

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 5TH-6TH, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

OCCASIONS (ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8)

TAKEN IN THE PROPER CONTEXT

V1-8 must be read in line with the fundamental claim of this book: we are mere mortals, destined to die, our work will die with us, and there is no meaning to life apart from God.

- We must also remember that though we have God, there will be bad things in this life. **Life goes through seasons, and not all of them are easy.**

WE MUST ALSO STRIVE FOR BALANCE

We must find a balance in how we use our time. There is always enough time to do God's will, but there might not be enough time to accomplish all of our selfish agendas.

- **Prioritization matters! We must be diligent to take care of the most important objectives of life first. Then, we can create margin for ourselves.**

A TIME TO GIVE BIRTH, DIE, PLANT, AND UPROOT

This simply reminds us that we are born and that we will all face death. In all of this, God is sovereign, in control.

- Solomon goes even further by saying, "a time to kill and a time to heal." This implies that sometimes justice must be extreme and there are times for war.

THERE ARE TIMES FOR ALL EMOTIONS (V4)

Solomon says that we will have proper times to weep, laugh, mourn, and celebrate. This shows us that **emotions shouldn't be ignored, but dealt with through the power of God and the wisdom of the Word.**

- We live in a time when people don't know how to handle their emotions. **The Spirit helps us to be emotionally stable.**

Fear: Is. 35:4, John 14:27, Matt. 6:34, Psalm 34:4, Romans 8:38-39, 2 Tim. 1:7

Temper/Anger: Eph. 4:26-31, James 1:19-20, Pr. 29:11, Col. 3:8, James 4:1-2

Sadness: Matt. 5:4, Rev. 21:3-4, Rev. 7:16-17

Depression: Deut. 31:8, Psalm 34:17, 1Pt. 5:6-7, John 16:33

Confusion: 1Cor. 14:33, 2 Tim. 2:7, 1Jn. 4:1, John 16:13

A TIME TO GATHER AND THROW STONES

In the OT they would throw stones on enemy fields to make them unproductive and they would gather stones to build new roads. They would also build stone memorials and sometimes tear them down over time. **There are times to cut people off and times to make amends. Times to remember, and times to let things go.**

A TIME TO EMBRACE, AND A TIME TO REFRAIN

The Bible tells us that God pushes away from pride but draws near to humility (Js. 4). We're to also have the **wisdom to embrace what is good and reject what is evil.**

- **This is becoming increasingly difficult in an age where some "Christians" embrace universalism and leave scripture open to debate.**

A TIME TO TEAR AND A TIME TO SEW

Ripping of one's garment in Bible times indicated grief and the sewing of clothes back up indicated that the problem and hurt had passed or healed up.

- **As Christians, we will get hurt, but we cannot let that hurt cause bitterness or resentment. God can help us to not become hardened.**

HERE'S THE ONE WE REALLY MESS UP

Solomon says there's a "time to be silent and a time to speak." The Bible says that **only God can tame the tongue (Js. 3:2)** and we need to be careful not to talk too much (Pr. 10:19).

- **At times, to not speak is a sin.** When there is heresy and injustice, we are to speak out against it. We are also to be telling others the Gospel.

A TIME FOR LOVE, HATE, WAR, AND PEACE

Of course we are to love God and others, but we are also called to hate sin and evil things. The hatred of evil will sometimes lead us to war against evil governments and people.

- These are some of the uncomfortable realities about living in a world where evil has influence.

IN CONTROL (ECCLESIASTES 3:9-15)

"HE HAS PUT ETERNITY IN OUR HEARTS"

Although we may have a deep longing to completely understand God and His eternal plan, we are incapable. Even in heaven we will not fully comprehend God. That is why eternity will never get boring.

- **The mystery of God should humble and intrigue us,** not push us to arrogance or defiance.

HOW DO WE AVOID DISILLUSIONMENT?

If it's good to seek God but we know we will never fully understand Him, how do we avoid becoming frustrated as we wait for heaven?

- Solomon tells us that we should **give thanks, do good, and enjoy the fruits of our labor. By appreciating what we do have we avoid sadness over what we don't have.**

GOD CARES ABOUT THE SMALL THINGS

We often think that God is only concerned with our souls and not the day-to-day activities of our lives, but this isn't the case.

- God walked with Adam in the Garden, He heard Moses' complaints about leading people, and ate breakfast with Peter on the beach. **God wants to be a part of every corner of our lives!**

GOD'S WORK IS ETERNAL AND LACKS NOTHING

V14 shows the turnaround Solomon has taken in Ecc. He says that he knows "that everything God does will last forever" and that work will make people "be in awe of Him."

- **In light of God's power, we should fear Him.** This is not walking in terror of being zapped, but a healthy respect of God's power and perfection.

GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED

God knows that if we don't respect and fear Him, we will gravitate to honor something else, and whatever that is, it will let us down and destroy us.

- **We all worship something.** The real question is if we worship something that has true power to save and will last forever.

WAIT, DO I GET A CHOICE OR NOT?

V15 brings up the argument of free will vs. predestination. God is so powerful and wise that in this life we have the ability to make genuine choices that come to no surprise to Him because He is beyond time. Are we predestined or do we have free will? Yes. The better question is if we **are being humble and obedient?**

INJUSTICE & DEATH (ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22)

THIS LIFE WILL ALWAYS HAVE EVIL ELEMENTS

Solomon reminds us that many times there is "wickedness" where good things should be happening. **When peoples and nations stop looking up to God for direction, evil creeps in and society goes awry.**

- There should be justice in gov't, law, and in commerce, but too often there is corruption and evil intent.

THIS DOESN'T CONDONE THEOCRACY

Often times Christians think that we can legislate morality. This leads to theocracy, and that has only led to hypocrisy and tainting the name of God.

- We must remember that our kingdom is not of this world. **The church is called to touch the hearts of man. Laws can't change hearts, only Christ can.**

WITHOUT GOD WE ARE JUST ANIMALS

Just like animals, we will all die one day. What separates us is that mankind was made in the image of God and we had His breath (a soul) breathed into us. **Without God in our lives, we're reduced to animals.** Don't we often live like animals? **We live in a day that strives to humanize animals and animalize humans.**

RECOGNIZING THAT WE ARE MEANT FOR MORE

V18-22 disturb some people because they seem to deny hope of eternal life, but the real point is that hope is absent to the one that doesn't trust in God.

- **We're constantly searching for meaning and purpose because we forget, or never knew, that God made us to eternally share in His Kingdom!**

PIECES OF THE KINGDOM TODAY

- Yes, the hope of an eternity with God in a perfect place with perfect people is the hope of the Christian. But, **our hope of the future should impact the way we live right now.** The Holy Spirit of the eternal God is in the heart of the Christian in this temporary life. What does this mean? It means we **need to be aware that God and His kingdom are active all the time.** God is present and wants to move in our marriage, kids, friendships, work, school, and even your leisure activities! **God is a deeply personal God!**

GOD IS PRESENT. ARE WE?

- If Satan cannot destroy or distort, he will distract. What are the distractions that are keeping our attention off what is really important? Are we fearful of the future? Are we distracted by materialism? Are we selfish with our time? Are we resting and finding time to be quiet? Are our eyes open to the beauty around us? **Are we present, or are we missing God and what He is doing all around us?**