

**DECEMBER 21, 2022, MIDWEEK LUM DEVOTIONAL  
THE POWER OF ONE MINUTE!**

**SCRIPTURE FOCUS: FROM MARK 1**

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. 11 And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." 12 And the Spirit **immediately** drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

**BLESSED THOUGHTS: "IMMEDIATELY"**

In the sixteen chapters of the Gospel of Mark, one word is used forty-one times. In Greek it is "euthys," a word which is often translated "immediately" or 'straightaway," but which actually means something like "Direct from Point A to Point B without any detours." The Gospel of Mark is unique in that it is the first one ever written, and it focuses on "showing" Jesus in action. Some call it the Gospel of God's Power! Mark knows how to write about miracles. And Mark was probably the youngest of all the Gospel writers. He keeps the Story m-o-v-i-n-g!

So how fitting to focus on The Power of One Minute! In looking at what I like to call "God's Time," our December mid-week devotionals have already lifted up "a day" and "a morning," but now, my favorite one, "just a minute.

In Spiritual Direction I love to show folks how life-changing a sixty-second spiritual retreat can be! I first learned this in my last year of Seminary, while being caught up in the drama of Apollo 13, a doomed moon shot that blasted off on the 13th day of the month at 1:13 P.M. (1313 in military time). An explosion in the fuel tank put the entire mission at risk. But here's the bigger picture. Apollo 13 was off course 99% of the time. It would have missed lunar orbit and gone sailing off into space. But the Lunar Excursion Module fired for about a minute and got it into orbit around the moon. But unless there was another quick burn, Apollo 13 would have never made it back towards earth, and all three men would have suffocated from a lack of oxygen. A final quick burn was required to bring the command capsule back to earth to safely splash down! What amazed me afterwards was how often just one minute with the Master changed the entire course of my own life.

I could give a lot of examples, but this one will have to do. After an unsuccessful time at a church in Northern B.C., I was already to move to a church in Western Saskatchewan. But my wife woke me up around five A.M. to tell me (in under sixty seconds): "Barry, you can't go there. You need to move back to the United States and look after your parents" (my Mom was dying). At the end of those sixty seconds, I said "Okay" (my wife is always right!), and that pre-sunrise minute changed a lot of lives.

Or maybe you're tempted to compromise your core values "just this once," but your conscience says "no," and in the scariest sixty seconds of your life you "Go with God, Come What May." That also happened to me when I risked my job to stand up against the way a teenaged client was mistreated, and thank God I did!

In “God’s Time” even a mere moment can change everything. When you read Genesis One, the poetic story of Creation, you can get so easily focused on the Six Days of Creation that you forget that it actually says, “And God said... and...presto...it was!” Each masterpiece, each part of Creation was—for God—the work of a moment. Even astrophysics suggests that the Big Bang was an instant (if even that because apparently time had yet to be created!)

Or look at Mark’s miracle stories! Jesus takes a basket of bread and says a blessing (which in Hebrew is the work of a minute) and...Wow... a catered lunch for 5,000 (do you know how long it takes Subway to make foot longs for my wife and me?) A terrible storm on the lake, and Jesus says one word, and in just a moment, everything is calm, but—and here’s the real miracle—they get to their destination “immediately.”

Most off, in God’s time, our salvation was the work of a minute. Sure, the whole Betrayal-Arrest-Trial-Crucifixion-Death-and-Burial took maybe twenty-four hours, but the Announcement of Christ’s Resurrection—you guessed it—took only a minute, and in that one minute, all human history changed forever.

Now here is my personal belief. I’ve watched several loved ones die. I was actually with them. I also was in the delivery room for one of my own kids' birth (my wife was there and helping when every Grandchild arrived!), so we know a little bit about birth and death. Dying can take weeks, months, even. But with the last breath, the Rebirth into Everlasting Life happens (in St. Paul’s teaching) about the time it takes to blink your eye! ***Perhaps salvation is the ultimate one moment miracle!***

Post-script: the biggest “happening” in my adult life also was the work of one minute. It was a beautiful summer evening at Mulhurst Bible Camp in Alberta. Clarice had a few days off, and she had driven out to the camp to visit me. It was just a magic moment. I asked her to marry me, and she said “Yes.” This holiday season we will celebrate our 52nd Anniversary, but that amazing life-together all flowed from One Awesome Minute that changed everything!

There are 72 words in the Lord’s Prayer. You can pray them in a minute, and if your prayer flows from your soul to your Savior, everything will change!

So, trust that St. Mark was on to something great, and trust that in just one minute God’s power can forgive you, heal you, convict you, even transform you. At the very least, that sixty-second mid-course correction can keep you from getting lost, and even get you home. AWESOME!

### **THREE SHORT BUT POWERFUL PRAYERS**

- Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. (The Jesus Prayer)
- The one who prays “Abba,” “Father” has already prayed all prayers.
- The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”  
And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”  
And let everyone who is thirsty come.  
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.  
The one who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22: 17,20)

### **MUSICAL BLESSING: A MINUTE (PLUS) “ALLELUIA**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ecYhhyXywU>

***It took longer than a minute for Pastor Barry Bence to write this one!***