

Ecclesiastes 3 - A Time For Everything

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Preacher: Anonymous

[0 : 00] Well, in Consale, we have been working our way through the book of Ecclesiastes, and so you're getting some of that today. Okay, so as we look at this, we're going to be looking in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, and if you've ever read through the book, you'll know it is maybe not one of the more straightforward books.

First time when Craig said that we were going to be working our way through that, I got a hold of my son that has a...

I had to ask him a couple of questions and told him I was going to be speaking on this. He has a master's degree in theology from this, and he told me, he said, well, way to go. It's probably the toughest book in the whole Bible.

So anyway, we'll just work our way through and see what the Lord has for us. But by way of introduction, I'm just going to play a video for you. Maybe you've heard this, and to give us a little bit of intro as to what this chapter is about.

Again, it's Ecclesiastes chapter 3. What's the day in turn, turn, turn, turn? There is a season turn, turn, turn, turn.

[1 : 19] And there's time to every purpose unto heaven. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plan, a time to reap, a time to kill, a time to heal, a time to nerve, a time to have, a time to leave, a time to love, a time to ever dön.

And then a time to love your purpose unto heaven. Thank you.

Thank you.

One time you may embrace, one time you may embrace, God has been praising. So many of you have probably heard that before.

Whatever the mainstream media mix-up on something philosophical like this, and quite an interesting term, this is done by the birds along the back of the hill.

[3 : 29] Almost right from Ecclesiastes chapter 3. This is a camera. You're probably wondering what that does to do with anything.

But if I were to take a photo of this camera right now, what would I get? Any idea? Nothing. Exactly right, because there's no wind on it.

Okay, so I could take something like this and put that on here. And then what would I get? Any idea?

What kind of lens is this? This is a good side of the day. Okay. This is a cell phone lens. And so if I were to put this lens on and make it a camera, from this, this is a Disney movie for my life.

Okay, there's not much else. Okay. There's not much else. All right. And so this moves in. So with this kind of lens on the camera, it is very close.

[4 : 28] So as you're trying to stick in each other. If I were to take a photo of this one and put it on, and take all the way down to what it's capable of doing, I have to put more stuff in and I can even put them on all of them.

Okay? That's a wide angle. It takes a big picture. It gives you a big idea of what it's looking at. All right? And so all of those require light.

If you're all sitting here just like you are now, and I'm going to turn the light out, and it's totally dark in here, it doesn't matter what it's going to be. Okay? You're not going to get anything. Okay?

So it requires light. Now all of these lenses, they have a ring on the other one that focuses. All right? So I can still put this at wide angle and get everyone in here.

But if I don't turn this until the glass sections are the right distance apart, you will be out of focus. You may not be visible at all.

[5 : 31] All right? And so by turning the ring directly, we bring it into focus so that we can see what we're trying to see. All right? And so all of that is just an illustration, if you would, of Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

It is a wide angle view of life. It is a type of what's called pessimistic literature. It's the only example of that in all of Scripture.

There's loads of it in the world. Most of it ends up very, very poorly. Either in some type of suicide or that type of situation.

But Ecclesiastes is much more of a wide angle. And there are parts of it that give us the focus ring. That turn things so that we can see it.

Chapter 3 in the book of Ecclesiastes appears to me to be this focus. There is a contrast between man's view of time and God's view of time.

[6 : 35] Between man's view of life and God's view of life. And there is significant difference. So if we look at the first verse in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, it says this, There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens, a time to be born and a time to die.

There is a time for everything. A season. It isn't always time to plant, is it? If you're a gardener or if you're a farmer, it is not always the right time to put the seed in the earth, is it?

And so there is a season to plant and there's a different season to harvest. There is a different time, if you would, to harvest.

So this passage starts at the beginning. A time to be born. All of us understand that we have no control over our birth. Alright?

I didn't somehow have a cosmic experience that said, I didn't exist. God brought that into an existence. So He has the power to bring us into existence by birth.

[7 : 53] But there's also a time to die. And God controls that as well. And understanding this big picture of who God is and His power is important.

Sometimes we think the way that we live, we forget that the first four words of God's owner's manual, when we get in the middle of all of these things that go on in life, we forget how God's word started.

The first four words. In the beginning, God. Okay? It wasn't in the beginning me, or in the beginning you. It was in the beginning God.

Starting with life and death, God controls both birth and our last breath. And everything in between. We can rest in that knowledge, however, regardless of life's ever-changing circumstances, because our circumstances do change constantly.

God is never surprised by those changes. God is never caught off guard by those circumstances. And so we can rest in that. Seasons change.

[9 : 09] Right? Seasons change all the time. They move on, though we think maybe they never will. Summer will give way to autumn. Autumn will give way to winter, and winter to spring.

Sometimes here it's eventually, but it will eventually come. And so when we turn, it will then return to summer. Summer. Some seasons we think are better than others.

Some summers are better than others. Right? Some spring, this has been a pretty good summer, I think. The last couple of weeks during our summer team was 21, 22 degrees. I don't think I saw that at all the summer before.

