

A time to be Born and a Time to Die

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning as we join together in the worship of God.
- We seek his blessing on his word to us. I hope that each of us would be given a hearing here. And we can begin by singing some verses from Psalm 102.
- And we're singing from the second version of the Psalm. Psalm 102, the second version of the Psalm. And we're singing from verse 11 to verse 18.
- Psalm 102, the third version of the Psalm.
- Psalm 102, the third version of the Psalm.
- [1 : 52] And to the needy's humble prayer. The afflicted's prayer he will not scorn. All times this shall be on record. And generations yet unborn shall praise and magnify the Lord.
- We can sing these verses, 11 to 18, Psalm 102, the second version of the Psalm. My days are like a shade of old way.
- My days are like a shade of old way.
- Which of the Lord's love. Which of the thine is swiftly past. And I am wedded away.
- Much like a tool of hitting us. But the Lord shall still endure.
- [3 : 09] From change and all mutation free. Until all generations true.
- Shall thy remembrance ever be. Thou shalt rise on mercy yet.
- Thou to the Zion's love shall descend. Thou shalt rise on mercy yet. The Lord shall be.
- Thou shalt rise on mercy yet. Thou shalt rise on mercy yet. was set, behold us now, who come to our hands.
- Thy saints in pleasure in our souls, I thank you now to the earth this year.
- [4 : 35] All even lands that came with roads, on earth thy glorious day shall be held.
- All in His glory shall I hear, when Zion he besavers.
- He shall be part of the end of his year, and to the need is unruly.
- The wicked bring me in our heart, all thanks to the glory of the Lord.
- And generations yet on board, shall praise and love in my Lord.
- [6 : 08] Let us join together in prayer. Let's pray. O Lord our God, as we come before you at this time of worship, grant to us that spirit of worship.
- That we might worship our God in spirit and in truth. That we might be prompted by the guiding hand of the spirit, so that in our praises our hearts are lifted up, not with pride, but with a desire to meet with our God at our throne of grace, our God at our throne of grace, our God at our throne of grace, our God at our throne of grace.
- For us, even in our lives up until the present. What you have done for this world, in the provision that you have made, that ensures that we are met together in this place today.

Because whether it not for the gospel, such a gathering of this kind would not be possible. There would be no purpose to it. Indeed, there are many gatherings that take place today, even at this present time.

And whatever has motivated these gatherings to take place, whatever lies at their heart, whatever purpose there is for them, they will be devoid of true value.

[7 : 50] Because with their passing, there is little by way of worth left in its wake. Because many of our gatherings that are focusing on the things of time and sense, the things that belong to this world, very soon, very soon, even the most important decisions taken, if indeed that was the purpose for it.

Or if it was simply a gathering meant for entertainment. A gathering that was purposed to ensure that revenue would be created for those who were performing at it, or those who had some part in bringing such a thing to fruition.

But these things will soon pass. The evidence for them will be a vague, distant memory.

Whereas the things that belong to God, the things that you have purposed, there is of eternal benefit, even the gospel that is preached today, this place and every other place where such gatherings take place, that the word that is proclaimed, however dull of hearing we may be, with regard to that which we are presented with, you have decreed that your word will not fall to the ground, void, without purpose, without meaning, without creating that which you have decreed for it.

It will perhaps lie dormant in our heart until the day when we will be asked to give account for it. What we have done with what we have received from God's hand, and that is especially so with regard to the gospel of your grace, that speaks to us of salvation at the hand of Christ, that reminds us of the need that we have of such a salvation, that brings to our attention not only the fact that such provision has been made, but that it is adequate to our need, needs in the light of the great eternity upon our face to set.

[10 : 19] We do not appreciate the reality of that teaching, that your word presents to our mind's eye, but we give thanks that it is there nevertheless.

We pray for your mercy, that it would indeed impact upon our thinking. There are so many things that distract us, even as we are met in this place today, even the things that we might otherwise have neglected, or forgotten, or treated as if it was of no relevance, and still, at such moments, that these things come to mind, and they dislodge the world, and they distract us from hearing the world.

How right the Lord was when he taught, by way of parable, the preaching of the word, and the way it was so like the farmer going out to sow his seed.

And the seed would fall on various grounds, and so many different things would impact upon, whether it came to fruition or not. And that is the way it is with ourselves.

Sometimes we might find the word sown, that it is strangled, even at the point of it being fixed in the ground, that is our heart.

