

# The Miracle of the Moment

## Galatians 4:4-5

Based on a sermon by Greg Fine

Hah! Exactly one minute has passed! Isn't that amazing! My watch tracks time. It has a second hand which moves every second. 60 seconds moves the big hand one step forward to mark the passing of a minute. Isn't it absolutely amazing how long one minute of silence seems and how short one minute seems when you are doing something you enjoy?

Did you know that there are only 27 days until Christmas? That means there are approximately 648 hours until we celebrate the birth of Christ. Assuming you sleep about 8 hours each night, that only leaves approximately 25,920 minutes left to get done all the things we need to do before Christmas arrives. There are presents to purchase and wrap, parties to attend, people to visit and we only have 25,920 minutes left to get everything done that needs to be done. Given that we only have 25,920 minutes left before Christmas, why did you just waste one precious moment sitting there doing nothing?

As we begin our Christmas season at New Covenant Baptist Church, I want us to recognize the significance of one moment. I want us to recognize not only the significance of one moment in time but also of the strategic nature of those moments. Have you ever stopped to consider how important timing is to everything that exists?

Do you plant tomato plants in November? Do you paint the outside of your house in January? Do you go snowboarding in July? No? Why not? It's not the right time! There is a right time for such activities.

Think about the importance of timing for our daily lives. If you have ever missed a flight because you arrived one minute after boarding you know the importance of timing. Maybe because you were delayed at work you missed a major accident on the interstate. Does one minute make a difference? Just ask those who made it out of the Twin Towers minutes before they collapsed. One moment, one sixty-second interval of time, placed in just the right location can make all the difference in the world.

Our theme this year for Christmas is called, The Miracle of Christmas. It is so easy to get all wrapped up (no pun intended) in the activity of the season that we miss the miracle of Christmas. This Christmas season, let's spend some moments reflecting upon the significance of Christ's birth. Galatians 4:4 is an incredible verse. It says, **"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons,"** (NKJV). Did you hear that? God's Word says, **"But when the fullness of the time had come ..."** At just the right time God sent His Son. That represents the Miracle of the Moment.

One of my favorite Christmas movies is "Miracle on 34th Street," the old black and white version. It is a wonderful, magical tale about an old man named Kris Kringle who believes he is Santa Clause and his attempt to get others to believe in him as well. At the beginning of the movie Kris Kringle arrives just as the Macy's Thanksgiving day parade is starting up. Kris finds the department store

Santa inebriated and Mrs. Walker hires Kris to take his place. Was it just by chance or coincidence that Kris Kringle was there at the parade that day? No! That represents the miracle of the moment. At just the right time, Kris Kringle showed up at the parade and rescued not only the parade, but the jobs of Ms. Walker and countless others. Ms. Walker failed to recognize the miracle of the moment. She failed to realize the significance of hiring Kris Kringle to be the store Santa at the time.

The Bible says, "**But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son ...**" But the reality is, most people missed the miracle of the moment. Most people did not recognize the significance of Christ's birth at the time. There was too much activity, people were much too busy to pay any attention to the young girl giving birth to her first child out in a stable there in Bethlehem. Many missed the moment.

Let's dig into these couple of verses and see the miracle of the moment.

### 1. **WHEN** God's sent His Son.

Paul says, "**When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son.**" In the context of this passage Paul has been talking about the faith of Abraham and how he believed the promise of God that the whole world would be blessed through his seed. Some 2,000 years had passed since God gave His promise to Abraham. In the mean time, God had given the Jewish people his law through Moses. For some 1,300 years, Israel had struggled under God's law. They were unable to keep the law. Under the law they were in bondage to sin. They were all in a hopeless sinful condition, just like all of us.

Finally "**the fullness of time**" or just the right time came for God to be revealed to the world bodily, through His Son, Jesus Christ. There are several factors that mark the "fullness" of God's timing of sending Jesus into the world. Let's just look at four:

- A. Greek Culture: In 350BC the son of a Macedonian (Gk) king, Philip, was born. He was called Alexander. We know him as 'Alexander the great'. He conquered the 'known world' in 12 years and brought tremendous changes to the areas he conquered. His goal was to Hellenize the world, to spread the Greek culture and language over the world. For the first time since Babel peoples of many nations were united by a common language, Greek. It is the language in which our New Testament is written. Because of Alexander and Greek influence, the gospel of Jesus Christ could be spread and the NT written in primarily one language.
- B. Pax Romana: Rome had conquered the divided and declining Greek territories and ushered in what is known as the pax Romana, the Roman peace which provided societal stability. This was an enforced peace. It was the rule of one government imposed by Rome's conquering armies. This peace extended over most of the civilised earth making travel and commerce possible in a way previously unrealised. Great Roman roads designed to quickly move their armies linked the Roman empire. Those famous Roman roads and the freedom of safe travel would be used by Paul and other missionaries to spread the gospel across the empire.

- C. Jewish Synagogues: Through their Babylonian exile, the Jews had once and for all forsaken idolatry. While in exile the Jews had established a synagogue system where they worshiped and taught the law of God. The law had prepared many of them for their Messiah, they were expecting the Messiah to come. Their synagogues would serve as a foundational model for churches and springboards for evangelism. God's timing was perfect!
- D. Spiritual Vacuum: Religiously, that ancient world was sunk in a moral abyss so deep that even pagans cried out against it. *"Historians tell us that the Roman world was in great expectation, waiting for a deliverer, at the time Jesus was born. The old religions were dying; the old philosophies were empty and powerless to change men's lives. Strange new mystery religions were invading the empire. Religious bankruptcy and spiritual hunger were everywhere. God was preparing the world for the arrival of His Son."* (Warren Wiersbe, Be Free, p. 90) Nothing could fill the "God-shaped vacuum" inside the human heart. These religious longings insured that, "the fullness of time had come."