So some are better than others. Some are hot. Some are cool. Some are wet. Maybe now. Maybe now. Right?

So when we read through these seasons of life, which are not meant to be inclusive, when we look at this passage, this is representative, think about time.

[10 : 13] Think about the times that you have experienced in your lifetime. Think about how the seasons of your life have come and gone. And may come again.

So as we read this together, think through where you have been. And it starts, there is a time for everything. A season for every activity under the heavens.

A time to be born. A time to die. A time to plant. And a time to uproot. A time to kill. And a time to heal.

A time to tear down. And a time to build. A time to weep. And a time to laugh. A time to mourn.

And a time to dance. A time to scatter stones. And a time to gather them together. A time to embrace. And a time to refrain from embracing.

[11 : 13] A time to search. And a time to give up. A time to keep. And a time to throw away. A time to tear.

And a time to mend. A time to be silent. And a time to speak. A time to love. And a time to hate. A time for war. And a time for peace. So as we think through. How do we bring this wide angle view of time.

Or times. Or seasons. Into focus. How do we do that? How do we understand what's going on? If we look at verse 9. It says this.

What do workers gain from their toil? And the expectation there. Is that there should be some kind of profit. From work. But what is it? It says.

[12 : 09] All. All is meaningless. Chapter. Or verse 10. I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. The burden we make. The burden to make sense of life.

To find meaning. In direct contrast to other pessimistic literature that is found in the world. That concludes that suicide is the only logical conclusion.

That's how most other pessimistic literature ends. Whereas Ecclesiastes is in stark contrast. Let's look at verse 11.

The first part of it. It says this. He has made everything beautiful in its time. This time for everything is not the same time for everything.

Just as seasons change. So times change. Again, farmers cannot always harvest. Nor can they always be planting.

[13 : 14] They must do it in the right time. There is a right time to plant. There is a right time to harvest. If you plant a crop in autumn. It will not ripen before winter.

And you will have nothing. Time. His time. His time. Often means waiting. Any experience of that? If you think through the times of your life. Times that you have had to wait. His time. Is very often different. Than our time.

We often believe we need things now. I need it now. Just like our kids. Those of you with young children. Right?

What's their patience level? What is our own patience level? We often have little. And stress out if answers are delayed and are unclear.

[14 : 16] Other times things happen faster than we want. Or faster than we think they should. We have four children.

It was yesterday that they were toddlers. In March we married off our youngest. We now have eight grandchildren and a ninth on the way.

Things go really fast. And the older I get. It seems the faster they go. So there are times where you think.

Is this never going to pass? Is this never going to end? And there are times. When you want to slow it down. Right? Harvests are like that.

Seasons are like that. I just cut the grass yesterday. How in the world could it need it again today? Right? I sprayed those weeds. How can they come back?

[15 : 18] How does that happen? When did I get old? I was a kid a couple days ago. I don't know what happened.

How can that electric bill be due again? I just paid it. So these seasons that we go through. And Solomon as he writes this.

And he's thinking through life. And he's thinking philosophically. Holding on to the fact that God's time is better than our time. And to him it is already done.

He has made, past tense, he has made everything beautiful in its time. We look at the second part of this. He has set eternity in the human heart.

Eternity. What is time to God compared to what it is again? Once again we see here that God is in control.

[16 : 21] He has set eternity in our heart. God's human creation, we innately know that there is more than this this time on earth.

We may deny it. We may try to fight it. We may try not to think about it. Yet our natural self thinks as if this time of unearthly life is all there is.

But somewhere in our subconscious we know that that's not the case. A couple of interesting facts. Irishman.

Okay? You're an Irishman. You have a life expectancy of 78 years. Right? That means I don't have a lot left. So I'm thinking about that. An average Irish woman, however, has another five years. Your life expectancy is 83 years. So if you're 84, you're doing good. Okay? So on average, an Irishman has about 28,470 days.

[17 : 30] 28,470 days from birth to death. If you're 25 years old, you've already used up 9,125 of them.

Okay? At 40, you've lived 14,600 days. And if you're my age, you might have about 6,000 days left. All right? A woman has about 30,295 days or 1,009 months.

Okay? That's what you've got. If you're a 25-year-old woman, you've lived 304 months. At 45, you have an average, on average, about 462 months left.

Okay? Eternity, however, is a lot longer. Have you ever thought about that? If we just take, I don't know, an introduction, maybe 15,000 years or so.

Okay? That's 5,475,000 days to say hello. And by the way, my name's Tim. Okay? 15,000 years. That's 182,500 months.

[18 : 41] Okay? So when we get confused between life that we know on earth and we start looking at eternity, there's a big difference. So this begs the question, how should we then live?

What should our priorities look like when we think about time? And try to think about time a little bit more like God thinks about time.

Colossians 3, 1, one of my favorite chapters, says this, Since then you have been raised up with Christ. Set your hearts on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, past tense, for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

[19 : 47] Anything above God. Anything that we think of higher than we think of God. So in the second part, the last part of this verse in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, He has made everything beautiful in His time.