[11 : 43] Sometimes the hardness of our heart rejects it. Sometimes it is the cares and concerns of the world, as the briars and the nettles and the thorns strangle its growth.

Sometimes it is the heat of the day, where the ground is parched, and it is left unwatered and nourished. Sometimes we think that the world is enough just to have it heard by us, and yet we do not look after it, we do not meditate upon it, we do not nourish it with greater thought.

And so it is with the world of life. Forgive us our sins. In that regard, bless us together then today. May your meeting be worth our while.

May it be to the glory of your name above all else. May Christ be glorified in the proclamation of his name. We pray for the young people with whom we meet here in this place as they prepare to go to be taught in Sunday school.

Bless them in their infancy. May it be to the Lord, and care for them, nourish their souls, that they may find themselves among the privileged who come to know Jesus as their God and their Saviour in their youth.

[13 : 08] and whatever the challenges this world brings, that they may be prepared for it in the only way that such preparation can prepare us for anything the world throws at us.

We pray, Lord, that you would bless their homes, their families, parents, grandparents, all who are interested in their spiritual welfare, all who care for their material needs.

We bless you and thank you for all that is done to them and for them. We pray for our school and the high school.

We pray for all the children who attend there, what they learn, what is good for their soul. We pray above all else that that would prosper. While other learning is important and preparatory to the place that they will take in society, do not allow us to neglect the food that is necessary for the soul that would strengthen the inner man and prepare each as they take their place in this world.

Remember our homes, our families, all for whom we have a concern, any who may be unwell we bring before you, ask for healing and that you would look after them even in their weakness, whether they be cared for in the homes or homes set aside for that purpose.

[14 : 33] Those in the hospital, we ask for guidance for nurses and doctors. We pray for those who are cared for in the hospice and remember them in their need, as they are confronted with the true fragility of life.

When we are taught and told that our days are finite and that soon they will be gone, it is so important for us to understand that there is a God to whom we can go and upon whom we can rely.

Remember the grieving and the sorrowful amongst us as your voice is heard. Even within this community, in recent days we pray for all affected. You are reminding each of us that we are but sojourners, mere pilgrims, those who are on the scene of time and seemingly it seems to us that the journey that we are on is never ending, but the truth is much more the fact that it is a short term for every one of us.

So bless your word to us to help us remember these things, remember our island community and all in it, all the needs of the community we pray for, concerns that many have in this current climate regarding their own welfare, the financial situation of our nation, concerns many.

We pray for any who may have these concerns foremost in their mind, encourage them to look beyond what they have and don't have to the God who is the God of all, who has provision without equal and all who rely upon him are never, ever left destitute.

[16 : 30] We pray, Lord, your blessing upon those who govern that you would speak into their minds and into their hearts and take away the blindness that so affects so many, blindness to the God of heaven who has placed them in such positions of power to do good and to whom they will answer.

They may think that they will answer to the constituent bodies that have elected them to power, but they will ultimately answer to the God who is sovereign and who holds the sway of life in his hands.

We pray that you would remind us of that. Bless them to our royal family and the Queen in the vulnerability of her old age.

Bless them in her home, her family, and pour out your Spirit upon each one of them that they may know that there is a God who is sovereign and to whom they must pay homage as all must.

Remember the world as a whole. Remember the difficulties that are so apparent within it. We think of Ukraine and those who are ravaged by the effects of war.

[17 : 43] We think of Pakistan and the effects of flood. We think of all the disaster-ridden places places in the world where want is so apparent, where there is poverty, where there is lack of resources and the abuse of others.

Hear our prayers. Guide us in what to pray for. Enable us to wait upon the Lord who will make an answer in time that is of your appointment.

Glendens from sin go before us in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to read from the Scriptures of the Old Testament and we're reading from the book of Ecclesiastes and we're reading chapter 3.

Ecclesiastes chapter 3. We'll read the whole chapter. To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal.

[18 : 59] A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together. A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. A time to get and a time to lose.

A time to keep and a time to cast away. A time to rend and a time to sow. A time to keep silence and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate A time of war and a time of peace What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?

