

## Timing is Everything

All of us know there is a proper time to do and say certain things. Words and actions have their proper times. **Timing is everything!**

### Ecclesiastes 3:1-17

#### Divinely Timed Universe

- Wise person lives in accordance with the ordered ways of nature and human society= well lived life
- Foolish refuse to learn and defies them= destruction and death
  - Blows pay check on pay day
  - Faithfulness= life; Unfaithfulness= death
  - Laziness, corner-cutting, procrastination= destruction
- God's timing teaches that patience is a requirement—seeds take time to mature before harvest comes
- Wisdom implies that we all must confront our own death
  - Psalm 90:12 number our days
  - Ephesians 5:15-16 make the most of our time
- Divine Determination—everything is pre-determined by God?
  - Birth & Death?
  - Does God prearrange the entire universe to just do something in my life?
  - Many aspects of life are under our direct control!
    - Education
    - Career
    - Money management
    - Diet, sleep & exercise habits
    - How we treat others
    - Work habits

#### Eternity In Our Hearts vs. 11

- Even if we figure out the rhythm of life perfectly; it is still **VAPOR**, because in the end we die.
- Under the sun we will have lived well. Yet, because eternity is in our heart, we will remain unsatisfied.
- In this Lenten season we remember our place in God's creation.
  - On Ash Wednesday we remember we are dust.
  - We remember that God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thought higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55).
  - Psalm 131:1, Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me."

#### Solving the Mystery of the Eternal

- Christian tend to oversimplify complex issues of life
  - Sovereignty of God
    - It is difficult to explain and believe all tragedy, loss and abuse being part of God's will
    - Everything happens for a reason?
    - Narcissistic view
  - Word of Faith
    - Everything happens as a result of my faith or lack thereof
    - Reduces the mystery of God to formulas

- Dashes people's hope and faith
- **End Times**
  - Perfectly explained answers about which nothing is provable
  - Must be constantly readjusted to accommodate current world events
- We are uncomfortable with the mystery, so we give pat, overly simplistic answers to:
  - **Tragedy**
    - God did it
    - Result of people's bad choices
    - Satan did it
  - **Personal Pain**
    - God is teaching a lesson?
    - What about Job?
    - Jesus' answer in **Luke 13:1-5**
  - **Personal Success**
    - There must be some compelling reason
    - They must have solved some great mystery
    - Causes great anxiety on the rest of us less successful humans
    - **Ecclesiastes 9:11**

## Conclusion

- Live the best way possible within the rhythm of life
- Enjoy where we are today
- Faith invites us to rest in Christ in the mystery of eternity
- **Matthew 11:28-40**
- C. S. Lewis— *Till We Have No Faces: A Myth Retold*
  - Story of Cupid & Psyche
  - Part 1 is written from the perspective of Psyche's older sister Orual, as an accusation against the cruelty of the gods. It ends with "no answer."
  - In Part 2 Orual changes her mindset, understanding that her initial accusations were tainted by her own failings. She says, "I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face, questions die away. What other answer would suffice?"
- If one learns to cooperate with the rhythm of the universe, he or she will live well under the sun.
- Yet, there is a mystery to God's working that we cannot plumb.
- **So, thank God for his many gifts. Humbly submit to his plan and working. Rejoice in the hope that death is not the end of all of our enjoyment and work.**
- When Christ returns our lives are taken up in resurrection, our good works are completed and made perfect, and we enter fully into God's eternal kingdom.
- Now we see through the glass darkly; then we will see face-to-face.

## Discussion Guide

Primary Text: Ecclesiastes 3

The writer of Ecclesiastes in chapter three suggests that there is a time for everything. Some things are in our control, but much of it is completely out of our control. The Teacher explores this in the famous chapter beginning, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." The key is that every activity is governed by time.

Ecclesiastes is a realistic exploration of life in the fallen world. Work is toilsome. Yet even amid the toil, our lot is to take pleasure in our toil and enjoy our work. This is not an answer to the conundrums of life, but a sign that God is in the world, even if we do not see clearly what exactly that means for us.

Despite the worst that he sees and experiences, the Teacher does not abandon hope in God's world. He finds the moments of joy, the sparks of wisdom, and the ways to cope with a world that is ephemeral, but not absurd. If God had abandoned humanity to the consequences of the fall, there would be no meaning, no good in work at all. Instead, the Teacher finds that there *is* meaning, and goodness in work. His complaint is that they are always transitory, incomplete, uncertain, limited. Given the alternative — a world completely without God — these are actually signs of hope.