



**καιρός
(kairos)**

#1 time

January 7, 2018

Courage Church, Detroit, MI

scriptures: Galatians 6:9,
Matthew 4:3, Matthew 26, 1
Timothy 6:15

Let me put this bug in your ear now, as we move into the 2018... we are going to do a three part series, and on week three, which is January 21, we will take our annual First Fruit Offering... we will talk in more detail about that next week, and really focus on it fully on the 21st... but what we always do leading up to the first fruit offering is this...

first, we ask you to pray... we ask you to begin praying now, and consider fasting as well... not only for this offering, but for this entire year, both for our church, as well as your own life, family, career, future... etc.

The first fruit offering is an offering that we describe as “one given out of uncertainty” - it is NOT a tithe... where you are giving 10% of what came in that week... at Courage Church we believe in the tithe, and encourage you to do that faithfully to see the work of the ministry move forward, and believe that you will see a difference in your own life, and the way that God blesses you and uses you, when you do that... but a first fruit offering is the first fruit that comes up in the harvest... you give that, NOT KNOWING what the rest of the harvest is going to be... it could be a great year, it may not be... we are believing that it WILL BE... WE BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS AMAZING PLANS FOR 2018, AND THIS IS A SEED INTO THOSE PLANS.

we don't tell you what to give... we don't ask you to give a certain percent or a certain amount... all that we ask you to do is to pray... faithfully... diligently, between now and that day... ask God for clarity on what you are supposed to do, and then be faithful to what He tells you.

and the first fruit gives us a boost on our year as a ministry and the work being done here in Detroit, which is especially helpful for us because we

have made it a habit of faithfully depleting many of our resources in December to bless families in the community... we want to be a vessel, a conduit of everything we have... and the first fruit offering always helps us bounce back from that a bit, as well as helps us to step into what is next. So pray!

Then, on the 28th, we are going to have our founding Pastor, Pastor Chilly Chilton here speaking. Pastor Chilly is moving to Vermont to plant Revolution Youth Ministry, a very unique ministry to youth in one of the most unchurched communities of the nation... and we wanted to give you all a chance to hear from him one more time before he goes... we love Pastor Chilly, and we definitely have him back in the future, but anytime we can help be a part of launching someone into what is next for their ministry, we want to be a part of that.

Last weeks message ended with us reading our churches verse for 2017... it was how we ended the year...

and now this morning we are starting a mini series, it will go three weeks it is called "*kairos*" - it is a Greek word that is found in the verse we are going to read in a moment, which is the verse that God has put on our hearts for 2018... the verse of the year this year is one that you have heard a lot around here already... so it may not come as a surprise, but I am telling you all right now... we all need to commit this one to our memories... we need to write it on our hearts, we need to highlight it in our bibles, and circle it, write it on notecards, post it online...

So lets open right up to it, and dive in...

It is found in Galatians, chapter 6, verse 9:

"let us not *grow weary* of doing good, for **in due season** we will reap, if we do not give up."

lets pray.

Last year, we toyed with this verse for being the verse of the year... in fact in the sermon when I told you what the verse was (1 Cor. 16:13-14) - "be

strong, and let everything you do be done in love” we also read you this verse... because it really is a recurring theme for our church and always will be...

The first day Dawn and I were ever with you, before we were offered the role of pastors here, when I taught that Sunday three years ago, I ended the sermon by giving you guys this verse... we didn't know if we were going to be offered this position...

we didn't know IF it was what God had for us for sure or not at that point... but what we did know was that this church was at a significant crossroad. A time when it would have been easy to back off, do less, love less, give less, help less... it was at a time when the easy road probably looked pretty enticing after serving for so long and NOT ALWAYS seeing the results that you had wanted.

And we knew, whether we were going to be pastors here or not... this is what God has for this church... He has a future.

He has a plan.

He has hopes and dreams and things that he wants to do through that plan... and HE WILL DO IT, if the people will stay faithful... if they will not grow weary of doing good... if they will just keep serving... and loving... and dreaming... if they will keep speaking up for the oppressed and the broken, if they will keep on being a voice for the voiceless.

and by the grace of God, He has allowed Dawn and I NOT TO BE people who just came in, gave an encouraging message and then go back to where we came from...