I have seen the tabel which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it He hath made everything beautiful in his time Also he hath set the world in their heart So that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end I know that there is no good in them But for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour It is the gift of God I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever Nothing can be put to it Nor anything taken from it And God doeth it that men should fear before him That which hath been is now And that which is to be hath already been And God requires that which is past

And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment That wickedness was there And the place of righteousness that iniquity was there I said in mine heart God shall judge the righteous and the wicked For there is a time there for every purpose and for every work I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men That God might manifest them And that they might see that they themselves are beasts For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts Every one thing befalleth them As one dieth so dies the other Yea they have all one breath So that a man hath no preeminence above a beast For all is vanity All go into one place All are of the dust And all turn to dust again

[21 : 46] Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward And the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth Wherefore I perceive That there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works For that is his portion For who shall bring him To see what shall be after him Amen And may the Lord That his blessing To this reading of his word And to this name Be the praise My boys and girls Before you go out to Sunday school Just a quick word With you Before Jesus went to heaven Last week we spoke of him going to heaven And saying his farewell to the disciples Who were downcast and sad When they saw him going up into the heavens Before he left he gave them promises

Many promises But one promise that he gave was That he would come again And we spoke about that Last week in the service in the morning That Jesus was going to come again To judge the world God had given him that role But he also promised that Until he came back He was going to leave A friend in the world To look after them A friend who would look Be able to help them When they needed it And that friend Was the Holy Spirit That's what he said I will send The Comforter And there's many names In the Bible But this is what Jesus promised That he would send His Spirit And I believe today You're going to be talking about The coming of The Holy Spirit And that was an event

That was very Very Exciting But very Very Scary Because when the Holy Spirit Came He didn't just Come to the earth Quietly We are told That he came And that There was a great noise Like a mighty Rushing wind And that people Saw Fire As it were Tongues of fire And I read Several comments On On that What that was How that appeared And a lot of people You know They allow their Imagination To run Right Just imagine If you're sitting Here today As you are If The person Of the Holy Spirit Made himself Known By way of Tongues of fire What would it be like

I don't think We've ever seen Anything quite like it But These people Who saw it They described it Like that And Their description You know It all varied Just The way they saw it But it was A mighty Time A mighty Time Of Demonstration Of God's Power Other things That happened Which You know All of these Things couldn't Be explained You know We We like To explain Everything We like to Have an answer For everything That happens We like to Be able to Say Well this Happened And this Is why It happened Or this Is the reason Why it Happened The way It did But sometimes When God Works The things That God Does Can't Be explained In ways That That Satisfy And It seems That when the Spirit came There were a lot Of people Gathered in

Jerusalem At that time Because it was A festal time It was a time Of celebration And those who Were Jews Were gathered In Jerusalem And they came From all over The world And if you Read chapter Two In the Book of Acts That tells You that There were All kinds Of races There People From different Countries People Who had Travelled From all The parts Of the world That you Could imagine That That had Jews Living there And as You can Imagine Because they Were from These different Parts They all Had different Languages Many of Them would Speak You know The people Who were Egyptian They speak Book Egyptian Those who Were from The continent They would Probably speak Whatever language It was That belonged To their Country But the Strange thing That happened Was That when These people Began to Speak As you Would When you Saw these Manifestations

[26 : 54] Of the spirit When you Saw the Fiery Tons When you Saw When you Heard the Loud Noise Of the Wind People Would Speak People Would Talk And ask What Was Happening And I Think I've Heard Different Explanations For it But I Think That People Heard Those That they Would Have Understood To have A different Language To their Own They Understood What they Were saying Even Though The Egyptians Were Speaking Egyptian And those Who were From Rome Were Speaking In Whatever Language The Romans Spoke Latin Whatever And Everybody Was able To understand What others Were saying Which is Strange But this Is what The spirit Was doing And this Was done Because Christ Jesus Had promised That When he

Came He would Come In this Way It was Promised Long Before Jesus Was born Even That this Would Happen In this Way Because the Old Testament Prophets Spoke about A day Like this A day That God Had promised A day That God Had planned To be But the Spirit Has not Stopped Revealing Himself In this World It didn't Just stop That day The fact That the Spirit of God Works Still I can Tell you That Because In this Place There are People Who are Christian People And because They are Christian People They are Born Again They have Come to Know Jesus Christ For themselves And it Wasn't Because They are Clever People Although I would Say that They are Clever Or smart If they

Know Jesus But their Cleverness Or smartness Isn't what Made them See Jesus Or discover Jesus For themselves But what The Spirit Has done In their Lives The Spirit Is someone Who is God Who speaks Of Jesus To other People And opens The eyes Of the Understanding And enables Men and Women To understand Who Christ Is So I Know that The Spirit Is working Still Because I Believe That every Person here Today Who professes To know Jesus Christ If their Profession Is right The only Reason that They are Christian Is because The Spirit Of Christ Enabled them To see Christ For what He is No other Reason Not because Their parents Were good Not because They were good Boys and Girls Themselves Not because They were Clever In learning Things in School Or learning What they

