

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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## SERMON TITLE

It's Not Too Late

## SERIES

## DATE

7/20/2025

## KEY SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 9:4

## SYNOPSIS

God's timing is always perfect, so don't ever give up.

## HIGHLIGHTS





## 🔑 IT'S NOT TOO LATE

A couple of weeks ago we talked about Design in the Delays. God's delays are not necessarily his denial. God's delays prepare us for his promise; they teach us to trust; and they set the stage for greater glory. In God's perfect plan, there really is no such thing as a delay. His plan is right on time. The things we perceive as delays have a divine purpose. And, as long as you're still living - with God, it's not too late.

### 🔑 Ecclesiastes 9:4

Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

There are moments in life when we look at a situation and think, "It's over." A dream dies. A relationship ends. A door closes. A prayer seems unanswered... And we're tempted to believe that it's too late for God to do anything. But the Word of God tells a different story. The Word says, "With God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26) and, "He makes all things beautiful in His time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Today, I want to remind you: It's not too late.

### The Colonel Sanders Story

*Most people know Colonel Sanders as the white-suited, goateed face behind Kentucky Fried Chicken. But what many don't know is that his success didn't come early in life—it came late. In fact, it came very late.*

*Harland Sanders faced setback after setback. By the age of 40, he had already been a farmhand, streetcar conductor, railroad fireman, insurance salesman, and even lost his job as a lawyer after a courtroom fight. He tried running a service station and started cooking meals for travelers. People liked his food—but life kept knocking him down.*

*At age 65, he was living on Social Security—just \$105 a month—and could've easily said, "It's too late for me." But instead, with a battered car and a pressure cooker, he started driving around the country, trying to sell his chicken recipe to restaurants. He was rejected over 1,000 times before someone finally said yes. That recipe became KFC, and by the time he was 73, Colonel Sanders had built a global brand. Colonel Sanders didn't even start building his legacy until most people were retiring. He didn't let age, failure, or rejection define the rest of his story.*

Have you ever felt like you've missed your moment? Maybe you think you've failed too many times, waited too long, or strayed too far from God's path. But, God is not limited by your age, your past mistakes, or how much time you think you've lost. If you're still breathing, He's still working. It's not too late to start walking in your purpose, to make a change, and to be used by God in ways you never



imagined. So don't give up. You might be one "yes" away from the breakthrough God has been preparing for you.

### ☞ 1. Dead but Not Done

In John 11, Lazarus was sick. His sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, the one you love is sick," but Jesus didn't come right away. In fact, He stayed where He was two more days. By the time He arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Everyone thought it was too late.

Martha said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Basically, she was saying, "it's too late." How many of us have prayed that kind of prayer? "Lord, if You had come sooner... If You had fixed it before it broke... If You had healed before the sickness took over..."

☞ But Jesus replied with a promise: "Your brother will rise again." Here's the truth: **A delay is not a denial. And, even death is not the end when God is involved.** Now, Lazarus may have been dead in the eyes of men, but he was still on Heaven's schedule. Jesus called him by name saying, "Lazarus, come forth!" And the dead man came out, alive. So, hear this: Even a tomb can become a testimony.

### ☞ 2. Old, but Not Obsolete

In Genesis 12, God called Abram to leave his home and go where He would lead him. And, he promised that Abram would be the father of a great nation. Abram was 75 when that happened, yet he obeyed the Lord. After 11 years had passed, Sarah got impatient, so Abram had a child with the servant, Hagar. It was like they were trying to force God's promise into reality, which opened the door to all kinds of trouble; and it still continues to this day.

Then, in Genesis 17 and 18, God clarified the promise to Abraham and Sarah, saying that Sarah, *herself*, would bear a son. But now they were *really old*. Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90. When Abraham heard God's promise, he laughed - and so did Sarah, when she heard it.

But in Genesis 21:2, the Bible says: "Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, ☞ at the very time God had promised him." **What man found ridiculous, God proved reliable.** It wasn't too late for Abraham to become a father of nations; and it wasn't too late for Sarah to give birth to purpose. And you're not too old to accomplish what God has placed in your heart.

Another reminder comes from Caleb... In Joshua's day, when the Israelites finally were in the Promised Land, Caleb was 85 years old. He had been ready at 40, but was delayed 45 years, yet he still took the promise when the time came.