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOT EASIER... TO BE FRANK... but when he had this word for you... He had it for Dawn and I too.

he actually was positioning us to move here, and be on the ground here with you all... but the thing that is so crazy is, when I gave that message as a visitor in your church, I was giving it to myself... when I left you with this verse, Galatians 6:9, I was leaving it with myself.

We were living in Brooklyn at the time...

I felt like I had found myself on the edge... on the brink of a breakthrough in my own life... in our family, in our home... and I had no idea what it looked like, but I knew that God was positioning us for something, and we needed to stay strong, and not grow weary.

so we fasted. and prayed... and diligently sought God and He spoke so clearly to us about what he was doing in Detroit, and we felt like we were supposed to be a part of that, and almost three years later, our family has been through more things that would certainly give us excuses to grow weary in doing good... most of you know most of our stories...

but this verse has always been there... in my mind... don't grow weary... there is a promise... there will be change... there will be revival... there will be a harvest...

IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP.

Lets look at this... its fascinating. The word "season" is the Greek word "*kairos*" - its an extremely significant word that describes something that **is coming**.

but it is in its most basic sense translated as "time"

but *kairos* is not the only Greek word for time... so don't be fooled into thinking its just that simple... if you look at your watch and count the lines to figure out what time of day it is, THAT IS NOT KAIROS. If you look at the calendar, and see that today is January 7th, 2018... THAT IS NOT KAIROS.

the other, much more commonly used Greek word for time is the word "*chronos*" - where we get the concept of "chronological order" from... its a much more robotic, trackable word. *Chronos* is time that can be MEASURED, as in a clock, telling you the time of the day and keeping you on schedule...

or a calendar... or even a season of the year, or a year itself.

That is "*chronos*"

Now, one of the things that was fascinating about the Greeks, was they had these words that had these meanings, but they often would create depictions that would describe these words, and often you would hear of their "gods" by the name of that depiction. That was so with both "*chronos*" and "*kairos*" *Chronos* was considered "the Greek god of time" and *kairos* was called "the god of opportunity"

we of course DO NOT worship these gods, and we know that there is only ONE TRUE GOD... so please know before I show you this that I am not acknowledging them to actually be gods, I am just trying to help you understand what these words meant to that culture.

it is important to understand that the New Testament was written primarily in the Greek language, and so its important to understand how the Greeks would have understood these words, and these two were both significant enough that they had full depictions of them, and the way that they are personified helps us to understand just how a Greek person would have heard this... there is a reason for Paul's decision to use "*kairos*" here in Galatians 6:9, and *chronos* in most other instances when talking about time.

in any painting or statue depicting the word "*chronos*" you will find an OLD man with a scythe (sigh-th) - it is a tool meant for reaping crops and trimming grass, but the imagery implies it to be used as a weapon, similar to that of the Grim Reaper... *chronos* always had the scythe (sigh-th) AND HE ALWAYS HAD AN HOUR GLASS... it was always this idea that TIME IS TICKING... each moment lived is a moment closer to death... closer to the end. it had this implication that time was coming for you.

Because *time* was, to an extent, considered the enemy.

Tomorrow wasn't better than today... tomorrow was another day closer to death.

but “*kairos*” was different. “*Kairos*” was depicted as a much younger man, but the man has a lot of hair on the front of his head, but is bald in the back of his head. He had a blade in his right hand, and he had WINGS on his back AND wings on his feet. It personified the ability to go anywhere... the ability to fly. To me, when I see it, I think “the ability to change my circumstances, no matter where I find myself today”

and the idea behind the hair in the front, but bald in the back is this... it was said that *kairos* is “a favourable opportunity opposing the fate of man” -

so when it feels like your life is controlled by *chronos*... like the walls are closing in on you, and time is slipping away, *kairos* will be that moment that can redeem time, that one thing that can make it all okay... but the way the Greeks depicted it, was as something fleeting that had to not be missed... so the idea was that as it is passing, you need to grab it while it is right in front of you... you grab it by the hair... because once its back is to you there is no hair left to grab... and you missed it.

In one of the most famous statues that stood of “*kairos*” was a question and answer inscription about it... and these are some of the things written into the stone:

Question: Why do you have a pair of wings on your feet?

Answer: —I fly with the wind.—

Question: Why do you hold a razor in your right hand?