At just the right time in history Jesus was born. The coming of Christ into the world was not a matter of chance or coincidence. His coming was part of God's divine plan established before the foundation of the world.

## 2. HOW God sent His Son.

Jesus was "**sent forth... born of a woman.**" He was God's Son but also the son of His mother. He was human as well as divine. He was the God-Man. Jesus was not only "**born of a woman**" but He was "**born under the law.**" He was born to a Jewish mother under the Jewish law.

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon mused on the significance of the incarnation of Jesus:

Infinite, and yet an infant.  
Eternal, and yet born of a woman.  
Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast.  
Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms.  
King of angels, and yet the reputed son of Joseph.  
Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised son.<sup>1</sup>

All His life He perfectly kept the Law of Moses. Jesus said in Mt.5:17, "**Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**" Jesus was the fully divine Son of God, the fully human Son of man, and the completely righteous keeper of God's law.

Rom.8:3-4 says, "**For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**"

## 3. WHY God sent His Son.

Paul says in v.5, that Jesus came "**to redeem those who were under the law.**" "**Redeem**" simply means "to buy out" or "to buy back." It was used of slaves whose freedom had been purchased. Jesus paid the awful price of our sin by His

blood sacrifice on the cross. Not only was God's purpose to **"redeem"** us but that we might **"receive the adoption as sons."** **"Adoption"** of course means giving sonship to someone who is not one's natural son. In Paul's day, sometimes a wealthy man with no natural children would set free a young slave and then adopt him as his son. That's what God did through Christ. We were slaves to sin and to the law. God paid the price for our freedom through Jesus' shed blood and then adopted us into His family. He had transformed us from slaves into sons.

John Stott writes, *"So the divinity of Christ, the humanity of Christ and the righteousness of Christ uniquely qualified Him to be man's redeemer. If He had not been man, He could not have redeemed men. If He had not been a righteous man, He could not have redeemed unrighteous men. And if He had not been God's Son, He could not have redeemed men for God or made them the sons of God."*

The miracle of Christmas is the miracle of the moment – at just the right time God sent His Son into the world. The miracle of Christmas is not limited to the fact that God came at just the right time, but that He still comes today.

This Christmas season many people will be content to go through the motions, they will endure the busy activity of the season without ever experiencing the miracle of Christmas. But some this holiday season need nothing short of a miracle. The good news is that God comes to us at just the right time with just what we need for the moment.

Listen to these promises from God's Word to see His character reflected in these actions.

Psalm 145:15, **"The LORD upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season."**

Psalm 104:27, **"These all wait for You, That You may give them their food in due season."**

Deuteronomy 11:14, **"then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil."**

At just the right time God provides exactly what is needed for the moment. God knows exactly what you are going through. He knows exactly what you need. At just the right time He will come to you and provide what you need for the moment. His timing is always perfect.

Part of the miracle of Christmas is the miracle of the moment. God's time is always right. His timing is never off. He not only came at just the right time, He continues to come to us at just the right time. Just when we need Him most, He is there. Romans 5:6 says, **"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."** The NIV translates that verse, **"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."** When do you need a miracle? When you are utterly helpless, when you have come to the end of your rope, when you have no more options and no

more resources, then you are in a position to receive a miracle from God. When we are utterly helpless and hopeless, Christ still comes to us today.

It seems we are always waiting for just the right time to do something. We are waiting for just the right time to make that commitment of our life to Christ as Savior and Lord. Maybe you are waiting for just the right time to make that commitment to church membership. Maybe you are waiting for just the right time to commit to a closer walk with Christ. Maybe you've been waiting for just the right time to give up to Jesus that bad habit.

2 Corinthians 6:2 says, **"For He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."** Now is the right time for you. Today is the right time to make that commitment to Christ. Jesus said in Mark 1:15, **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."** Now is the right time to let Jesus make those changes in your life. Now is the right time to repent and believe the gospel of your salvation. Now is the time to join the church. Now is the time to recommit to your marriage and family. Now is the time to renew your commitment to walk in close fellowship with Christ. The right time is now to draw close to the Lord!

One single moment, one sixty-second span of time can make all the difference in eternity. One moment in time can determine an eternal destiny. All it takes is one, single moment. Right now is just such a moment. You don't have to live your life separated from God's love and blessing. Today is the right time to receive God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

I invite you to make that commitment today. This moment can change your earthly direction as well as your eternal destiny. Right now is the right time to receive God's gift of salvation. It is just what you need for just this exact moment. That represents the miracle of Christmas – God comes to us at just the right time with just what we need. Will you recognize the moment for what it truly is—a miracle? Don't put off making that commitment you need to make today because now is the right time.

#### PRAYER

If you want to make that commitment of your life to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, then repeat this prayer quietly in your heart along with me as I pray.

Dear God, I don't want to live one more moment without you. I don't want to live one more moment without your love filling my heart and life. I ask your forgiveness for living my life without you, for not recognizing your great love for me. I believe Jesus is your Son, who left heaven and came to earth to die on the cross for my sin. I believe He rose from the dead and is alive today. He came at just the right time just for me. Today, I want to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I choose in this moment to receive the greatest gift ever given – the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.