, but if we realize God's will in the midst of it all, everything becomes an opportunity, a blessing, and there is no waste or futility in our lives.

But if we are victorious, if we are successful, if things go well, if we are fortunate in the world, but we do not ask God's will in it, if we do not realize God's will, it will become an anger, an irritation, and a detriment to us.

If we look at Luke 12, we find the story of the foolish rich man. He experienced an unparalleled harvest, and he even built a large new warehouse to store his crops as if they were piled on top of each other.

Then he said to his soul, "O my soul! My soul, I have stored up enough for many years to come. Now rest. Eat, drink, and be merry.

### **Luke 12:16-21 (PowerPoint presentation)**

Why did God make me so wealthy? Why did He give me such a great harvest?" I did not ask the Lord God, "Why did God give me such a great harvest?"

He only followed his own desires and thought only about his own soul.

He said, "My soul, rest now. Eat, drink, and be merry!" But instead, it became a curse for him.

And that night, life was taken away from him.

What is the "good life?"

We believe that to live a good life, to live blessedly, to live abundantly, is to realize God's will through His Word in order to fully utilize the opportunities we already have, and that this is the way of the wise, the true good life, and the only way.

In God's Word, in Jesus' words, we find God's will.

In God's Word, in Jesus' words, there is a concrete path for us to follow.

He specifically tells us how to live this day well, which no one has ever lived before.

However, as the saying goes, “Easier said than done,” but I also believe that the words of the Bible are “Easier said than done” and “Harder said than lived.

Nevertheless, if you hear it, no matter how difficult it is, close your eyes and begin to go on, my beloved ones, all your steps will be full of opportunities.

We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

Even difficulties, pain, and suffering will become opportunities for blessing.

We cannot help but believe that at that time we will be people who are truly living the good life, taking full advantage of opportunities, and walking in wisdom.

### **Conclusion**

I pray that we, all of you, will always realize the Lord’s will, live God’s way, and always rejoice and experience victory in the Lord Jesus, even in the midst of the circumstances and adversities that surround all of life.

Please ask God for the way.

Ask Jesus the way.

Ask the Holy Spirit for His will.

Through the words of the Bible and prayer.

And when you are shown the way, and the way comes to mind, and you know His will, go ahead.

Then I believe that you will realize that your life is not a waste, not even for a moment, but that you will always be a person who lives abundantly, who makes full use of opportunities, and who walks as a person of wisdom.

Let’s pray.

Benediction: Ephesians 5:15-17