Answer: —As a sign to men that I am sharper than any sharp edge.—

Question: And why is the back of your head bald?

Answer: —Because none whom I have once raced by on my winged feet will now, though he wishes it, take hold of me from behind.

That was the Greek view. two very deep and detailed words that both occur throughout the New Testament...

Now, I don't think that Paul is saying that all of our hard work and perseverance will lead us to a moment that we better not miss or we will have to start over again...

I believe Paul is saying something slightly different... he is not saying that you will miss the moment if you blink... he is saying that the reason most people miss their moment is because they give up before they get to it.

God is not stringing you along in some practical joke, trying to waste yours and my time while we believe that he is going to move.

But how often, in those areas of your life that you ended up walking away from, when looking back do you wonder... HOW CLOSE WAS I? What if I would have pushed just one more inch? what if I had just knocked on one more door?

But instead we let our circumstances dictate our decisions... and we stepped back when we knew we were once again supposed to step up... because we grew tired of stepping up over and over, and reaching for a destiny that we used to believe was coming, but like sand through the hourglass held by *chronos*, the sun was setting on our dreams.

Because that is what Satan wants to convince us of... He wants to make us believe that the things that God said will happen, are never going to happen. It is what he does, he lies to people... he spends all of his time trying to get them to believe that they aren't enough... that nothing that God said would happen actually will... because he knows that if he can get you to cut yourself off from what God is doing, he can defeat you by your own ambitions and dreams.

He tried to do it to Jesus! Its so crazy, but people miss this all the time. In Matthew 3, John the Baptist baptizes Jesus... and when that happens, a dove descends down on Jesus and God speaks from the clouds and says "This is my beloved Son, who I am well pleased."

Then, just one chapter later in Matthew 4, it says Jesus goes from there and is led to the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and there he fasts for 40 days, and 40 nights... and he is hungry. And do you know what the VERY FIRST THING that the Devil says to him is?

Matthew 4:3 - "if you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

See, we tend to focus on the fact that Jesus is hungry... and that he has to overcome his hunger and prove strong against the devil... and we miss the fact that the very first thing that the devil tries to do to Jesus is to GET HIM TO QUESTION WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY SAID ABOUT HIM.

John Baptizes Jesus... God opens up to Heavens to make the announcement that Jesus IS THE SON OF GOD... and the first thing the Devil does is subtly tries to get into his head, and says "if you are..." -

The Devil will always try and get you to question what God has already spoken over your life...

IT DIDN'T WORK ON JESUS, but has it worked on you? Because the Devils tactics have never changed... and the moment you begin to wonder... "did God really say ____? as Eve did about eating the fruit of the tree in the garden" -- or the moment that you wonder "am I who God says I am?" like the Devil tried to make Jesus feel... when you start buying into the lie that there is even a possibility that God is not who He says that He is... THAT is the moment you begin to grow weary in doing good.

God is moving in our community... and we are working for something that the Devil does NOT want to see happen... and we will miss it... it will go right on by us IF we grow weary of doing good...

IF we start to measure our success based on a clock, a calendar or an hourglass...

think about it... How many stories are there of missionaries who move to unreached areas... and they love people and minister to people and serve people for decades before they see even the first person come to Christ?

and do you call those stories failures?

of course not! They were in uncharted territory. They went on a mission that nobody else in the world was willing to accept.

but time is one of the few things that the Devil can use against you with his awful lies... He wants to use time against you.

He will say things like:

“You are too old now...”

“you blew it already”

“maybe that USED TO BE YOUR CALLING, but you missed it...” -- its just a bald head flying past you now, the hourglass has already dropped its final grain of sand on your destiny and who you are now is all that you ever will be...”

BUT ITS A LIE.

Which is why it is so important, in a world that has allowed itself to be controlled by *chronos*, there is a *kairos*. And its not a bald head in the distance that is never coming back... Maybe you did miss it in the past... WE ARE HUMAN... AND WE BLOW IT, ALL THE TIME... and maybe you would be further THAN YOU ARE NOW, had you been a little more faithful... but the God that we serve is the God of second chances, third chances and fourth chances... in fact, the Bible tells us in Romans that your gifts and your calling are irrevocable... (Romans 11:29)

NOBODY CAN TAKE THEM FROM YOU!!!

and if it feels like your dream is dead, then the goal today is that new life would be birthed in it... because our God is not the God of dead dreams or of TIME lost... in fact, He is the only God who ever resurrected.

and the contrast between our God, and all the Greek gods, it could not be greater... and the contrast between time on a clock, and the destiny that God has for your life, COULD NOT BE GREATER.

