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“Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

2 Cor 6:1-11; Matt 5:38-42

Among the many sayings of the legendary New York Yankee’s catcher, Yogi Berra, was his answer to the question: “What time is it?” His response: “You mean right

now?" The time is always right now. The present moment is all there is. Past is past and future is not yet. Seize the moment. To hesitate is to let opportunity pass.

St. Paul was quoting Isaiah 49:8 to the disciples in Corinth at a time of doubt and hesitation. "Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." God is in the moment, and if we ask for help, God will provide it. Paul recounts all the adversities he has faced: "Afflictions, hardships, constraints, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils and fasts." He kept going forward, and the grace of the moment was always provided.

Matthew was also addressing his community facing persecution when he composed his Gospel. Jesus' teachings about nonviolent resistance were a radical departure from the Law of the Talon but offered a new and creative response. In an oppressive imbalance of power like the Roman occupation, turning the other cheek shamed the powerful aggressor. Any soldier could force a passerby to carry his pack one mile, but voluntarily going an extra mile tipped the burden of conscience onto the soldier. Surrendering both cloak and tunic at court exposed the greed of the winning litigant. Each example offered a fresh strategy for disarming the aggressor and highlighting the evil of the injustice.

The effectiveness of these strategies has always been debatable in a violent world, but Jesus set the standard for refusing to act in kind when abused by power. He put the victims of oppression on higher moral ground. In the words of Tertullian, the heroic suffering of martyrs in Jesus' name was a force like no other in the growth of the church during the persecutions.

If all we have is now, then why not fill the moment with the most gracious response we can muster? Wager bravely on the side of virtue, trusting that God will back your witness to the foolishness of the Gospel. Be generous to a fault, vulnerable to the needs of others, open to every opportunity to go the extra mile. You will live in the grace of the moment and every day will be the day of salvation.

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