Were taught In Sunday School But because The Holy Spirit Did what Christ Sent them To do One thing Just that I was When I was Thinking of This I was Remembering Somebody And I Was privileged To know This person And to Hear him Speak And he Spoke of Revival of Religion He spoke Of times Of the Spirit of God Working In the Community That he Lived And during His lifetime He experienced Four Revivals Of religion Four times Where Well the Spirit was Working Always But four Times Of Extraordinary Work Of the Spirit I don't Know why God doesn't Work in The same Way all The time All that I Know is That he Doesn't But I Do know That he Does work Extraordinarily At other Times And this Man Was someone

Who Lived During his Lifetime Experienced Four Revivals Of religion And it's So interesting To hear The story Of this Person Of how People came To know The Lord How the Spirit opened Their eyes And one Moment they Were sitting There just As you Are today Some of You And you're Thinking well How long Is this Going to Go on For You're Looking at Watch maybe And thinking When can I Go to Sunday School And how Long is The Sunday School Going to Be Maybe But one Person After another And they Were just Like that The next Minute What they Were doing Was They understood That they Had a soul They understood That God Was near They understood That they Needed Christ For their Saviour And they Were crying Out to God To show Himself To them That was What the Spirit did That's What the Spirit does He goes On doing That And my

[31 : 58] Prayer for You is That he Would do That even Today as You go to Sunday School and Your teachers Explain to You what the Bible is Saying that Your eyes Would be Opened That as I Preach here That the Eyes and The understanding Of those I'm preaching To would be Opened I know that The Spirit Can do it I would hope That you would Want him to Do it And that you Would know For yourself What it Means for The Spirit Of God To come With power Into your Life Well before You As you Go out to Sunday School We're going To sing Some verses From Psalm 39 Psalm 39 At the beginning Of the Psalm I said I will Look to My ways Lest with My tongue I sin In sight Of wicked Men My mouth With bridle I'll keep In With silence I as done Became I did Myself Restrain From speaking Good But then The more Increased Was my

Pain My heart Within me Walks Taught While I'm Using was The fire That burned From my Tongue These words I did Let pass Mine end And measure Of my day So Lord Unto me Show What is The same That I Thereby My frailty Well May know Lo Thou My days And hand Breath Mates Mine ages In thine Eye As nothing Sure Each man At best As holy Vanity Sure Each man Walks In a vain Show They vex Themselves In vain He Heaps Of wealth And doth Not know To whom It shall Pertain Versus 1 to 6 Of Psalm 39 I said I will Look to My ways Lest With My tongue I Sound I Said I Will Look Tree medic for razones administrator

I Turn to my turn conduct Wicked man, oh, with light like him.

With silence I adjunct began. I did myself regret.

From speaking earth and heaven, no more than trees.

[34 : 52] It was my head. My heart within me was in love.

And why I'm using more. The fire is burned.

I'm wrong. More custom pins said to me.

All my days, O Lord, unto me, O What is the sin that I thereby My grace, you have been known Lord, I am my days, an hundred things My days, you have been known As none in Germany's mouth I am my days, O Lord, I am my days To reach my Lord, till I am true

They've had some sense in me He is a brand and a home To whom it's a heart that is We turn back now to the chapter that we read in the Old Testament Scriptures The book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3 And we can read at the beginning of the chapter Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verse 1 To everything there is a season And a time to every purpose under the heaven A time to be born

[37 : 41] And a time to die A time to plant And a time to pluck up that Which is planted And so on A time to be born And a time to die Those of you who were here last Sunday Will remember, I hope, that we spoke about The solemn words God has appointed a day In which he will judge the world In righteousness By that man He ordained I find No difficulty In believing That to be a fact A simple reason That I find no difficulty in it Is because I believe The Bible to be God's word And I believe God's word to be true Now that's not to say

That everything the Bible says While it is true That it is easy for us To understand The mechanics of it Or the whys and wherefore of it It is one thing to say That we believe it to be true But it's another thing For us to try and reconcile The way we understand things To the way God is Either going to do something Or has done something I don't doubt for a minute That it's difficult for us all In that sense Just thinking about judgment For a moment This chapter here is Full of the idea of judgment That it has this At the heart of what The man of God is saying But If God is going to be a judge

