INTRODUCTION

Francis Schaeffer would take his disciples to the peaks of the Alps and show them two rivers: the Rhone and the Rhine. To the left was the Rhone, the dirtiest river in the world and to the right was the Rhine, the cleanest river that goes by beautiful French countryside and ends up in the balmy Mediterranean. As the snow fell on the ridge line, he would say that each snowflake would end up in one of these two rivers. If it went left of the ridge line, the Rhone. If it went right, the Rhine.

A kairos is a lot like this: there is a razor’s edge, a decision to engage with how God is breaking into our life or not to. Up until now, up until the point where we became a Christian, we could only go left. But now we can choose to go right. Kairos moments are like these snowflakes. There are many of them, and we choose what we do with them. Do we ignore them (and thus the snowflake going left) or do we engage with them to discover what God is trying to say (and thus the snowflake going right)? We choose every day.

Breen, Mike (2011-08-16). Building a Discipling Culture.

SCRIPTURE

Consider two Biblical examples of Kairos moments:

Mark 1:14-18 (NASB)

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” 18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

Acts 16:13-15 (NASB)

And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.
**LESSON: A Kairos Moment** by Scott L. Engle

**Time is such an odd thing.** It seems so concrete, yet so elusive. A few years ago Scientific American did a big special issue on the subject of time. I was intrigued (amused?) that the cover article quoted St. Augustine at length three times. And he lived in the fifth century AD! The truth is that everyone knows what time is until they are asked to define. Though Einstein showed us that time is relative, we can’t really conceive how that could be. We can’t really conceive of an existence without time. When C.S. Lewis speaks of God existing in the Eternal Now, I sort of understand what he is trying to say, but I can’t really dump all my thoughts of before and after.

The ancient Greeks had two words to describe time and both are used in the New Testament. The first, chronos, looks familiar and means simply the passage of time or a period of time (see, for example, Acts 1:21).

The second time-oriented Greek word, kairos, is more interesting. In its nonbiblical use in ancient Greek, kairos most often refers to a decisive moment – positive or negative. Kairos is frequently used in the New Testament, nearly always referring to a decisive event or moment, often stressing the fact that the moment is divinely ordained. For example, the people of Jerusalem do not perceive the unique kairos when Jesus comes to them, “... you did not recognize the time (kairos in the original Greek) of your visitation from God” (Luke 19:44). The masses fail to see the unique kairos present with Jesus, “Why do you not know how to interpret the present time (kairos)?” (Luke 12:56). They do not understand that Jesus’ ministry is a decisive moment in time, a world-changing event like no other. And the kairos is God’s doing.

[[a more detailed synopsis of the Kairos Moment Circle is at the end of this lesson]]
Two Kairos Moments

In Mark's gospel, Jesus bursts onto the scene proclaiming, “The time (kairos) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15). God has reached into history and grabbed humanity. It is the moment that the Jews have awaited for centuries. It is the moment that the rest of humanity has desperately needed. Later, as Simon and Andrew work on the shore, they are confronted with a very personal kairos moment of their own. Jesus challenges them and, in response, the two brothers simply follow. They embrace the kairos and will be forever changed.

Our second Scripture passage is the story of Lydia, a wealthy woman from Thyatira (a city in Asia Minor, northeast of Ephesus). She and other women would meet near a city gate each Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath). There, on an otherwise ordinary day, she met Paul. Luke writes that “the Lord opened her heart.” She had a kairos moment and responded by eagerly listening to everything Paul had to say. She and her household were baptized into the Christian community.

Kairos and learning

We might think that the stories of Andrew’s and Lydia’s kairos moments have little to do with our own lives. After all, one was approached by Jesus and the other Paul! But we would be wrong. Jesus lived then and he lives now. God presents us all with kairos moments of our own. We may not see them for what they are and even if we do, we may not respond like Lydia. But such moments, the large and small events that shake us up, are opportunities to learn and to grow.

The truth about humans is that we are loathe to change, to adopt new attitudes and practices. It is hard to teach old dogs new tricks. Kairos moments are the teachable moments, the times when we are open to change. Sometimes, such moments are big, a potentially life-shaping event such as a divorce or a big promotion or the birth of a child. But sometimes, they are smaller, perhaps coming to us in surprising moments. Like Lydia’s encounter with Paul on that ordinary Saturday.

Remember that kairos moments are never neutral. It may be a positive experience or a negative one. The question is what we will do with it. The kairos event is like a portal into the learning circle. Will we seize the moment and press on? Will we try to learn how we can grow from it? Or will we freeze up and stay the same old dog with the same old tricks? Divinely appointed defining moments, kairos moments, will come to each of us. We can ask ourselves now, how we will respond then.

DISCUSS

1. Consider an easily recognizable Kairos Moment in your own life. Share it with the group.
2. What distinguishes a kairos moment from other important moments in our lives?
3. If a kairos moment is a teachable moment, how can we prepare ourselves to be good learners, to make the most of the opportunity presented to us?
KAIROS MOMENTS: THE CIRCLE

Chronos = the flowing of time, in chronological order.
Kairos = a time in your life, a significant event (the kairos moment).

1. These are always positive or negative, they are never neutral.
2. These leave an impact on you, and change your life.
3. These signal an opportunity to grow spiritually and emotionally.

Within the circle...

1. Observe – where we are – our reactions, thoughts, emotions. The disciples had the Pharisees breathing down their necks and Jesus was looking at the birds (Matt. 6:25-26).
2. Reflect – on the observations, asking questions, invite others in (Matt. 6:26).
3. Discuss – People need to talk things over to find clarity...your shortcomings within community (James 5:16, Matt. 6:27). Jesus says the person who worries needs to change, not the things we worry about.
4. Plan – make a plan for inner and lasting change (James 2:14, 26). How do we build a life based on faith rather than worry (Matt. 6:33)? Planning is all about vision.
5. Account – accountability aids in our success, left alone we will not follow through. Jesus keeps us humble when He reminds us about our own frailties (Matt. 7:1-3). He calls us to be authentic, not hypocritical. Change doesn’t happen in private, even the disciples were sent out in pairs. If one spoke is missing in the wheel, the circle will not turn properly.
6. Act – step out in faith, not just in our thoughts or intentions. Faith must come to the surface and produce action. Jesus tells about wise and foolish builders, followers who act on His words or not (Matt. 7:24-27).

This kairos is designed to be a life-changing moment and we must learn from it!