

12.29.24

Luke

Chapter 2 - A Most Unusual Advent
Uncanny Timing (vs.21-38)

Luke 2:21-38: And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.” And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came

in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.” And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God,

and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Luke is a very unusual gospel in the sense that you can't help but read through this particular gospel and see the unlikeliness of all these things that are taking place. Whether it's the individuals that are being called, such as Elizabeth and her old age to have a child or Mary and Joseph, who are basically poor people, having the Messiah in a place that is largely Gentile at first and living in the realm of Nazareth; that particular region will be largely Gentile and will have to go to Bethlehem to have the child. Everything seems to be unlikely. In fact, Mary will actually say, "How is this that it could happen to me?" And Elizabeth will say the same thing. And you'll see throughout the pages of the Gospel of Luke very unlikely people having most unusual things happen to them. It is encouraging for me because I realize that God can work in anybody's life, even mine, and that according to 1 Corinthians 1, that God can actually take the weak and

the foolish things and confound the wise with them. He can transform the things that are not to nullify the things that are. So, God is great, and it is about giving Him the praise, but never will you see it so clearly than in the pages of the Gospel of Luke.

When you come into the Gospel of Luke, in this particular text that we're going to be looking at, you can't help but step back and say, "Wow, the timing of God, the timing of these individuals is impeccable. How is it that they're at the right place at the right time?"

There's an interesting passage in the Book of Ecclesiastes. If you just take a moment and turn there with me, in Chapter 8. There are two verses that I want you to look at that as you go through the Book of Ecclesiastes, one of the things that it clearly states throughout this book is that nothing makes sense without God. If you take God out of the picture and you're just looking at the happenings of the earth, you're going, "That didn't make any sense." But you put God in the picture, and then God begins to reveal to you what He's actually doing. I think one of the reasons why things don't seem to make sense

is that we're trying to accomplish things that aren't necessarily things that God wants. So, we're not understanding why things aren't working out the way we think that they should, and that's one of the reasons why Ecclesiastes will say the race is not always to the swiftest. There are things that happen that you go, "The other person should have won this," or "This should have turned out this way." But Ecclesiastes 8 reads this way, (Ecclesiastes 8:6) "For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.

(Ecclesiastes 8:7) If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?"

In other words, you and I have no idea what's going to happen next. So, how can we have good timing? We don't know what's going to happen. So, how can we tell you when it's going to happen? And Scripture is telling us that it's impossible for us to be literally at the right place at the right time. Yet, in this passage that we'll be looking at today, everybody's at the right place at the right time.

It really starts off in Chapter 2 with a spirit of submission by Mary and Joseph at a time in which you wouldn't think would be a really good time to be submissive to governing authority. Not only is Herod king of that particular region in which they're in, but you have Ceasar Augustus, who is calling himself basically god; the first time really that the emperor began to take on deity status. You also have his own hitman, which is Quirinius, who's in that region of Syria just north. So, a lot of things that are happening. Boy, it just doesn't seem like a real good time to submit to authority. Authority doesn't seem to be the best.

Paul will write in Romans 13, and as you begin in that chapter, he starts off, "All authority is ordained by God." If you resist this authority, he says you're resisting God. Now, we know Paul is the prophet that pens this, and we know that the Spirit of God is directing his hand, but we don't oftentimes think of the time in which he writes this. The time in which he writes this Nero has just come into office. So, for Paul to proclaim, "You need to submit to all authority;" I know that the initial reaction is, "Well, he's not talking about governing authority." But he's exactly

talking about governing authority in that particular passage because he goes on to say, "You have to pay your taxes for this very reason." I think you thought the reason you pay your taxes was to get things accomplished in your neighborhood. That doesn't always happen. The actual reason why you pay taxes is because God told you to. See, that's the reason and I know that we like to debate and argue, and say, "They're really mishandling my funds; misallocating." That's what they do, but it doesn't make any difference. We submit to authority because we believe that when we do, God works on our behalf. How interesting and fortuitous it is that Joseph and Mary just happen to end up in Bethlehem just at the time when this child has to be born, according to Micah 5, in Bethlehem. But where does it start? Well, it starts with Caesar Augustus making sure that he has an account of all the people so that he's getting the money that he wants to accomplish the things that he wants to do. So, he begins to tax. It happens at a particular point in time in which Herod is the king of that particular region, and he begins the whole census process in which he goes by tribes. So, one of the tribes that he starts off with is the tribe of

