Redeeming the Time

The Theme of our 2009 Camp Meeting is Redeeming the Time in 2009. We must redeem the time, learning from the past, making the most of the present, and preparing the the future. Ready if Jesus returns today, prepared in case we have longer than we think. Today we are closer to his return than ever, and at any moment the trumpet could sound. Meanwhile, we have a job to do, an assignment, if you will. Matthew 24:14 says And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Is there not a cause? We don't have time to put things off any longer. Our rights and freedoms are slowly being stripped away. Signs of His coming are ever increasing. There are more lost people in the world than ever before. The churches of America are losing their fight, their zeal, their witness, their members, and their testimony. Judgement must begin at the house of God. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. We must redeem the time while it is still day. To redeem means to purchase back, to ransom, to liberate or rescue from captivity. The devil has many of the Christians in America captive, overcharged with surfeiting and cares of this life, so that day will come upon many unawares. (See Luke 21:24)

We can go beyond captivity, and we don't have to settle for the Laodicean lukewarm lounge-chair life. It will involve moving forward, and moving against our flesh, only possible by prayer and fasting. We can do all things through Christ, and catching a vision while surrendering to the spirit of God that abides with in is a good combination for reaching the abundant life.

Our vision of redeeming the time coincides with the timing to build God's house. This is a special year for Old Time Baptist Church. It is our 25th Anniversary and our 25th annual Camp Meeting. Can you see how God has been building us as we go forward in our building project? In 2005, the theme was How to Survive in 2005. Pastor Phil Seeley preached "You Ain't Getting my Bean Patch" and standing for your church, fighting and protecting what's right. Brother Hardman preached how to go "Beyond Captivity" and said you have to be prayed up and prepare yourself "aforetime" like Daniel did before the tough times come. 2006 was the Power of Vision. Here, God gave us a vision of Himself, and He increased and we decreased. The next year it was "Getting Rid of the Leaven in 2007" and Preacher's theme was how it was the little things that were destroying us. Last year, we were invited back to the Old Paths and to ask for the old ways. We can look back and see God building us for this year, moving our church forward to build not only our lives, but a new church building.

As we prepare for the camp meeting and prepare for what God wants to do with our church, we need to prepare the way the men of old prepared. They sought God out, they fasted and prayed, and they earnestly wanted God seeking him with all their heart. Yes, we still want God today, but the key ingredients missing today are perseverance and desperation. We want God to come through, but we have lots of reserves in case He doesn't. We need God and want him real in our lives, but if he fails to show up, we have found other options. It seems as our government gets bigger our God gets smaller and that need not be the case. Let's purpose in our heart to survive no matter what the world throws at us, to find our vision again, to purge out the old leaven, to determine to keep walking on the old paths, and to redeem the time while we still have it. In the book of Ezra, there was a vision to build a house for God. When adversaries showed up, they were ready because they knew about redeeming the time. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. (Ezra 7:10)

Ezra 8:21 says Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. Ezra prepared himself to survive the trial ahead, Ezra followed God's vision, Ezra proclaimed a fast to purge out the leaven, Ezra found the right way on the old path, and in the end Ezra redeemed the time. Before Ezra did these things, the work had ceased. (see Ezra 4:24). Let's proclaim a church fast, with as much participation as possible. There are many varieties of fasts you can choose.

1) Only Water for 24-hours, for 1,2, or more days, weekly or monthly until Camp Meeting

2) Only Water and juice for 1 to 7 24-hour days

3) Only water and a Daniel type Diet (See Daniel 1:16 --pulse which is beans/peas/legumes) for 7 days.

4) Giving up something significant for a long period of time (ex: sweets, Soda, coffee)

Below are a few Fasting Hints for success and tips for extended fasts The following are blueprints for a 3, 5, and 7 day fast:

1) Cut out coffee, caffeine, and soft drinks 48-72 hours before beginning fast.

2) Make day 1 of the fast a day of eating a good diet---

 a) Stick to water, fruits and vegetables mostly, chicken, nuts, low fat items

 b) Avoid foods that can cause rebound headaches if you avoid them: anything processed or man made, anything with preservatives, caffeine, corn syrup, sugary juices, syrups, refined sugars, desserts, fast/fried food, chemical additives (sugar substitutes, decaffeinated products, diet drinks)

 c) Take Vitamins (avoid ingredients such as caffeine, ephedra, mao hung, ginseng); drink teas (naturally decaffeinated)

3) Juice fruits and vegetables for Day 2 of the Fast. For 5-Day and 7-Day fasts, you may opt to juice an additional day.

4) Drink nothing but water for the rest of the fast. For a 7 day or longer fast, you may want to juice your final fasting day.