And he says he is And if he has committed judgment To his son And he says he has And if the judgment Is going to be just And he says it is Then it will require A whole lot of things To be true Before that can possibly Be the case And Just to cite a couple of things That may make us Wonder at how This can possibly Happen Just think for a moment If God is going to judge And everybody is going to be judged That must mean That every creature From the beginning of time That is a A human being Man, woman Child, whatever Who has ever been born Into the world Who possesses A soul As God has given it Must come to judgment Without exception At whatever stage

They departed this world Even The infant That was in the womb Of the mother If that Is considered to be A living soul Then that living soul Must be brought to judgment And God Has the ability To judge Now we might not think That is possible We might not think That it is conceivable That judgment Would take place In such a Situation But If it is the case Whatever point At which the soul Of man Is Created Then that Point Is the point At which that soul Is susceptible To God's Scrutiny As judge But even though There's a difficulty There Or difficulties That we might find Difficult To even unravel Or begin to unravel Just think Just think for a moment Of the number Of souls

That have existed In the world From the beginning To the present That there are So many of them That are without Can't be numbered And yet They are to be brought To judgment And every one Of them Whether their Whether their Remains Are in the dust And the dust Is dust As we know Dust Because The time From their death To the present Is so vast That it can't But be considered Dust Some have been Destroyed by fire In their death And some Have experienced Various forms Of death That can only Result almost In extinction But the soul Exists And because The soul Exists The soul And the body Will be united For judgment And God Will do it Every soul Every race

[42 : 45] Even those races That have never Had the gospel Preached to them Those natives Who belong In the vast Jungles of South America Some of them That haven't even Been discovered yet We are told That there are Some tribes That exist In the jungles That no man Has ever seen But God's eye Is upon them Just as surely As it takes On you and Myself Here in this place And you say That can't Possibly be true And you find Difficulty with it And that Difficulty You shouldn't Be embarrassed About it But You should Be embarrassed If you say These things Are a hindrance To God Being God A hindrance To God Doing what God has Promised To do For God Because if God created The world And we are Told that He did And he Created all In the world And he Did And he Created man

Out of the Dust of the Ground And he Did And he Breathed Life into Man Who took Out of the Ground And the Same God Is able To do Far greater Things If it's Possible Even to Say that These things Are greater Whatever We look at With regard To what God Is doing There may be And there is Always The opportunity For us to Think of these Things and Wonder How How it Possibly Can be Now looking At what this Passion has Written I think It's very Difficult for us To We say Because The Bible Is the Word of God And Because God Is The author His spirit Has Been Responsible For Bringing

This Composition Together As a Word A total Entity From Genesis To Revelation It doesn't Mean that Everything That is Said By those Who Speak Is True Yes The God Who is God Has Presented His word To us And His word Is true But The thinking The Meanderings Of Thought The The The exploration If you like Of God's World In a In a Theoretical Way Can Sometimes Arrive at Conclusions Which are Not Right Which are Not True Which are Not God's Truth Things You know For example We read Here in This chapter And this Man said Quite Plainly

What Befalleth The Sons Of Men Befalleth Beasts He said Even One Thing Befalleth Them As One Dieth So Dieth The Other Yea They All Have One Breath So That A Man Hath No Preemence Above A Beast For All Is Vanity Now This is The Bible This is God's Truth But Is That Statement True Is The Conclusion To Which This Man Has Come An Accurate Conclusion Well It Can't Be Because He The One That Is Coming To This Conclusion Is Somebody Who Is Who Has An Understanding Of God That Is Not The Understanding Of A Man Of God Somebody Who Has The Spirit Of God To Help Them Understand The Way God Does Things Or What God

Intends To Do And This Is This Is What We Need To Remember We Are Reliably Informed That The Author Of This Book Is Solomon And Solomon Was A Wise Man And We Are Told That The Bible Tells Us That But For A Wise Man He Did Many Foolish Things Which Seems Quite Strange If A Wise Man Did The Things Solomon Did And He Did They Recorded For Us He Had 300 Wives He Had 700 Concubines He Had More Than Enough To Be Going On With And They Resulted In A Disasterous Home Life A Disasterous Relationship With That Extended Family That Created All Kinds Of Difficulty For Him In His Life And That Is Not Very Wise Not Very Prudent It