### ☞ 3. Sideline but Not Sacked

In sports, a player who is *sidelined* is taken out of the game temporarily - often due to injury, strategy, or discipline. They're still on the team, still in uniform, and they will return to the game once conditions are right. To be *sacked* (or fired, especially in British English) means you're removed from the team permanently - your contract is terminated, and you're no longer considered part of the organization.

☞ You might feel like you've been sacked, but really, you're just sidelined. **God hasn't given up on you.** You're still on the team, and your jersey still fits. In his perfect timing, you'll be back in the game.

In Mark 5:21ff, Jairus begged Jesus to heal his dying daughter. But on the way, Jesus stopped to heal a woman with an issue of blood. Jairus and his dying daughter were moved to the sideline. And, during that delay, Jairus received the worst news: "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore." The sideline seemed like a slip-up, but Jesus turned and said, "Don't be afraid. Just believe." Then, he entered the house, took the girl by the hand, and said, "Little girl, arise." And she did.

Even when it seems like the window has closed, God has *another window*. Man says "death," God says "sleep." You're not off the team, you're just on hold. It's not too late for a miracle.

### ☞ 4. Late but Not Lost

When Jesus hung on the cross, there were two criminals beside Him. One ridiculed Jesus, the other repented. The repentant thief said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise." (Luke 23:42-43)

That thief had no more time left to do good works. He couldn't fix his past, but in his final moments, grace stepped in. It wasn't too late... not for forgiveness; not for redemption; not for a future with God.

Perhaps you've walked away from the Lord; you've indulged in an ungodly lifestyle; and, you think you've gone too far. It's not too late; you don't have to stay lost. God is a God of second chances (and 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>, etc.) The Prodigal Son had walked away and squandered everything, but when he finally ☞ turned for home, his father ran to meet him. That's the way God is. **Just come home. Just turn to him.**

Always remember:

☞ **God's timing is perfect.** Habakkuk 2:3 says, "*The vision awaits its appointed time...*" Sometimes God delays to develop your faith. Sometimes He waits until every human option is gone so He alone gets the glory.

☞ **Don't give up even when it looks over.** What if Mary and Martha had stopped believing? What if Abraham stopped following? What if Jairus walked away? What if the thief had stayed silent?





☞ **Speak life into dead places.** Like Jesus with Lazarus and the little girl, start speaking life over what looks dead. Your marriage? It's not too late. Your health? Not too late. Your calling? Not too late. Your children? Not too late. Your dream? Not too late. It can still live.

These stories remind us that God is not bound by our clocks or calendars. He's the *Ancient of Days*, and yet always *on time*. He raised Lazarus. He empowered Sarah. He answered the request of Jairus. He saved the thief. If He did it for them, He can do it for you.

Don't bury what God wants to resurrect. Two of our stories today looked like death had won, but Jesus changed the equation. Don't quit before the miracle. Look at your neighbor and say: "It's not too late!"

A few more thoughts... When Jesus finally arrived at Lazarus' tomb, He didn't just snap His fingers and make everything better. He involved those around Him in the miracle. He told the people to roll away the stone (John 11:39). He called Lazarus by name to come out (John 11:43). And after Lazarus emerged still wrapped up, Jesus instructed the crowd to "take off the grave clothes and let him go" (John 11:44). You see, while God performs the miracle, He often invites us to participate through faith and action. As I have often said... God partners with people.

What stones need to be rolled away in your life? What grave clothes... old habits, fears, or doubts are holding you back? It's not too late to step out in faith, to trust God's power, and to take action. Maybe it's forgiving someone who hurt you, following through on a commitment, or returning to God after years of wandering. The same Jesus who called Lazarus out of the tomb is calling you today: "Come forth! It's not too late!"

No matter how dead your spirit feels, no matter how far you've fallen, God's grace can breathe new life into you. It wasn't too late for these people in the bible, and it's not too late for you. God is waiting, ☞ ready to restore what was lost and to write a new chapter in your story. **With God, it's never too late for restoration, redemption, or revival. (music begins here)**

Are you facing something that feels final? A closed door, a lost hope, a dead dream? Come to the One who says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Let Him speak to your Lazarus. Let Him breathe life again. Let Him bring restoration. If you have been feeling like it's too late, this word is for you. I invite you to come to the altar and seek the Lord. If you'd like prayer, we can pray with each other. Let's see what God has to say today. It's not too late.