

*Thoughts While Stuck in a Traffic Jam*<sup>1</sup>

"Fifteen days left!" That was a note on the fridge of a hard-working teacher, counting down until the end of her school year. My children, too, are doing a similar countdown.

How often do we want to make time go away? Caught in a traffic jam, we fume about how long it is taking us to arrive at our destination. In a doctor's waiting room, we tap impatiently while awaiting our turn. Though our tapping and fuming doesn't make the time go any faster, it expresses how we want to move on to "the more important stuff."

We enthusiastically await life's next milestones—the baby finally sleeping through the night, speaking her first words, walking his first steps, beginning that first day at school—only to wake up one day to an empty home, wondering where the time went.

We can't wait to graduate, earn our degrees, and begin our first job.

Then, we're eager for the next, better job opportunity, until we find ourselves pondering when we will finally save enough to retire.

When recording the life of righteous people, like Abraham and Sarah, the Torah uses the phrase, "zekeinim, baim bayomim—they were old, they entered many days." **If they were old, isn't it obvious that they lived many days?** The wording implies, however, that **living many days isn't necessarily entering our days**. We can drive away our time, looking for the next prospect, **or we can live in the moment**, entering each of our days by experiencing them fully.

The Jewish people had an unusual practice when they journeyed in the desert.

Whether it was for two days, a month or a year, that the cloud lingered to hover over the Sanctuary, the children of Israel would encamp and not travel, and when it departed, they traveled. At the L-rd's bidding they would encamp, and at the L-rd's bidding they would travel.—

NUMBERS 9:22-23

Sometimes, they camped for weeks at a location; other times they remained for just a day. At every location, the Levites assembled the Sanctuary, including the wall sections, pillars, tapestries, furnishing, and every one of its hundreds of foundation sockets. Several thousand Levites were needed for this formidable task.

Was it really necessary to assemble and disassemble the entire structure if they were to remain for only one day at a particular location?

**Yes! Because every one of our "stations" in life is significant.**

At times, we may feel that we are just at a waiting point, at a stage before the next, more meaningful phase. **But every day, every moment—somehow, even those caught at the long supermarket checkout line—can be entered into and transformed into an opportunity for growth.**

**At every juncture, we need to assemble our own Sanctuary by finding a way, at this moment, to join heaven and earth.**

1. Ephesians 5:15-17

<sup>15</sup>Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,

<sup>16</sup>**making the most of every opportunity**, because the days are evil.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

KJV, NKJ, YLT—**Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil.

a. **5:16**. The present participle (of the word *exagorazo*) in this verse is in the middle voice and refers to purchasing for one's self or for one's personal benefit on a continuous basis. "The days are evil" (*penēros*) speaks of evil "in active opposition to that which is good." If (Believers) are not careful, the evil nature of this age will rob them of opportunities to do God's will.<sup>2</sup>

CJB—**Use your time well**, for these are evil days.

MIT—**Be in the market to buy up time**, because the days are evil.

NAS, RSV—**making the most of your time**, because the days are evil.

NJB—**Make the best of the present time**, for it is a wicked age.

b. **"redeeming the time"—not escaping from it**.

1) Matthew 24:45-46 (cf. Lk 12:37)

<sup>45</sup>"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup>**It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.**

2) John 17:15

<sup>15</sup>My prayer **is not that you take them out of the world** but that you protect them from the evil one.

2. Colossians 4:5

<sup>5</sup>Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **make the most of every opportunity** (or **redeeming the time** [KJV, NKJ]).

a. The verb in the statement "make the most of every opportunity" is a market term that meant "to buy out," "purchase completely" (*exag-*

1 Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights, Vayikra/Bamidbar/Devarim*, (Chabad.org, pp. 119-121.