[47 : 47] Wasn't Very God Honoring But That Is The Kind Of Thing That He Exposed Himself To But That Being Said Solomon Is Recon To Have Been The Main Writer Of This Book And It Was Written There For About 3000 Years Ago God You Think Oh My Goodness 3000 Years Ago God On Earth Has A Man Who Wrote 3000 Years Ago Got To Say That's Relevant To This Generation Well If You Read Carefully Through The Book And Find Some Of The Things That Are Recorded You'll Find That Many Of The Problems That He Is Presented With Many Of The Concerns That He Has Many Of The Questions That He Asks Many Of The Problems That He Reckons Are Beyond The Ability Of Anyone

To Answer Or To Find A Reason Why These Problems Could Be Could Be Considered Anything Other Than Problematic He Are The Very Things That People Are Wrestling With Today One Of The Commentators Stuart Alliot Suggests That What We Need To Remember When We Look At This Book Is We Are Given Two Eyes To See Well We Have Two Eyes To See Usually But The Eyes There's Two Sets Of Eyes One Set Of Eyes Is Looking At The World Through The Eyes Of An Unconverted Man Or Woman God In His Fullness Does Not Come Into Their Thinking At All What God Has Said May Be Something That They Know May

May May Be Something That They Are Aware Of May Be Something That They Have Discarded At Will But They Are Not Really Thinking About The World In Terms Of A Person Who Knows Very Much About Who God Is And What God Is Doing And The Other Set Of Eyes That We Have Here Are The Eyes Of Somebody Who Is Born Again Somebody Who Knows The Lord Somebody Who Has Personal Experience Of What God Is Doing And Why And Therein Is The Dilemma That We Are Faced In Trying To Understand Some Of The Questions That Are Asked Who Is The Question And What Is He What State Of Mind Does He Have What Is The Spiritual Condition When These Questions Are Post And Remember Sometimes He Supplies The Answer Himself But

That Same Person Might Change His Mind And Might Because Of Circumstances Address The Situation In Different Ways So There's A Fluidity Of Experience That Is Before Us And The Question If You Like Which Is A Universal Question If You Went To University And You Sat Under The Teaching Of A Philosopher Perhaps At Some Point During Their Lecture They Would Introduce This Question To You And That Question Would Be Simply Why Are You Here And He Wouldn't Be Asking The Question As Somebody Wants To Find Out Why You're Sitting In This Class But Why Are You In The World What Is The To You What Are You Expected To Achieve In Anybody Can Answer Them And Each Answer Is Right And It

Seems In Many Respects That This Is Really The Burning Issue With Regard To The Right Of Ecclesiastes He Wants To Understand The Meaning Of Life You Might Want To Find Out The Meaning Of Life But If You're Really Asking That Question How Can You Ask That Question Seriously Expecting To Have An Answer To The Question Without Actually Asking It With The Ability That Comes From The God Who Created Life Would You Not Think It Would Be Extra Ordinary For A Person To Ask Such A Question And Exclude The God Who Gave Life Who Gives Life Sustains Life Decrees The End Of Life That You Would Exclude Him From Your Conclusion Exclude Them From Your Reasoning Whatever Rational Your Thinking May Be If You Think To Yourself

[52 : 49] Well I Can Unravel The Purpose Of Life And The Meaning Of Life Purely By Experience Purely By My Own Intellectual Ability Anal vanity of vanities all this vanity and that's a very pessimistic statement to make it's a very downbeat statement he looks at the world and he sees there's nothing in this world that means anything my life is meaningless the Greek and Hebrew word that is translated there is a world that simply means it is something that is without substance that's his conclusion it's a pessimistic outlook on life world, this world my part in it, everybody's part in it, is meaningless would you agree with that?

is that your position? is that the way you look at the world? he uses the expression under the sun and that expression really suggests that it's used throughout the book and it speaks about the understanding that everything that we know everything that we experience everything that we can possibly arrive at a conclusion with regard to has to be confound within the boundaries that we can explore in this world there is nothing beyond the world there is nothing beyond the experiences of this world there is nothing that that impacts upon my thinking outside of my experiences of the world and if I don't believe there is a God at work in the world then God is not influential in anything that takes place within the world and that's the conclusions that we need to understand that we are confronted with one person who sees everything limited to what we can demonstrate within the experience of life and the other knows that the God who is God is the giver of life who existed before time and who continues after time so that's the background to these words and you know when you read these words a time to be born and a time to die we are having these two points fixed that's fixed for you and it's fixed for me the time of our birth and the time of our death and then the list that follows on from that none of these things come outside of these two points whatever it is that is spoken of usually they've spoken of as contrasts or opposites but all of these things you'll find are contained within these two points the point at which we were born and the point at which we die and the writers say to everything there is a season a time to every purpose under the heaven and the conclusions that you arrive at regarding that can only be the conclusions of somebody who is earthbound whose thinking is totally contained within the world and everything that goes on in the world your part in it or the part the world has to play in your life or somebody who understands that the