He has also said, Eternity in the human heart. Yet no one can fathom what He, God, has done from beginning to end. None of us see the whole picture from beginning to end.

None of us have this concept that God has. This perspective that He has. Ecclesiastes is focusing the focus ring on our lens on our limitations.

It contrasts our limited knowledge and understanding with God's unlimited knowledge, visibility, and understanding.

Notice also that God, that through God, though God has put a desire for eternity and a desire for beauty in our hearts, our lives contain many mysteries that we can't understand.

[20 : 54] We see it every day in the headlines, don't we? Why did a shooter go into Orlando, Florida and kill 49 people? Why do babies die in their cribs on occasion?

We are not in control of those things. We do not know how God thinks in every circumstance. We don't know the end from the beginning as God does.

We are not part of that ultimate, infinite timeline that He is. God has not shared everything with us. And it's time we understand that. That God, just like you don't share everything you know with your two-year-old, God does not share every single thing with us.

We would like Him to, or so we think. But there are times that that's just not the case. Life is often like a puzzle. If you could imagine puzzle pieces that go on for miles, and we are on one of those puzzle pieces.

[22 : 07] If we had a puzzle that lined this whole wall and you could see the entire thing, you could see where your puzzle piece fits in and makes a difference in that wall mural or that wall puzzle.

That's kind of how God is. Is that God can see the entire puzzle from beginning to end and every aspect. all that has been and all that will be.

And He knows why our peace is important. Why what He has done or allowed to have done is worked in to this mural that makes sense.

We know that God does all things for His glory as anything else would be idolatrous. If God were to do anything else that would be something other than for His glory, it would be idolatrous just as it is for us to put anything before Him.

But we can also rest in what the preacher as it's termed in this book's encouragement to enjoy what we have in life now. So if we look at this verse in verse 12 to 13, I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

[23 : 22] That each of them may eat. Let me get the rest of this. And drink and find satisfaction in all their toil.

This is the gift from God. Ecclesiastes 3.22 So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work because that is their lot.

For who can bring them to see what will happen after them? If we move to this 16, why don't you take a look at this one?

When we talk about these things, about why their things happen the way that they do, why do we have injustice? Look at this verse.

This is an incredibly powerful verse to use with those that are considering who God is and why these things happen in the world.

[24 : 20] Look what this observation is. And I saw something else under the sun. In the place of judgment, wickedness was there. In the place of justice, wickedness was there. Solomon could understand that where there should be judgment and where there should be justice in this world, there dwells wickedness.

Do we not see that? time and time again. Why do these things happen? Why do we see courts legislating immorality?

Why do we see judges on benches around the world making rulings that make no sense from a purity standpoint?

The writer notes that even in his kingdom, and I'm presuming this is written by Solomon, there's not, that may not be 100%, but I think so.

The writer notes that even in his kingdom, there is not an honest and fair court system. In the place of judgment, wickedness is there. The justice system is also wicked.

[25 : 30] Handing out sentences to innocents and letting the guilty go free, no doubt. Not in every case, but in many. Corruption was clearly visible.

Yet then, as now, it continues. There is no political savior, even in a kingdom led by a king of great wisdom such as Solomon.

No Taoiseach will put a perfect end to Irish injustice. No U.S. president or Brexit is going to fix the world's issues and lead us into some type of utopian state of perfection.

corruption. There is sickness at every turn. Only God can bring an end to government corruption, unfairness, and ever-changing legislated immorality.

Only God. So when we're focusing our focus ring, it's a good idea to know what we're focusing on. Verse 17, I said to myself, notice also that though God has put a desire for eternity and a desire for beauty in our heart.

[26 : 49] Wait a minute, I got myself mixed up here. God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed.

a time to judge every deed. So when we think about getting lost in this world of these injustices, think about this.

God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked. It doesn't just say the wicked. Both the righteous and the wicked for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed.

And once again, we will see that in God's time, He will judge every deed at last. Perfect judgment. Perfect justice.

Perfect fairness. Perfect administration. And no corruption. Is that not what all the world cries for? Can we not have justice?

[27 : 52] What an incredible passage to share with those that are seeking. So, what do we conclude? At least this.

God's blessing is to be acknowledged and enjoyed. God's blessing to be acknowledged and enjoyed. And God's judgment to be prepared for.

Are you ready? Am I ready? Romans 8.1 says this, Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.

Boy, is that not good news. There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. This implies that there is condemnation for those who are not.

No mention of Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Muslim, white, black, or brown, only in Christ. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[28 : 58] Are you in Christ? Have you trusted Him? Ephesians 2.8 and 9, one of my all-time favorite verses, For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works that anyone should boast.

If you are trusting in your works, then you are not in Christ. If you are trusting in His, then you are. Let's pray. Father, we praise you and we thank you for who you are. We thank you if you are trusting and quick on on the earth...

Can you guess please?