Judah and they just happen to be moving them from Nazareth to little Bethlehem, which is in the tribe of Judah, which would fulfill the prophecy of Micah 5 in which the Savior would be born not only in this tribe of Judah, but in the lineage of David. It would have to work out just right, but where does it begin? It began with them submitting to governing authorities. All the way through, you begin to see the submission not only of obviously there had to be some kind of submission of Mary to Joseph. I can just see Joseph going, "We've got to go down and register." And I can just see her saying, "Uh, you do know I'm about to have a baby?" And I know that guys may tend to go, "Well, it's not a big deal, is it?" But the fact that she would submit to him in this journey is an amazing thing in and of itself. Were they privy to everything that was going to happen? They're shellshocked. They're not really understanding what's going on. God has announced to them what's going, but how is this going to happen and where is it that they have to be? Yet God is orchestrating because of their humility, because of their obedience, because of their submission; God is putting them at the right place at the right time.

We oftentimes wonder, “How do I get there? How do I find the place that I need to be?” And really, through Luke 2, you begin to see the wonderful timing of God. As we come to verse 21, in particular, we now see this timing continue and become more focused. As we watch God working in pinpoint accuracy on certain meetings within this particular passage, we see people bumping into each other. You know how you maybe go to a restaurant, and you go, “Oh, I didn't know you guys ate here,” and you just happen to be there at a particular time? Well, just imagine everything happening just right on schedule. After a while it just gets spooky. That's one of the reasons why I put as the title, “*An Uncanny Timing*,” because “uncanny” really has a connotation of something mysterious happening; something supernatural is happening in the timing of these events. You have to sit back, and you go, “That’s pretty wild.” It's more than ironic. It’s just plain uncanny.

(Luke 2:21) “And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus...”

“*Yeshua*,” which declares that Jehovah saves. It's a great declaration. Of course, we have the Savior and God became flesh and dwelt among us. So, Jehovah came to save us. His very name is demonstrating His desire and power to save.

“... His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

(Luke 2:22) And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.”

Now, the days of purification, and we won't take out time to read it, but according to Leviticus 12; Leviticus 12 is actually dedicated towards this time of purification. More specifically, the time of purification of the mother, and it's broken down into 7 days and then 33 days, 7 days, and then it has the 8th day, and the child is circumcised. Then, it goes into 33 more days of the woman's purification. So, 40 days total. So, it's after 40 days that this happens. You consider that you have a couple that have been living in Nazareth, they've been living around a lot of Gentiles, but they seem to stay true to what their faith was and

according to the Jewish tradition, according to Jewish laws, they've adhered to those things. God called them. He had them born in a Jewish family for a particular reason. So, these are the laws that are given. You were born in a particular family. I'm sure your parents ruled their household in a very unique way; not necessarily like the neighbors or like anybody else, but your house was different. Those were the parents that God gave you. There were times that they were wrong, there were times where they were right, but those are the parents God gave you. Why would we question God's wisdom in all of this? God was giving you exactly what you needed, and some of us, to just say this, need somebody stronger to push us into the arms of God and some of us need somebody more compassionate to draw us into His arms, but both God is using for a particular purpose. So, God's using the authority that He has designated for a particular time, and clearly these are Jews and they're going according to the Jewish law of Leviticus. She waits for this time. So, the timing in this is really conveyed 40 days. So, that kind of erases anything that may have been

happening through kind of a domino effect of the Christ child being born. It's now 40 days at least later.

We pick up in verse 23, that they go on to present Him before the Lord. Now, from what we understand, the mother and the father, as they go in, they go in to give a sacrifice unto the Lord for the purification. I know that oftentimes people say, "Well, she was a virgin, why would she need purification?" But more specifically, I think the point of the sacrifice and the time of her purification is a designation that she, like all women, needs the forgiveness of sins. In fact, the purification and the sacrifice actually says that she gives a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins in Leviticus 12. So, we know that she's going in for that particular reason, and the point is though Christ was holy, man is still not and there's a purification for this. So, they come in and I can just imagine, once again, you have this magnificent temple that Herod's been in the process of building. They say that the gate that she would have to go through would be the Nicanor Gate. Now, that's the Greek name for it. The Hebrews would call it the Eastern Gate which is an interesting point

in the sense that that's the gate according to Ezekiel, that the Messiah is going to come through. So, here she goes in presenting her body and her child to the Lord through the eastern gate and these gates are something else to behold. They say they are 50 cubits high. That would be 75 feet high, and they were made out of bronze and lined with gold and silver. It takes 20 men to open them. So, you can imagine these huge doors as she walks into this great place, in which she comes to present before the Lord, obeying God, committing the sacrifice.

