

It's About Time (2014)

Houston Hodges, for Writer's Corner, WLRH Radio Huntsville, AL USA

Time flies. No, it doesn't: time crawls. Time flits; time leaps; time plays hop-scotch in our lives, rushing for awhile, for seconds or minutes or decades, and then, suddenly, it stops.

There's only so much time, but only otherworldly authorities can measure exactly. One of my sons said to me, "Dad, there are only so many clicks in that lighter, don't use them all up!" as I nervously flicked the cigarette lighter lid up and down. You remember the Zippo, could have been called the Click-o.

I've recently been observing time more closely, after undergoing an adventure called a stroke, which played various games inside my noggin, changing some things and leaving others untouched. It's all about how you choose to use your clicks, isn't it? —There, there's a video-game to spend time on; there, there's a little old lady to help across the street; there, there's a global conflict to assuage. Pick one!

No, even as a preacher-man, I'm not going to propose the unreasonable goal of spending all your rationed hours in doing good; nobody's that giddy or that goody. I'm just going to propose that you go back to the hour glass, as a useful way of visualizing what's going on. Surely someone can invent an electronic hour-glass, maybe powered by a solar cell, that shows the grains of life falling down, top half to bottom half, then all gone. Most of the time it would start over again, measuring out a specific quota of grains... and lifetimes.

"Ding!" That's the timer on our microwave going off; three minutes, the egg is done. But what else happened, around this globe, throughout the universe, in those hundred and eighty seconds: births and deaths, weddings and family spats, the symphony of creation.

And ... what else could have happened during the same time, if I had made a different decision, other than cooking that egg? Better, or worse? It'll take some time to reflect on that.

The Rev. Houston Hodges is mostly retired, but spends a little time helping out at the Big Cove Presbyterian Church, over the mountain in Hampton Cove.