You can view your life as slipping away more and more as each day goes by... as something that you once thought you had in your grasp, but as you get older you realize you can't control... but on the other side of a view like that is anxiety and depression. There is nothing more than that.

OR you can allow every moment to propel you into the next moment, all of which is taking you closer to the love of God...

That is why I LOVE that when Paul wrote the verse that we are committing ourselves to this year... when he talked about time... he chose *kairos*.

kairos, in every sense of the word, speaks of a time that is NOT measured numerically but rather is experienced. It is NOT ticking away... IT IS COMING.

It is not always talking about the culmination of something, but it can refer to that, for example:

Paul uses the word in his first letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 6:15) when he talks about the second coming of Christ.

and Jesus uses the word in Matthew 26 when He says "my time is at hand" - my "*kairos*" is at hand...

and by that, He is talking about his death... which, as you may recall from Hebrews, is called "the culmination of the ages" - everything is leading to this one thing...

This moment in time where Jesus lays down his life, dying for the sins of this world... because you and me, we couldn't stand on our own two feet because the weight of our sin was so heavy...

But Jesus' entire life was leading up to this moment when he would stand up, and take your place... and face death.

it was the greatest fulfillment of prophecy...

that is Kairos... it was the bearing of fruit that the whole world can taste because Jesus lived a perfect life, and died for us...

in your life... its this bearing of fruit from everything we worked our whole lives for... but its not something that everyone gets to experience because not everyone lasts that long.

Paul says that if you want to get there... to that ultimate *kairos*... to that place you knew you were created for... you have to understand that there will first come things that will be hard... and it will be tempting to grow weary, to tuck away in a corner...

but what happens when we grow weary in doing good... and we get tired, and we let that tiredness start to dictate the way that we respond to needs and the way that we begin to view our future... what happens is, without even realizing it... we start to view time not as an opportunity, but as an hourglass.

But this year, lets smash the hourglass... and run toward our destiny no matter where we are in life.

I like to always take some time in January, as we all take a few weeks to pray and to fast, and we think about the year, and we begin to make our plans based on what God speaks to us... I try and take some time to get really practical with you all... and I will do this the next couple weeks too...

I really think that last year, the verse in 1 Corinthians was exactly what we needed... I think that verse carried us in 2017... whenever we were faced with decisions, we kept that in our hearts... we stayed willing to go places nobody else wanted to go... take on challenges that nobody else wanted to take on... love people that nobody else wanted to love.

and the reason that I think that God wanted us to wait a year on THIS verse as our verse for the year, as I am seeing it now in hindsight, is because: this year we find ourselves as a church IN A LOT OF HALF WAY PLACES...

At the start of LAST year, the Courage House, the side lot and reconciliation table were just dreams... just like the storefronts and community co-ops are still today... they were ideas we put on paper and shared, but there was nothing in sight... but our word last year was BE STRONG... do everything in love, and as you love... make Courageous moves that will lead to others experiencing the love of Jesus in more practical and tangible ways.

and last year we finally bought a two unit house for our first courage house, which was a huge win... a huge step... but today, the house is not complete... its not ready... and its not full of students yet working for the mission... now we need to make the final improvements on it, and get the word out and fill it with ministry students who can help us on the ground...

its a half way place... we raised the money... we patiently but diligently searched for the right place, we now have it, but it is NOT ready.

we now own the land to put the reconciliation table on to, but now we need to BUILD the reconciliation table.

we entered both of those situations completely debt free, and in trying to keep it that way, the next steps have been slower than we hoped. We need more people to rise up, and say "I believe that I am supposed to help with the table... I believe I am supposed to help with the program... I believe I am supposed to help get missions teams here, and lead them when they come... I believe I am supposed to step up in this way, and in that way..."

we also have been working to establish another non-profit under Courage Church so that we can begin going after storefront locations for community ideas that we have... but we still need to finish it.