Just a side note, Noah's ark was 50 cubits wide. So, here you have this wonderful picture of salvation that God is bringing, and she walks through and begins to present this child by way of dedication as well as admitting before the God of the universe that she's a sinner. If I were a nominal Jew living in a Gentile region, I'd probably go, "Why do I have to do this?" and I'm sure there were a lot of Jews that felt that way, but not Mary and Joseph. They would be there and do exactly what God told them to do at the exact time that He told them to do it.

Scripture tells us that she will offer sacrifice and according to Leviticus 12, she needs to bring a lamb. However, if they're poor, they can bring turtle doves. So, she does. It's one of the signs that we know. I oftentimes think of that wonderful passage in Corinthians which says, "Though He were rich, yet for your sake He became poor." So, you have that fulfilled within the passage.

It reads this way,

(Luke 2:23) "(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),"

(Luke 2:24) and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord..."

That's twice it's repeated, "according to the Law of the Lord."

"... "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.""

Of course, that tax actually just jumps over the fact that you give a lamb and kind of shows that this is what they

gave according to the Law. The passage is telling us that they're adhering to everything that God told them to do. I've oftentimes talked with individuals and some of the conversations have oftentimes led to "Well, how do you know that God wants you to do this? How do you have a relationship with God? How do you know that you can visit with Him? And when are these times that you get together with Him?" and the same people, clearly not always, but oftentimes are doing other things in their life. For instance, they may be pursuing hobbies, or they may be pursuing sports. So, as they're asking the question, they're pursuing these other things and they're going, "Why don't I really ever see these things work out in my life?" I'm going, "Well, maybe you're at the wrong place at the wrong time. And maybe you're not looking for the right things." One of the things that we have clearly throughout, in the very beginning of Luke especially, is every one of these people whether it's Elizabeth or whether it's the people that were surrounding the temple at the particular day that Zacharias was giving offering or whether it's Mary or whoever it is, and we're going to

look at Simeon and Anna within the text, they were seeking the right thing. They were seeking God. They were seeking a relationship with God. They were looking for the redemption of God. That's what they were seeking.

Where do you spend your time and how do you know that you're at the right place at the right time? Well, I do think it's interesting that in many scenarios God has actually given us specific times to be in specific places. For instance, on the first day of the week, we're supposed to come and worship God. That's a New Testament Law for the church in a sense. In fact, Paul will write to the Corinthians, "On the first day, when you gather together..." We know that at the beginning of Acts that was at the beginning of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week. Is it possible that if you're at church on the first day of the week when you're supposed to be, that God will be speaking to you; that God will be visiting; that things will begin to fall in place? Perhaps, maybe you decided to go some other place, and maybe the people that you meet there are not the right kind of people and

things aren't working out. In the context of all this, you have Herod, you have Caesar Augustus, you have Quirinius, and every one of them pursued exactly what they wanted to pursue. But historically, none of their lives panned out. Every one of them died in misery. So, probably one of the worst things that could ever happen is you pursue whatever you want to pursue and finally get it. But it's not going to bring the result that you long for. But here you have people that are seeking for God, and guess what's going to happen this day? They're going to find Him. Now, what are the odds of that happening? That the presence of God is going to be in their midst, and they're actually going to find Him? Well, all of this is a setup. See, that's one of the reasons why we couldn't just tear this whole text out. All of this is a setup. Everybody's doing exactly what they're supposed to do, and that's why things are falling in order. See. Do what is right. If you're looking for the wrong things, you'll never find the right things. It'll never happen. When I say, "wrong things," I'm saying if you're pursuing power or recognition or prestige, obviously like some of these other people were, comfort, pleasure; if this is the goal of your life, you're looking for

the wrong stuff. I mean, Timothy says don't love money. That's not saying that you can't have it. It's just saying don't love it. Well, that would be you seeking after these things. It goes on and says, "But seek after these things," and he talks about righteousness and all these things. So, what are you looking for?

And you're going to see in verse 24,

(Luke 2:24) "and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

(Luke 2:25) And..."

"Behold!" now, verse 25 is a moment of epiphany. "Wow. How did that happen?" I mean, it's a demonstrative in the text, which means everybody's surprised. Nobody probably knows who this Simeon is, but Simeon knows who he is and knows what he's been looking for because the passage really begins to explain that this is a guy that's been devout. He's been righteous. He's been looking for, and the picture is such that God has promised him that he would see the day of salvation. I mean, could you imagine? I mean, you consider that 4000 years from

the time of man, they've been looking for it, and this guy just happens to trip over Him? So, that's the reason for the demonstrative in the passage.

