



Time to Move

Thank you for joining us for this evening of hope and remembrance. And the hope part is easy. We say that where there is life, there is hope, and that is certainly true. Tonight, we stand on the threshold of doing something great right here where we live. So we have hope, and we shall be messengers of hope about this disease.

The Remembrance That is the challenge. In preparing my talk this evening, I asked myself: How can I honor those who have passed on, their mothers, their fathers, siblings, big mamas and paw paws; cousins and aunts, and caretakers? What would honor them most? What would they want me to say?

I think they would want me to talk with you about time. Because time is something we don't appreciate until we're out of it. And so, tonight, let's turn to 1 Corinthians 13:11 and listen in as Paul speaks to this beloved people about the lessons he has learned in his life. Paul says,

11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, I used to think like a child, and I reasoned like a child; When I grew in years,, I did away with childish things.

If you'll allow me to paraphrase, I think Paul was saying,

When I was a child, it was time to speak like a child, it was time to think like a child, and it was time to reason like a child. When I grew in years, it was time to put away childish things. Tonight I want to dialogue with you briefly on the subject: Does anybody know what time it is? Does anybody really care?

The Bible speaks of **time** some 566 times in the New American Standard Bible. It speaks of time almost twice as much as faith or love, so we begin to realize that **time** is an important Biblical concept.

Most of us would agree that these are difficult times and there are even more difficult times ahead. The world has literally gone mad. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion is all around. We live in a nation where the president pursues the interests of those who have and cares not for those who have not.

A man once asked Diogenes what was the proper time for supper, and he made answer,

"If you are a rich man, whenever you please; and if you are a poor man, whenever you can."

Diogenes knew what time it was.



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

2724 McCart Avenue ♦ Fort Worth, TX 76110 ♦ (817) 922-0258

We live in a time when we are misinformed by the news media, miseducated by our schools, and misused by police, but we can no longer seek a remedy from the Supreme Court of the United States, because they are too busy stealing elections and selecting presidents.

We live in a time when a handicapped Texas attorney general wants to deny other handicapped people the very rights which have helped him get where he is today.

Does he know what time it is?

We live in a time when families watch wrestling matches where men beat up blindfolded women, and never think about what this teaches them about relationships between men and women.

This year is the year in which Dr. King would have turned 75, and all we want to do is party and drink Bacardi.

We live in a time when our president can propose spending trillions of dollars to go to Mars, but there's no money for health care and jobs. ***He knows what time it is, but he doesn't really care.***

We excuse the behavior of pedophiles, adulterers and rapists because they can sing or rap or play a child's game, but we sit in judgment of girls, boys, men and women who have a disease, because we're worried about how they got it.

We live in a time when even insured people can't afford to get medical care because they can't meet the co-pay and the deductible. We live in a time when CNN tells us about the economic recovery, but in our neighborhoods, all we see is the same old poverty and joblessness and hopelessness.

And now here we come, wanting to add HIV and AIDS to your list of concerns. Listen, I understand that times are hard. I understand that your plate is already full, ***but what I need you to understand right here and right now is that denial is killing our people.*** *Our pastor often says that to waste time is to commit suicide. And we have committed suicide to the tune of 28.1 million deaths and 13.2 million orphans. 8000 people die every day, but that's not the end of the story. Just under 14,000 new cases of HIV occur every single day.*

I need for you to understand that if you are waiting for this disease to touch you on a personal level, you're too late. It already has. In the 10+ years I have been working with people living with



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

2724 McCart Avenue ♦ Fort Worth, TX 76110 ♦ (817) 922-0258

HIV and AIDS, I want you to know that I have seen the face of this disease begin to resemble you and me, and I have wondered why.

I have cried at funerals, and I have helped mothers make deathbed arrangements for the care of their children, and I have seen them die alone and afraid. During one awful December, I experienced the deaths of 2 of the women I worked with, and 6 of their family members, all to AIDS. The only time I saw a preacher was at the funerals. Not one time did any of these people receive a visit, a telephone call, or even a blanket, from a church. I think of the young woman who finally got up the nerve to tell her mother she was HIV positive, and was then allowed to use one cup, one plate, one knife, one spoon, and one fork. They told her children not to touch their own mama, all because of ignorance. That young woman needs a place to go where people will show her love. Her family needs a place to go where they can be educated out of their ignorance. And if they won't come to us, we need to go to them.

I think of young brothers who go into the criminal justice system HIV negative and come out HIV positive. They need a place to go where they can find out about the community resources available to them. And if they won't come to us, we need to go to them.

I think of young men and women who can't afford their medication because God's people don't mobilize and organize and advocate for health care benefits, not only for plwha, but for all people. They need us.

I think of elderly men who solicit the services of young girls around the first of every month with no thought of HIV and AIDS. I think of those young girls who trick with whomever they can to make their ends, afraid to get tested because they're afraid of the results.

That old man and that young girl need us, and we must reach out in the name of Jesus to stem the tide of this disease. That old man is somebody's father. That young girl is somebody's child. They need hope. They need to know that their past doesn't have to be their future. They need to know they can live with the results of a positive HIV test, because we, God's people, will be there to help.