We are closer than we have ever been... but we need to push. And I know for me... every time we take a BOLD move... a move that is a long play for our community... we take a step of faith... with it comes a lot more responsibility... with it comes fresh burdens that we aren't used to carrying... with it comes a whole new set of circumstances that will wear us down if we let them...

and so in that half way place of many of our early dreams for this church, growing weary is the natural thing to do.

So my prayer is that those words of Paul, "let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up..." I pray that they will echo in your mind and heart this entire year.

and you will put your hope in Jesus... I know that so many of us feel like our backs are against the wall... we feel like this is harder than we thought it would be... we feel like its not happening fast enough... and we are running out of time... but I want to encourage you, that God is bigger than that... time is an “us” problem... its not a God problem... and its an “us” problem that we need to sort out, for the sake of our lives, and the sake of our dreams, and the sake of our mission.

and I will close with this:

When I was a Senior in high school, I had a teacher named Mr. Thalen... he was very instrumental in that short season of my life... and one day in class, he was talking about stress... anxiety, and peace, and he was talking about some research that lead to this discovery, but he began comparing instances of people of a certain age demographic, and build, who otherwise seemed healthy, but who suddenly had heart attacks and died... and in one particular study he said there was only one similarity found in all of them.

and he pointed to his wrist that DID NOT have a watch on it... but he tapped it like it did... and he said “this... right here...”

and please understand this not meant to be taken completely literally, but there is a lot of depth in what he told us...

he said that it was found that people who wore watches were more likely to have heart attacks... and it wasn't about the watch itself, but around the concept of “there is always somewhere to be, and there is a time I need to be there by”

and even though its good to be on time, we have taken it too far...

and it ruins people.
it kills people.

now, obviously even since then, watches are like the most modest... moderate way to tell time... now all of us who don't wear watches create the same feelings of anxiety by always having to dig our phone out of our

pocket in order to see what time it is... then of course when we do that we see right below the clock, the list of notifications we have... and all of the things that we missed since the last time we checked the time, 45 seconds ago.

we never rest, even when we are resting... and we are always worried about the numbers that keep moving on and on and on. The dates that keep going up... the years.... 2015... 2016... 2017... 2018. Our birthdays.... 32, 33, 34, 35...45, 65, 75, 85.

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

and I remember sitting in that 12th grade classroom thinking “I don’t wear a watch... and I never will...” but of course, eventually... I did. And its not that watches are bad... they aren’t... I actually really like them, but what I was saying was: I am never going to let time stress me out...

BUT I DO.

I constantly hear God speak vision into my life... and I don’t doubt that vision with my mind... but I doubt it with the way I live my life in preparation for it...

I doubt it when I wonder when it will happen, and I worry that it won’t happen in the time frame that I of course assume that it will happen... and I constantly forget that: His ways are higher than our ways...

Look at what Peter says... and I want you to think about this...

2 Peter 3:8 says: But do not overlook this one **fact**, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Peter says, “don’t miss this... because its not theory... its not an idea... its a concrete fact that God and time as we have come to understand it do not represent each other.”

God has a destiny, and is outside of anything that constrains or limits.

and of course time itself is valuable... and we should use every moment that we are blessed with on this earth... it is more valuable than gold, than cars or houses... but we can't forget that the way that we constrain our lives within it is the opposite of the way that God works. One day is as a thousand years... do you know how many GENERATIONS live in a thousand years? How many sets of great great great great great grandparents back that takes us?

its just another reminder that God is doing something so much bigger than us... something that we GET to be a part of, and something that even when our clock stops ticking here on earth... we will one day get to step over that line, into eternity with him... and experience time in an endless way... a way in which we are not limited by it or controlled by it...

that is why people who fully understand the Kingdom of God are able to live lives that aren't full of anxiety... because they understand that time is limited ONLY in this life...but the picture is bigger... eternity is forever.

But in the time we do have, we need to share Jesus... and in the time that we do have... most importantly... WE NEED TO KNOW JESUS...

Do you know Jesus?

The Gospel is that God so loved the world, that He sent His only Son, Jesus... to step out INTO time... to face the limits of it... to live a perfect life in those limited years, and then, after being betrayed by one of his closest friends, denied by his best friend, and abandoned by almost ALL of his friends... He died on a cross, as the payment for our sins... a payment we could never pay.

The first step to that ultimate kairos is accepting Jesus... there will be no kairos without him...