God who created the world has a reason for creating it has a reason for everything that goes on in it I was thinking of this and the way many of us look at our life we don't often think through a lot of what we do as to the ultimate end of these things you know maybe there are major life decisions that we take at some point in our lives and we do give some time to these major decisions what kind of work we're going to do where we're going to live what kind of family we are going to have what wife what husband how we raise our children what schools we send them to some have that choice to make but there are choices there are decisions that are taken and very often we take time to think about these things but most things don't really work them out but the thing is that if your life is governed by the thought that everything is as you see it contained within the world and your activities and your actions are really relevant only to yourself then you will follow a different path think for example about when you leave school you're told oh well you're going to join the rock race you've heard the expression joining the rock race what is the rock race

I was wondering how do I understand the rock my thinking initially was when I heard this expression would be that you've seen jebbles or hamsters put inside a cage and you've got a wheel and maybe the rock or the pet is put in that for exercise they go onto this wheel and they're threading this wheel and the wheel is turning and the wheel is turning and the wheel is getting nowhere so maybe in that sense there's a meaninglessness to what is done but somebody explained it like this the rock race is where you see two rocks and they're striving with all their energy to get to a piece of cheese at the end of a path and they expend all their energy so that they can get to this reward and then having got there having used all their energy the reward isn't really all it's made out to be it wasn't worth all the energy that was expended to get it and much of what we do in this world can be in that category and the the writer of this world of this world too is saying that on one side you've got those who are caught up in the rat race as it were and what they have is a life where disappointment with their achievement results in them trying and striving to achieve more following that with more disappointment discouragement and trying something different something better they hope but which again heals little little by way of help

I mentioned Stuart Oliott and he says when our outlook is earthbound when our outlook is totally life under the sun then it is inevitable that the spirit of this man who began crafting in this way are very pessimistic everything is meaningless everything is pointless hopeless let me quote to you words of a writer called Paul David Tripp I mentioned it before at some point we were created to live in a forever relationship with a forever God forever it's an interesting statement we are created to live in a forever relationship with a forever

[61 : 59] God forever it's emphasizing the nature of God and the nature of man as created by God souls that will go on into eternity we were designed to live based on a long view of life we were made to live with one eye on now and one eye on eternity you and I simply cannot live as we were put together to live without forever but so many people try they put all their hopes and dreams in the right here right now situations locations possessions positions and people of their daily lives they live moment after moment with indeliverable expectations they ask people to be what people this side of eternity will never be they demand that a seriously broken world deliver what it could never deliver even if it were not broken he goes on to say the evidence is clear there just has to be more to life than this this broken sin scarred mess can't be all there is and scripture is clear this is not paradise and it won't be rather this moment is a time of preparation for the paradise that is to come when everything that sin has broken will be fully restored to what

God originally intended it to be I think he gets that in a nutshell the season of our life that's a very pregnant statement the season of our life we think of four seasons so we think they're easily understood categorized but putting your life into a season reminds you of the brevity of your existence how short life seems to be if we think of it like that we sang psalms that spoke of the brevity of humanity remember the pessimism of the unconverted must be challenged by the optimism of the person who knows that there is a God who understands that there is a

God who is over the heavens not under the sun a God who is before time a God who will be after time while there can never be satisfaction without God your life cannot but have meaning with God that's what the man of God has discovered you cannot have a life without meaning if God is part of it if God is God you cannot but live as if what you were doing what God means you to do has a purpose has an end and this is what people struggle with with regard to Christianity they say what kind of God is your God your God says that everything is a purpose everything is a reason everything is a plan everything works out according to God to God's plan what about the Holocaust what about 9-11 what about the child who was born deformed what about the family that are changed by reason of disaster it's interesting that they would go as proof positive for a carefree God highlighting the things that are most negative and never for one moment consider the very things that life is also made up of the good things the things that that that that they have in abundance without ever acknowledging the source of that provision