It's at this time, behold,

“... there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon...”

I like the fact that his name is Simeon because it takes you all the way back to Leah in the Old Testament and naming one of the 12 tribes, Simeon. The reason why she names this son, Simeon, is because she cries unto the Lord and her cry is basically, “You know I feel unloved.” And God goes, “I know.” So, He gives her this child, and she says, “I'm going to name him Simeon.” Which means “the Lord has heard my cry.” The same context is in this because the Lord has heard the cry of Simeon. Perhaps throughout his life he had been unloved, perhaps overlooked and insignificant. Obviously, an insignificant next to Caesar Augustus, who perceives himself to be god in this realm of the universe.

Behold,

“... a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout...”

That is to say, he was God-fearing; put the Lord first; sought the Lord.

Watch the phrase,

“looking for the consolation of Israel...”

Now, watch the way this ends. It's very interesting because we know, according to the Book of Acts that the Holy Spirit has not come upon the church until this point, but that doesn't mean the Holy Spirit hasn't been acting all the way through the Old Testament. As David will even say, “Do not cast Your Spirit from me.” His point being that the Holy Spirit would come upon him, oftentimes in the prophecy that was being proclaimed.

Just to emphasize the purpose of the Holy Spirit which makes distinction, is that the purpose of the “holy” is that in John 15:26, Christ will say, “He will bear witness of me.” Galatians will actually call Him the Spirit of Christ. So, the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to point to Christ.

The same thing is seen in John 16:14. In which it states, "He will glorify Me."

I like the way that it's put in John 16:13, "He will guide you into all truth."

Jesus says, "I am truth." So, what you have is a guide; the Spirit moving us towards and in the right direction. One of the words that we use defining this would be "unction," and "unction" is defined as "an anointing;" as well as it gives an interesting picture of a pushing. Thus, the word "Spirit," "pneuma," like a wind pushing. You know how you feel like you're being driven somewhere? You don't know why you're heading in that direction. You thought it was just to get a popsicle, but you just seem to be moving in a particular direction. So, in this text, the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Now, what Luke is going to convey; once again, Luke pens the Gospel of Luke as well the Book of Acts, which introduces us to the Holy Spirit. So, in this book, he's going to be emphasizing the Holy Spirit and the working in the Holy Spirit in orchestrating these things. See, the wonderful thing about all this is that what some of this

appears to be, is it seems like a serendipitous event. That is to say, it seems like a fortuitous coincidence that has happened; a stroke of luck. "We just bounced into each other." No, no. This is the orchestration of God. It reminds me of, as we oftentimes read, one of our favorite passages in Psalm 37:4, that if you'll delight yourself in the Lord, He'll give you the desires of your heart. Well, what you're finding is that God is orchestrating through circumstances and timing. He's orchestrating to bring about the fulfillment of the desires of these individuals. Because what does the passage say? He had been looking for the consolation of Israel. I would say he's looking for the right thing. Will he find it? Oh, yeah, yeah, he'll find it. I like the way that it's put in Chronicles. It says this as the prophet says to Asa in the Old Testament, "If you seek for Him, He will let you find Him." He says actually, earlier in that verse, "The Lord is with you when you are with Him." Now, in that phrase, he's not talking about the omnipresence of God or the lack thereof. What he's talking about is the empowerment and the favor of God upon you. So, if in fact you are with Him, you're thinking like Him, your desires are the same as His; His power, His

influence, His favor will be upon you. We'll put it another way, you'll be at the right place at the right time. I mean, how wonderful it is when you consider that here he is, and he's been wishing for this, he's been longing for this, and according to verse 26,

(Luke 2:26) “And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

And it seems like at this particular juncture, he might get him pretty close to that. I suppose that there had been times that he was thinking, but he had had this sense of, “But God told me.” Have you ever had those moments where it's like, as if He had audibly told you, there is this unction that goes, “This is going to happen”? You don't know how it's going to happen. You don't know when it's going to happen. Sometimes, you wonder if you're really going to make it to see it happen, but you've just had this sense of confidence. Let me say this too, that one of the great types of evidence of the Holy Spirit in you according to Acts Chapter 4, is that you do have confidence. If in fact you're in this quagmire of “might happen,” it couldn't

happen,” “it sometimes could happen,” probability, possibility; if you're in those realms, then that's not the Spirit. Where the Spirit of God is there's confidence and there's boldness and there's a sense of “it's going to happen. It's going to happen.” Now, that has to be the Holy Spirit, because if I don't know what's going to happen how can I know when it's going to happen? But God does, and God, through His Spirit, begins to work in the lives of people. Now, what's interesting is you see this orchestration; God is using the government, God is using the authority of the husband, God is using the Law of the Old Testament, and as people begin to align with what Scripture says, then God begins to reveal. So, all of them are wishing for the right thing which puts them clearly on target.

