

Now is the Accepted Time

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." – **2 Corinthians 6:2**

Summary:

This sermon teaches that the best time to seek God's salvation is **now**. Just as people must use the right moment in daily life, they must not delay when it comes to their soul. Life is short and uncertain, and there is no promise of another chance after death. The sermon urges people to respond while they can, especially in youth, on the Sabbath, during trouble, when others are turning to God, or when conscience is awakened.

Outline:

1. **Main message**
 - Now is the time to seek salvation.
2. **Everyday opportunities**
 - Sailors, farmers, and others must act at the right time.
 - Spiritual opportunities are even more important.
3. **The gospel opportunity**
 - Christ is now offered as Saviour.
 - This opportunity should not be delayed.
4. **Life is short**
 - Each person only has this life to respond.
 - Death ends the present opportunity.
5. **Do not put it off**
 - Waiting for a better time is dangerous.
 - Feelings of conviction may fade.
6. **Special times to seek God**
 - Youth
 - The Sabbath
 - Times of trouble
 - Times of spiritual awakening
 - Times when conscience is stirred
7. **Final appeal**
 - Do not waste the opportunity.
 - "Now is the accepted time."

Text

The importance of opportunity is readily acknowledged in temporal things. The seafaring man wisely avails himself of the winds and tides; and the husbandman gathers the precious harvest before the season passes. Some seasons never return; and, as they are seized or neglected, they may decide a man's condition for life. But here is an opportunity superior to every other: an opportunity to gain acceptance with God, and salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ—"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

This "now" takes in the whole period of the gospel dispensation, or the mediatorial reign of Christ. He is exalted at the right hand of God as Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins. He is the great High Priest over the house of God; and while we are reconciled by his death, we are saved by his life. But this season will not continue always. "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Though this period may continue long for mankind, our own season is far shorter. At death, with regard to us, "time shall be no longer."

This "now," therefore, is to be considered as the period of life. Some have been restored from the borders of the grave; and some have been saved at the eleventh hour, adoring the longsuffering of God. But the redemption of the soul is precious, and after our present state ceases for ever, God has not revealed another hope. They are the merciful teachers who, knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men to flee from the wrath to come. In this view, how precious and all-important is life—

"Life is the time to serve the Lord; And while the lamp holds out to burn, The vilest sinner may return."

How instantly and zealously should we use this only season, especially when we consider how short and uncertain it is. Another year of our allotted life is gone,— *"And every beating pulse we tell, Leaves but the number less."*

And, O my soul! how many strokes remain! There is but a step between me and death—

*"Great God! on what a slender thread Hang everlasting things!
The eternal state of all the dead*

Upon life's feeble strings!"

But this "now" also includes every period peculiarly favourable to religion. Youth is such a period. The young have fewer cares, warmer affections, and hearts not yet hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Therefore Grace says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Such a period is the Sabbath. It was made for man; it draws us from the world, gives leisure to examine our state before God, and reminds us that one thing is needful. Affliction is also such a period. Our troubles are designed for profit; they impress the mind, soften the heart, show the vanity of the world, and teach us our need of a better home than earth. A season of religious excitement is likewise favourable, when we see others seeking and finding mercy, and are moved to pray, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father." So too is the time when conscience is awakened.

Felix trembled, but instead of cherishing conviction, he dismissed it to a more convenient season. That season never came. Beware! Impressions may die away and never revive. All good is from God, but he will not be trifled with. "My Spirit will not always strive with man." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 2, Evening), first published in 1854.