I'm not saying that's an answer to the question what I'm saying is that those who who attack God on the basis of of the evil that is in the world and say God is responsible for the evil without ever acknowledging that God is responsible for the evil the good they are not being fair minded if at all there are many things that happens within the sovereign sway of God and all is within his sway everything he says there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven and God is the one who is responsible for that and if there is evil and there is if there is wickedness and there is if there are horrors and there are it is not God who is responsible for these horrors but he is still sovereign and that is difficult for us to comprehend the good as well as the evil

Roy and Moda he wrote the following it doesn't explain what I've been just saying but he says God gives to us such exercise that we might understand our limitations the mixed nature of life necessitates submission to the highest will we have storms and tranquility chastening and blessing we are humbled as well as honoured through these changes we learn that it is futile to strive against God's providence we no longer labour in vain if we understand that it doesn't mean that it's easy for us to do that but it is something that gives when we appreciate when we believe that God God is God and God does all things well even the person who has to encounter the griefs and the sorrows that this world brings you know very often you hear people quote the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8 and they're so easily quoted and they're so easily mentioned except by the person who is in the grip of the storm who is in the centre of the pain of loss all things he says work together for good to them that love God to them who are called according to his purpose it's that all that's so difficult for us to reconcile when the pain is new and fresh and real at the time it's nearly gone just one story

[69 : 15] I read Professor St. Cliff Ferguson he was talking about his own experience he was a newly ordained minister 23 24 years old ministered in the Church of Scotland he was in his first congregation he was in the service like it is today at the end of the service somebody in the congregation he had never seen before he didn't know who it was asked to see him and that person poured out his heart to him and said that he his wife had been recently diagnosed with cancer and his whole life was upset he had everything that he could possibly want he had a happy marriage he had all the possessions materialistic possessions that his work would allow him to have everything was the way it should be and then this came and everything became meaningless to him and he just couldn't deal with it he couldn't handle it didn't know how to handle it and this is what

Sinclair Ferguson said for all the resources that he had that were worth nothing now there was no emergency account on which to draw for such a time as this no investment which they could cash in to see them through such a crisis he had everything most of us would ever want yet his whole life his whole being was crying out for the one thing he now lacked and this was him a minister of a few months faced with a question which he had no answer to and sometimes we need to bite our tongue and say well I can't I can't change what is happening I can't take away your pain

I can't say how this will work out and sometimes that's all we have but it doesn't mean that we have nothing as Christians as believers we have a God that we can direct people to and who can even in the darkest hour be a light in that dark hour a God who can make something mean something even when to others it's just crying out meaninglessness and that man went away from Sinclair Ferguson he was saying I would like to know what happened he walked out of here I spoke to him I shared the gospel with him I did my best to help him he doesn't know whether what he said was a help or a hindrance and you know being a

Christian does not mean that you are going to avoid these issues that life brings you are not going to avoid the pain you're not going to avoid the loss you're not going to avoid the questions that are impossible to answer but just because they're impossible for you to answer doesn't mean that the God of heaven is not God or that he is not able to meet you at that time it is far better to you know the person who treats life with this philosophy meaningless meaningless all is meaningless nothing are his answers better than your answers who know that there is a God who know that God does all things well who knows that whatever is mysterious must remain mysterious that they will come when the mysteries perhaps will unfold there is a difference there is there are things that

God alone can help you through and may you know the difference between being such a one and one who knows no God let us pray heavenly father help us to understand that throughout all the generations there have been those who would question meaningful questions and deep impenetrable problems to them and that they would seek to deal with these things using their own resources or resources that are time bound whereas you people will know to go to God and surrender their all to you and humble themselves under the mighty hand of the sovereign who is the one ultimately with whom we have to do bless us in his name we pray amen our closing psalm psalm 89 psalm 89 and we're going to sing the first two verses of the psalm and then verse 47 and 48 so the first two verses of the psalm

[75 : 11] God's mercy I will ever sing and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all for mercy shall be built said I forever to endure thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish sure remember Lord how short a time I shall on earth remain oh wherefore is it so that thou hast made all men in vain what man is he that liveth here and death shall never see or from the power of the grave what man his soul shall be these four stands as God's mercies I will ever sing what message I will ever sing I will in my world my son thy faithfulness and victory be yours to generations all for

Mary John be blessed I forever you and you thy faithful and still in the heavens the will is come is sure remember Lord the short of time I shall all never remain O where war is his short love has given man in here what mind is here

I live and hear I I can hear I hear I can hear I can hear what my is I hear you me page behind in all years you bunch but at you what we need to lhr