

# Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

## Pastor's Blog: January 19, 2012

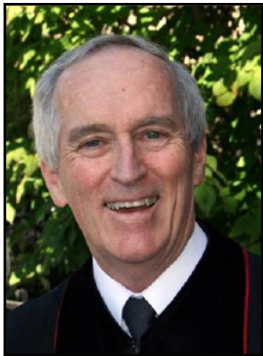
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### Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?

By the Rev. Charles Grant

That is the title of a classic rock song by *Chicago*, of course. It is also the title of my sermon for this week. My text is **Mark 1:14-20**:



<sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, “The *time is fulfilled*, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” <sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

In this sermon we will reflect on the meaning of TIME in our lives.

Working on the sermon this week, I also thought of a book I have been reading of late: *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr. This book, too, is about time. Early on in the book Rohr writes:

The task of the first half of life is to create a proper *container* for one’s life and answer the first essential questions: “What makes me significant?” “How can I support myself?” and “Who will go with me?” The task of the second half of life is, quite simply, to find the actual *contents* that this container was meant to hold and deliver... In other words, the container is not an end in itself, but exists for the sake of your deeper and fullest life, which you largely do not know about yourself! Far too many people just keep doing repair work on the container itself and never “throw their nets into the deep” to bring in the huge catch that awaits them. (Page 1)

As one who chronologically is clearly in the second half of life, I am intrigued by the spiritual dynamics Rohr is exploring in this book—dynamics not defined so much by age as by spiritual growth and temperament. Again, Rohr writes:

...the first-half-of-life is no more than finding the starting gate. It is merely the warm-up act, not the full journey. It is the raft but not the shore. If you realize that there is a further journey, you might do the warm-up act quite differently, which would better prepare you for what follows. People at any age must know about the whole arc of their life and where it is tending and leading. (Page viii)

I think Rohr could be exegeting our Mark text for this week: What is important for our spiritual growth is “Do we *really* know what time it is?” Not is our age 35 or 46 or 82 (or 61, as I will become in two weeks). Whatever our age and whatever our circumstance, the question is, are we in touch with God’s kingdom which is not only near, but confronts us at every turn? Do we hear the call of Jesus to leave our nets behind and venture out into new and uncharted waters? Do we believe the good news of God *to be* good news?



I don’t have the answers, not by a long shot. I do invite you to share your learnings with me, and all of us to share our learnings with one another.

### **Prayer**

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things which cannot be changed,  
the courage to change the things which can be changed,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

-Reinhold Niebuhr