

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you have read the newsletter or the church bulletin lately, you must know that this Lent, beginning today and continuing each Thursday in Lent, that the theme for this season is built around what we are calling, “Words of Faith.” In our pre-Lenten publications, we told you which words we were going to unwrap but did not intentionally tell you what those words meant. In the news release we told you that the words of faith we chose were:

- Dikaisune
- Shuwb
- Logos
- Agape
- Koinonia
and though not listed, today’s words,
- Kairos
- and Chronos.

Seven of these words are Greek in origin, one Hebrew. Each week, one of your pastors (and we added Pastor Kattermann, a member of Holy Trinity and partner with us in our ministry at Parkside each week, we will unwrap our chosen word and, hopefully, do an artful job of linking it to this holy season. I leave it to my faithful colleagues to do that down the line and so for today, I will simply tell you what these words translate into”

- Dikaisune is righteousness
- Shuwb is Hebrew for, “to turn back”
- Logos is Greek for, “The Word”
- Agape - a particular kind of love
- Koinonia – fellowship or community

The words I have chosen to start off this season are two, *kairos* and *chronos*, both Greek words that have something to do with time, but while they have that in common, they couldn’t be more different.

Chronos, from which we derive our words, chronological, chronometer, chronic, anachronism and chronicle, finds its origin in Greek mythology. In pre-Socratic philosophy, Chronos was the personification of time.

We use the word in reference to time as well, but it is used in reference to a certain KIND of time, chronological time. In chronological time, I am 56 ½ years old, well to be truthful in chronological time I am technically in the second half of my 57th year, because 0-1 counts, ask any parent of a newborn if that first year counts. So we talk about chronological time, linear time, time from then ‘til now, from now ‘til then. This is the time that marches on, this is the time that marks our days, this is the time between sunrises, the time represented by the dash between the two dates on a tombstone. It is specific, it can be measured. Some get paid by the hour, when you bring your car into the dealer, it’s \$90 per hour and so you ask, “How long will it

take?” When your young child, who cannot tell time asks how long until Christmas or until her birthday, you say, “four more sleeps.”

Chronological time is where we live most of our lives. It is the master we serve. From the time we could tell time, until time no longer matters to us, it rules us. When Peter Fonda threw his watch in the gutter and headed out on his motorcycle, those of us who have been slaves to the same master secretly said, “Someday, I’m gonna do that!”

The word, *kairos*, has to do with time as well, but it is a different kind of time. When little Johnny says to his Mom, “Mom, Mom, Mommy, Mom, mama, can we go now and she says, “In a minute,” she’s not talking chronologically. When Jesus says to the lawyer who answers his question, “what is the greatest commandment in the law and he quotes the Shema, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might,” and tells him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God,” he wasn’t speaking spatially. When hanging on the cross Jesus speaks to the thief saying, “Today, you will be with me in Paradise,” he wasn’t speaking about that afternoon.

We are trapped in *chromos* and can’t see our way out. Like the crazy house of mirrors that keeps bringing us back to the same door that leads back into the same room, we are bound by our addition to time as *chronos*, as a straight line, as the day after tomorrow, as yesterday, as in now.

Kairos is a different kind of time. Kairos is time in the sense of the right time, the time to do something. Kairos is time in the sense of

- it’s time I grew up
- it’s time we got engaged
- it’s time we got married
- it’s time for us to have children
- it’s time own our own home
- it’s time we got rid of our college furniture

Kairotic time is time in the sense of when Mom says, “In a minute.” What she means is, when I’ve done what I have to do and when I have my day planned out so I don’t forget something important, when the time is right for us to leave, we’ll leave.

It’s all that, and then some. *Kairotic* time is not our time, but God’s time. And we have trouble with that.

Take Lent for instance, we say it’s forty days, a tithe of the year, a time for repentance and prayer, fasting and works of love, and the first thing we do is count the days and say, “Hey, wait a minute, from now to Easter is not forty days, it’s 46. It’s not a tithe, a tithe would be 36.5 days. We say it’s the same amount of time Jesus spent in the wilderness without food and drink and we say, “no one could last that long.”

We hear that it mimics the number of years Moses and the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, and then we read the story and we learn that Moses never makes it into the Promised Land but

instead dies on Mt. Nebo and we say, after all that time, it's not fair that he didn't make it, after all, he spent all that time.

We live in the box that time has fashioned for us, that chronos has crafted out of the cycle of our days.

And so we come to Lent, again.

Each year, I try, in my sermons and my writings, to give you a perspective on Lent that you might not have had before. I've told you to stop giving things up and instead, take something worthwhile on. I've told you that Jesus doesn't care if you eat chocolate or not, or that losing the weight we all should lose anyway is not a Lenten discipline and that fish or meat make no difference whatsoever, except of course to the cow or the salmon.

So for this year, I would like to invite you to see Lent as an opportunity for you to enter God's time, for a time. Each day, somewhere in the day, maybe the first thing, perhaps the last, but sometime during the day, stop living chronologically and live *kairotically*, enter into the place where God is and where there are no set boundaries within which you have to conform. That time could be a time of prayer, or silence. It could be a moment of appreciation and wonder, it could be an extra moment given to a friend or a child or a parent, a moment given without thought of how long it needs to be. And don't confuse this moment with the often touted moment for yourself. This moment is not for yourself, it's for God. It's not the quiet cup of coffee, consumed behind the closed door where you can't hear the children, it's not the evening at the movies or the drive to the waterfront, or the good time had with friends over endless breadsticks and a bottomless *tourine* of soup. It's not a moment for yourself, but a moment for God, a *kairos* moment, when you set everything else aside and look for God to fill you, or better, complete you, because without that, we are merely slaves to the to do list of life. In the moments you allow God to become one with you again, there is your redemption, your justification, your sanctification, your resurrection, your new life, your eternal self. Amen.

Amen.