2 Thoralf Gibrant, Int. Ed., *The Complete Biblical Library, Galatians-Philemon*, (The Complete Biblical Library), p. 155.

orazomenoi). So, Christians, as an expression of practical wisdom, must buy up **and make the most of every opportunity FOR WITNESSING TO THE FAITH** (*italics, captials added*). (It may be appropriate at this point to recall the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price in Matthew 13.) The word translated “opportunity” is *kairos*, **which essentially denotes a point in time in contrast to duration**, which is the idea of *chronos*. ***Kairos, however, is sometimes used for significant time, God’s time, or opportunity***, and this appears to be the sense to be preferred in the present passage.<sup>3</sup>

1) For most Christians, making “the most of every opportunity for *witnessing to the faith*” involves a verbal testimony of the “Gospel” but that isn’t what the text says. It says we should be “redeeming the time” which is used in the sense of “making full use of every opportunity”—but in what sense? In the sense that we need to be aware of **the way we act** in the presence of “others” (or non-believers).

2) Neither of the two parables cited have anything to do with “witnessing to the faith”—but both DO have to do with “buy(ing) out” or “purchasing completely” the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e., recognizing the great value attached to the “Kingdom of Heaven.”

### 3) Matthew 5:13

<sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

#### Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, **let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

#### Matthew 6:19-21

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### 3. ***Live Like You are Dying*** by Tim McGraw<sup>4</sup>—a song he wrote for his father

He said  
 “I was in my early forties  
 With a lot of life before me  
 And **a moment came that stopped me on a dime**  
**I spent most of the next days**  
**Looking at the x-rays**  
**Talkin' 'bout the options**  
**And talkin' 'bout sweet time”**  
 I asked him  
 “When it sank in  
 That this might really be the real end  
 How's it hit you  
**When you get that kind of news?**  
**Man, what'd you do?”**

He said  
 “I went skydiving  
 I went Rocky Mountain climbing  
 I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fumanchu  
 And **I loved deeper**  
 And **I spoke sweeter**  
 And **I gave forgiveness I'd been denying”**  
 And he said  
 “Someday I hope you get the chance  
 To live like you were dying”

He said  
**“I was finally the husband**  
**That most of the time I wasn't**  
 And **I became a friend a friend would like to have**  
 And all of a sudden going fishin'  
 Wasn't such an imposition  
 And I went three times that year I lost my dad  
 I finally read the Good Book, and **I**  
**Took a good, long, hard look**  
**At what I'd do if I could do it all again**  
 And then

I went skydiving  
 I went Rocky Mountain climbing  
 I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fumanchu

4 [https://www.google.com/search?q=live+like+you+were+dying+lyrics&sxsrf=ALeKk00WZ1EzgC2M5Ta1ihIb4j17xWawAg%3A1621899091001&ei=UjesYM7IPNDH-gTv0ozICA&oq=live+like+you&gs\\_lcp=Cgdn3Mtd2l6EAEYATIHCC4QJxCTAjiCCAAyBAgAEEMyBAgAEEMyAgguMgIIADIECC4QQzICCAyAggAMgIILjoHCC4QQxCTAjoKCC4QsQMogwEQzOICC4QsQMogwE6BAgJECc6CAguEMcBEK8BOgUILhCxAzofCAAQsQNKQg4EgExUND4VVirj1ZghatWaABwAHgAgAHHAYgBjw6SAQ QwLjE0mAEAoAEBqgEHZ3dzLXdpesABAQ&scient=gws-wiz](https://www.google.com/search?q=live+like+you+were+dying+lyrics&sxsrf=ALeKk00WZ1EzgC2M5Ta1ihIb4j17xWawAg%3A1621899091001&ei=UjesYM7IPNDH-gTv0ozICA&oq=live+like+you&gs_lcp=Cgdn3Mtd2l6EAEYATIHCC4QJxCTAjiCCAAyBAgAEEMyBAgAEEMyAgguMgIIADIECC4QQzICCAyAggAMgIILjoHCC4QQxCTAjoKCC4QsQMogwEQzOICC4QsQMogwE6BAgJECc6CAguEMcBEK8BOgUILhCxAzofCAAQsQNKQg4EgExUND4VVirj1ZghatWaABwAHgAgAHHAYgBjw6SAQ QwLjE0mAEAoAEBqgEHZ3dzLXdpesABAQ&scient=gws-wiz)

3 Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11*, (Zondervan Publishing House), p. 222.

