

*"You may delay but time will not"*

*Benjamin Franklin*

What you see here on the PowerPoint slide is a large sculptural clock at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, in the United Kingdom. The face of the clock is gold-plated and there are no hands to tell time. It has just struck three. The outer ring represents the seconds; minutes are shown on the middle ring; the innermost ring indicates the hours. The most prominent feature of the clock is the grim looking insect which is either a grasshopper or a locust. The creature is called the "time eater" because it moves its mouth every second, as if eating up each second as it passes. Occasionally the creature blinks in satisfaction. Each hour is signalled by the clanking sound of a chain.

The image that each second of your life is being gobbled up is particularly unsettling. Time is definitely not on our side. Time slips away from us and the most frightening thing is that we have no control over it.

Time of course is a common theme in literature. Many people have written about it, but none better than this famous Chinese writer Chu Ziqing (朱自清)

燕子去了，有再來的時候；楊柳枯了，有再青的時候；桃花謝了，有再開的時候。但是，聰明的，你告訴我，我們的日子為什麼一去不復返呢？是有人偷了他們罷；那是誰？又藏在何處呢？是他們自己逃走了罷；現在又到了那裡呢？

Where has time gone? Has it been stolen? Has it been hidden somewhere? The writer laments that time is lost forever. You may not have heard of this song but Jim Croce in my time was a famous

American singer and songwriter. One of his famous songs is "Time in a bottle":

*If I could save time in a bottle*

*The first thing that I'd like to do*

*Is to save every day*

*'Til eternity passes away*

*Just to spend them with you*

*If I could make days last forever*

*If words could make wishes come true*

*I'd save every day like a treasure and then.*

*Again, I would spend them with you.*

This is, of course, a love song and most love songs are full of beautiful lies. We can never save up time in a bottle to do what we want to do later. For Jim Croce the irony is that his life was suddenly cut short because of a plane crash and he died at a very young age. What is gone is gone forever and there is no way we can slow it down. It is often said that time is money but time is actually more valuable than money. You can get more money but you cannot get more time. In this sense, time is the great equalizer. Regardless of your age, wealth, race or intelligence, everyone is given only twenty four hours a day to use. No more, no less. It is like having \$240 in your bank account every day and you have to use it all up at the end of the day. Saving it up is not an option. You can only use it and use it wisely.

Two months have passed since the beginning of the new school year. Have you been making the best use of your time? Perhaps it is now time for a stocktake and to reassess whether or not you

have been using your time wisely. Have you been spending a disproportionate amount of time on something at the expense of other things? Have you been using your time effectively to achieve the most?

One of the more famous passages in the Bible about time is from Ecclesiastes:

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:  
2 a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
3 a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1-4*

There is time for everything, including pleasant or unpleasant experiences. Here it tells us that God has a plan for everything.

However, in the context of the school, there is also a time to play and a time to study. November is coming and it means the mid-year exams are not that far off. It is perhaps time to focus more on your academic studies. You should be having a lot of tests in these weeks and soon your form teachers will be collecting information from class teachers about those who are at risk of failing the mid-year exam. They will be talking to these students and maybe even their parents. For the senior form students, I want

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to remind you that your SBAs are very important and you should not take them too lightly. To minimise any disruption to classes, those who have to change classrooms are asked to bring all the textbooks and exercise books for the next three lessons so that they do not need to go back to their classrooms during a change of lessons.

In English we have a number of idioms or phrases about the lack of time such as “we are pressed for time”, “we are running out of time”, “it is a race against time”, “we have no time to lose” or “the doctor arrives just in the nick of time”. With only two months to go before your mid-year exams or your mock exams, there is really no time to lose. “You may delay but time will not,” Benjamin Franklin once said. I hope you will make good use of the time in the next two months on your learning. Remember the future is built on the present. If you want to have a successful future, then do not waste the present.

Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Yuen

Acting Principal

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