So, it says in verse 27, which is to be noted, you might want to underline it,

(Luke 2:27) “And he came in the Spirit into the temple...”

That's a great phrase, isn't it? I mean, the Holy Spirit hadn't even come on the church yet, but the Holy Spirit is moving him because his wish is, “I want to see the Christ,”

and what's the job of the Holy Spirit? To point to Christ. So, here he is longing to see Christ, and He goes, "Come on, I'm going to take you." We know the whole reason they're there at the temple at this particular time is not necessarily because it's the Sabbath. They're there as an individual reason because it's 40 days after her purification. So, there's not really a specific time in which everybody should be there, but she's following what the law is, and now he's following what the Spirit says. Both are being moved to come in and meet at the same time.

(Luke 2:27) "And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,"

Once again, what is it emphasizing? They're just doing what God told them to do. If you asked me how I met my wife, I'd go, "I just went to church." I didn't think that in the 3rd grade I'd find my wife, but I actually did. I think the Lord knew that I was a slow learner, and that I would need convincing. I happened to be in church when I found the perfect person for me. Be at the right place. Do what God says. You know, it's interesting because I went to

church on Sunday, and she did too. Same day. That's an amazing thing.

(Luke 2:27) “And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

(Luke 2:28) then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

(Luke 2:29) “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;”

“You did exactly what You told me and promised me You would.”

(Luke 2:30) “For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

(Luke 2:31) Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

(Luke 2:32) A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES...”

It's actually quoting from Isaiah 42, as well as probably Isaiah 49, but the glory and the promise that was given. In other words, God is fulfilling the promise, and he's getting to see it. He just happens to be at the right place at the

right time. It's very clear as we're going in this, that there's no luck involved in any of this. Everybody's doing exactly what God says.

(Luke 2:33) “And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.”

Which is telling us that they weren't necessarily looking for any of this to happen, but they were obeying what God told them to do.

My dad used to tell me that you trip over happiness on the road to obedience; that you actually can't make yourself happy, but as you're doing what God tells you to do, you find happiness. Clearly, the joy of the Lord is upon all these.

(Luke 2:34) “And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—

(Luke 2:35) and a sword will pierce even your own soul...”

“This is not going to be an easy time for you. You’re going to watch your son be crucified.” She won't understand all of this at this juncture.

“... to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

In other words, God's going to reveal just how man hates God. There are many things that the cross reveals, but that's one of them. Man says, “If God would just reveal Himself. If He would just be kind to me.” How much kinder could you be than to die on the cross for somebody?

(Luke 2:36) “And there was a prophetess...”

Oh, another oops. An event, possibility, an accident? No, no.

“There was a prophetess, Anna....”

And of course, you can't help but think of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1, and she just happened to be going into giving a sacrifice to the Lord during those days. But it wasn't till the day that she finally gave herself to the Lord that God began to reveal Himself to her. But while she was doing that; while she was in the temple. It really wasn't at a time where the priest was really a good priest. I think a lot of times we wait for all the planets to align for everybody

else to do the right thing and God says, “You don't have to count on that. All you have to do is you do the right thing, and I'll orchestrate in your life.”

“And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage.”

And then he dies. That's not very long to be married to somebody.

And as the passage goes on, it says,

(Luke 2:37) “and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

(Luke 2:38) At that very moment...”

Is this text about timing? At that very moment, something happened.

“... she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

For all those who were looking for the right things. See, if you're looking for the right things, if you're doing the right things, that will put you in the right place at the right time. God will begin to work in your life. I hear disgruntled people all the time say, "Well, you don't know my parents." Yeah, but Scripture says, "Honor and obey your mother and father." "How do I know what my life will bring me?" You don't need to figure it all out. God will put right things in your path and direct your path if you'll do what God tells you to do today. If you'll obey. This is one of the reasons why we tell people, "Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together." Why? Why is that so important? Well, you want to be at the right place at the right time? God begins to work in that place.

