

VOTC 4 – Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 – “**God’s Perfect Timing**” or “**Sovereign Over the Seasons**”

We live in a world that is obsessed w/ *time travel* movies and shows. It’s fun to suspend reality for a moment and watch a movie or show with this theme. But *why* do we enjoy the topic of time travel? I think we like the idea of *transcending* the limits of time, and having the ability to back in fix things, or change the big picture of life. We like to feel a sense of control over time.

In our ordinary lives, we long to control the seasons of life we go through. We want to be able to quickly end seasons of suffering and make those vacation times last forever. But Ecclesiastes 3 paints a very different picture for us.

The preacher reminds us that we are time bound creatures who are subject to the various seasons of life that God brings upon us. But the preacher teaches us that when we acknowledge our limits & rest in God’s all wise control, we can receive each day for what it truly is, a gift of God.

Here we come to one of the most well-known parts of Ecclesiastes, even for those who don’t know the Bible very well.

This passage highlights in a poetic way the various seasons of life God brings upon us, and we are invited to discern the appropriate season of life we are in so that we might live rightly before God. & a number of these remind us that we are not in ultimate control. Of course, the very opening line is the most obvious. ***There is a time to be born, & a time to die.***

In **Gen. 1**, when God created this world, he also created us time. God himself is *eternal*, meaning he is outside of time, but we are creatures who are subject the various rhythms of life he set up. God set up seasons like winter, spring, summer, & fall, but he also brings us through different seasons of life

Time to weep & a time to laugh (v.4) Parallel to that is ***mourning & dancing***. There are seasons of **different emotions**. There are times when we cry w/ others & enter into their sorrow.

We weep at times of death. **V.7** also speaks to this. There is a ***time to tear***. This refers to the OT practice of tearing our clothes in the face of death. For a season we are undone. We also weep in times of sin, in times of sickness, & in times of loss. But there is also a...

Time to laugh. Some of those people we weep with at a funeral, we laugh with and dance with at a wedding. After our clothes have been torn by grief, we sew them & we smile

In this poem we are called to EMBRACE ALL seasons of life as coming to us from GOD’S hand and respond in the appropriate way. We *cry* in the sad times. We *dance* & rejoice in the good times. Life is *not* just one great mountaintop experience. We are not always going to want to smile, and that’s ok. Some days we may want to pull your hair out. The preacher says, there is a time for every purpose under heaven!

This list reminds us that God is in control & we must remember each season of life we go through is **temporary**. It’s a season, meaning it will come to an end. Part of being wise in this world is humbly recognizing that God’s is working out the BIGGER PICTURE in his perfect timing. As Christians, we call this God’s sovereignty.

When we say that God is **sovereign**, we are saying that God is in charge, and we are not. God is the one directing history, & he decides whatsoever comes to pass in this world. **How Do We Respond to God's Sovereignty?**

The Preacher says in **v. 11b**. "*he has put eternity into man's heart, yet he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.*" Here is something unique about us as human beings. We are self aware creatures who. We *long* for immortality. Moreover, we are ppl who consider the past & the future, & we want to know the **bigger picture**.

One of the most difficult things for a **child** to grasp is the big picture of life. When a parent says you can't have that toy or a device, or when a parent takes away something they know is harmful, the question is inevitable, "*why? That is not fair!*" As parents we often say, "You have trust me. I love you, and I'm trying to do what is best for you."

Before God, ALL of us are those children who want to know the big picture. God brings about a difficult season of life, and we wonder, "God why are you doing this." God takes away something precious to us, or a dream doesn't come to fruition, "God, why would you withhold this from me?"

God is saying to us in those moments, "My dear child, I love you, and you can trust me in these things." WHY can we trust God in every season of life???

God is not only sovereign over the seasons, but he is sovereign over our salvation. That's what we see in Jesus Christ. **Gal. 4:4**, *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son.* The God who is outside of time came into it.

We may not see how all the details of our life fit together yet, but the scriptures teach us that God's ways are good, and we can know that for certain because of how he showed his love and care for us at the cross. So, for the Christian we have the promise that "*for those who love God, he works all things together for good.*" (**Rom. 8:28**). **Now with the eyes of faith, we can see the seasons of life as coming from his kind hand.**

The preacher says, - he has made everything beautiful in its time. Here he affirms God is the Creator who does all things well. Again, right now, we don't see how all the puzzle pieces of our lives fit together. BUT there is one who does. And his ways are good. One day, we will see more of how God's beautiful hand has been at work in our lives. The call is to trust him. To be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and for the future to have good confidence in God our Father, b/c we know nothing will separate us from his love.

And so with Moses in **Ps. 90:12** may we learn to pray, "*Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*" May we *relinquish control*, b/c it is an illusion at the end of the day, and instead trust in God who makes everything beautiful in its time.

And may we rejoice each day in the time he gives to us as we live for his glory.

It has been a joy to think about the meaning of life with you as we've looked at the book of Ecclesiastes. May God write these truths on our hearts, and help us to find our satisfaction in Jesus Christ. God bless you and keep you.