And I loved deeper  
And I spoke sweeter  
And I gave forgiveness I'd been denying"  
And he said

**"Someday I hope you get the chance  
To live like you were dying  
Like tomorrow was a gift**

And you've got eternity  
To think about  
What you'd do with it  
What could you do with it  
What did I do with it?  
What would I do with it?

Skydiving  
I went Rocky mountain climbing  
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fumanchu  
And I loved deeper  
And I spoke sweeter  
And I watched an eagle as it was flying"  
And he said  
"Someday I hope you get the chance  
To live like you were dying  
To live like you were dying  
To live like you were dying"

- a. When my husband and I married, he told me that the Doctor told him he would probably only live 5 years because of his heart, and **I told him that we'd have five good years together then** ... he listened to this song all the time like many others have. He lived 12 years after we married, seven more than the doc. predicted ... we lived our lives as full as we could, motorcycle riding, raising great danes, camping, and finally building a "trike" for him. This was an amazing song for my love, my husband and my best friend. He took his ride with God in 2016 since we needed more thunder. I miss him terribly. Thank you for this song (Sandra Smith).<sup>5</sup>
- b. My mama is 53 years old, and she has so many health conditions I can't possibly list them here. We've been through so many tough times together we're inseparable. I'm 17, almost 18, and these days I think I might lose her any day. She's finally got a doctor who's actually helping her. She hasn't always been the greatest mom, but she stepped up for me and my older sister in these recent years. **It's something I'm grateful for every single day.** I'm gonna gradu-

ate in June, making me the first kid to graduate out of her 4. We sing to this song together when it comes on the radio, and she cries. It's one of her favorites, and honestly, it's one of my favorites now. I hope she lives to see how impactful she's been on her little girl. I want her to see all the success I do because of her. **Hold your loved ones close guys**, stay safe (king\_spoon\_toons).

- c. Last night my best friend of 30 years told me he has terminal cancer and won't live to see another birthday. I'm at a loss and kept thinking of this song. **Don't wait to do the things you always dreamed of because tomorrow isn't promised** (James Utley).
- d. My grandmother was diagnosed with Stage 4 Pancreatic cancer and by that time it was too late for any treatment options. **From the time of diagnosis to when she passed away was approximately 1 and a half months.** To all of you that have lost loved ones to cancer or anything for that matter, and for those of you going through rough times, my prayers are with you all (CopperPuppy).
- e. I was in my early 30's and was told I would be dead by 40, I was in heart failure. Well 20+ years later I am still alive, the heart is (a mess), **I am limited as to what I can do. It has left me disabled but I will be damned if I just rollover and let this kill me.** I am grateful to God Almighty for making me unreasonably stubborn and making me stronger than I ever knew. This will get me eventually I have no doubt, but **I will fight to the bitter end** (Allan .Marcotte).
- f. See, the reality is, we are all dying. You never know when your last day will be, nor do you know what your last words, deeds, or thoughts will be. That's why **every day truly is a gift**, and you should cherish every second you have on this earth. **You never know who you'll inspire, who's life you'll change, or what impact you have on other people's lives. Just give, love, and keep smiling** (Cody Jacob).
4. In Biblical times, there were three tithes, not one.
- a. The "first" and "second" tithes were taken to "the place which the Lord ... will choose ... to put his name," *i.e.*, Jerusalem (Deut.12:5-14; 14:26).
- 1) The "first" tithe was given to the Levites and Priests who served God. **The "second" was used to facilitate the annual travel to Jerusalem.**
- b. The "third" or "poor" tithe (taken every 3rd and 6th year) was gathered at the village gate and the "storerooms of the treasury" for "the Levite ... the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow" (Deut. 14:28-30; Neh. 10:37,38,44).

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9TShlMkQnc&ab\\_channel=TimMcGrawOfficialVideos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9TShlMkQnc&ab_channel=TimMcGrawOfficialVideos)