I tell on myself, and I don't usually like to do it because it embarrasses me. When that happens, I just don't feel really good, but I'm going to go ahead and do it anyway. When we first went out to California and we were going to school, and I was heading to Biola University, I figured I had done God a lot of favors by virtue of actually going out there; selling everything I had and going out there and

going to school. So, I figured, "Ok God, You owe me on this one." I'm thinking that I might go into ministry, but something where I don't have to stand and talk in front of people. God doesn't always listen to us, I'm just saying, which I'm thankful for. So, I'm feeling He's a little bit beholden. So, we start the process, and Connie, when we first got there, started working for Underground Evangelism, which was just down the street. She could actually walk there. Underground Evangelism was smuggling Bibles into Russia at the time, and she was able to work for them in Pasadena. So, things seemed to be going ok. I got registered and paid for my first year, which I had saved up for. Then, my wife came up to me one day, it was kind in the middle of a semester, and she goes, "I'm expecting." I didn't feel like she was being very considerate. Because, quite frankly, I had been working to get this done. I had just signed up for a full load of 17, 19 units, and I'm going, "Ok. So, what do you want me to do?" But we had also made a commitment and a promise, which one of those promises that you kind of regret making, that she would not work if she had a child. She would stay home. So, there I am with my commitment

and feeling pretty bad about that. So, as time went on, of course she got to the point where we just didn't feel like it was good for her to continue to go to work. So, I needed to get a job. So, I'm going to school full time and looking for a job. So, I'm a little upset about it. So, I get the LA Times; I guess that's what it was, and they have a lot of jobs going through the pages and I've got a magnifying glass, going through all the jobs and the whole time I'm just pretty much grumbling. I was pretty upset. As I'm looking, my wife comes up to me and she goes, "You know, it's Wednesday night." And I said, "Yeah, so what?" She goes, "Well, we're going to church, right?" And I said, "Why don't you go? I'll stay here because I got to find a job." Now, I just want you to remember I'm going out there for ministry. I wasn't really excited about what God was doing. So, she says, "Ok." And she didn't fight me on it. She went and she came back, and of course I went through all the paper, and she goes, "Did you find anything?" I go, "No." And she said, "Well, I talked to a guy while I was at church, and he said he could use some help." I said, "Well, what does he do?" "He has a mechanic shop." And I said, "Well, you know, I'm not that

good. I couldn't just walk in and take the job. I'd done shade tree mechanic, but you know." She goes, "Well, he said he'd work with you." I go, "Well, my schedule is really tight." She goes, "He said he would be flexible." And I said, "No, I'm not going to mess with it." So, I did go to church. I want to pat myself on the back at this moment. I did go to church Sunday, and wouldn't you know, he walked up to me. He said, "I heard you're going to Biola. I've got some guys going to Biola and Talbot, and they oftentimes come and work with me. Would you think about it? I know you need a job." And I said, "I don't know that much about it." I'm actually trying to talk him out of it, and the guy's trying to talk me into it. And I finally go, "All right." Well, I can tell you through the years that I was there taking classes that it was the most therapeutic, the most encouraging, the most comforting job I've ever had. We enjoyed working together. We'd have theological debates, different ones. One guy was getting his masters in exercise Physiology. Another guy was getting his medical doctorate, actually graduated from Biola in the medicine field. But we would talk theology, and we'd just have the greatest time. It was an encouraging time. All of

us just got along which was great. I mean, as far as secular jobs, it was the greatest job I ever had. The greatest job I ever had. I look back on those days, I would have to say it was a perfect job for me at that time. Now, in spite of me, somebody was in the right place at the right time. When you begin to submit to the Lord, and when you begin to stop looking for all the wrong things and start looking for the right things, God begins to direct in areas of your life that you need taken care of. There are areas of our life that are a part of our life, but as we just keep that focus of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all those other things will be taken care of. It's very encouraging when I think of and consider this particular passage, because it's not just a series of events that is happening. It's God's perfect timing that is orchestrating the fulfillment of prophecy and the desires of hearts all in one as He begins to move. God will move through circumstances. God will move through authority and God will move through your heart as the Spirit of God begins to direct you to the Lord.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your leading and direction in our lives and the fact that we can depend on You to do that. There are a lot of decisions that we make throughout our lives and oftentimes we find ourselves in confusion, but You reveal to us this particular passage of great simplicity, of two people that are just obeying You. They know what they need to do, and they do it. They don't know what's in store, but what will be in store is a perfection of Your intricate timing in their lives. You'll begin to move in such a way that they'll just stand back and gasp at what You're doing. You want God to work in your life?