I think of the young men and women who think they can look at somebody and tell if they have HIV; they need to be educated, and we must care.

I think of a friend who contracted HIV at the age of 15 from her very first boyfriend, and she is still alive now, some 18 years later. I think about her and other people living strong active lives in every imaginable profession, raising families, and living with hope, despite a diagnosis.



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

2724 McCart Avenue ♦ Fort Worth, TX 76110 ♦ (817) 922-0258

I think of these people who smile on the outside but cry on the inside because they are so lonely, even as they sit in the pews of their churches, because they are living with a secret they're afraid to share.

The numbers are overwhelming; the issues complex, and the impact on our community-devastating. It's easy to throw up our hands in surrender, but **we have to put aside childish things. It's time to move.**

This is a problem that will never, ever go away until **we, God's people**, deal with it. To paraphrase Malcolm X, The government **won't** do this for us. Social agencies **can't** do it for us. We've got to do this one for ourselves.

Does anyone remember the middle passage? an institution called slavery? Jim Crow? Can you imagine situations more hopeless? And yet our forebears prayed to the same God we pray to, and God raised up ordinary people who did extraordinary things. He took a Sojourner Truth, he took a Harriet Tubman, he took a Fannie Lou Hamer, he took a Nat Turner, he took a Marcus Garvey and they led the way. People like these made it possible for us to be where we are tonight. It's alright to look back, but now it's time to look forward, and church, it's time to move, for this is our watch. **This is our time.** It's time to move.

*You see, the hope and remembrance we celebrate tonight is real. This disease is real. But more real than HIV is the fact that my God is real. And when I look at HIV and AIDS through God's eyes, then **I know what time it is. I know what to do. And I know it's time to move.***

We ask what would Jesus do in the case of HIV/AIDS but do we really want to know, and will we do what Jesus would do? We know that Jesus would show love and compassion; that he said to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. There's not one instance in the Bible where Jesus asked a deaf man, or a leper, or a bent-over woman, or a blind man, or a lame man, or a man named Lazarus, or a woman with an issue of blood, or Jarius' daughter, what they did to deserve their plight. All Jesus did was to love. What would Jesus do? You already know. Now, will you do it?

Will we continue to sit on the wall and die? Or do we know what time it is? Will we continue to bury our heads in the sand? Or will we move out in the name of Jesus and conquer this disease?

Some questions to ask yourself:

1. As individuals, as a church, are we **contributing** to the oppression of those living with HIV/AIDS, **or are we alleviating suffering?**



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

2724 McCart Avenue ♦ Fort Worth, TX 76110 ♦ (817) 922-0258

2. Are we open to welcoming all God's people? To supporting them, caring for them, loving them, assuring them they are loved by God and will be just as welcome in the household of God as we are?

Look, the challenge for people living with HIV/AIDS is not getting to Jesus. The challenge they have is with us Christians who get in the way. Isaiah has reminded us that ***we are all the work of God's hands. No one is indispensable; and no one can be left out.***

3. As an individual, do I really believe God? Listen, we know we can't do this thing on our own power. Do we have the kind of faith to take us out of "what we've always done" or "what we think we could do" and instead expects God to do something that's never been done before in your life, your church, your nation, your world.

Is there anything too hard for God? Can God heal sick bodies? Yes. Can God cure disease? Yes. Can our hands, strengthened by God, make a difference in the world? Do we really believe that that we can do greater things than even he did? **If we believe God, it's time to move.**

Because when God's people begin to move on one accord, things start to happen. When God's righteous people begin to touch and agree; when we begin to pray effectively and fervently, when we move on our faith;. When we decide to be His hands and feet, when we make the word flesh; when we decide to make full proof of this ministry He has called us to, **we can do anything, because God can do anything.**

Martin Luther King, Jr. said there comes a time when silence is a betrayal. My brothers and sisters in Christ, **that time is now.**

It is time to put aside denial. **It's time** to break the silence. **It's time** to stop the shaming and blaming. **It's time to move.** It's time to remember who we are and whom we serve.

It's time to stop the doubting and start the shouting. It's time to move.

It is time to remember that faith is an action verb, and until we move to make our faith tangible, we are not fulfilling God's purpose for our lives. **I say it again, church. It's time to move.**

It's time to be revolutionaries once more, and like the revolution Jesus began 2 millennia ago, this resolution will not be televised.

It's time to get educated, it's time to get tested, it's time to end the denial that is ending our lives. **It's time to move.**

It's time to pack up, it's time to saddle up, it's time to giddy up. **It's time to move.**



Breaking the Silence - Building Hope

2724 McCart Avenue ♦ Fort Worth, TX 76110 ♦ (817) 922-0258

This is a critical time for the church, and for our people. Will we be hypocrites, who know what time it is, but refuse to step out in faith in obedience to God? Or will we be about the father's business?

Will we hurry up, will we ante up, and will we stir it up all for the glory of God? My brothers and sisters in Christ, it's time to push up, it's time to come up, and it's time to show up. Church, it's time to put away childish things. A wise man once said there is a **time** for some things, and a **time** for all things; a **time** for great things, and a **time** for small things. The Holy Spirit is saying tonight that ***it's time for a new thing***. It's time to move, and we must dare.