

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #110 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 8/12/20)

“A Time for Everything”

“There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak up. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace. What do people really get for all their hard work? I have thought about this in connection with the various kinds of work God has given people to do. God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end. So I concluded that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to enjoy themselves as long as they can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-13)

As Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes 3, there is a time and season for everything. “There is a time to be born and a time to die...” Even though we are in a season of death during the pandemic, we know that a season of birth and new life will come... There is “a time to cry and a time to laugh.” Many of us may feel like crying with all that is going on (or not going on) in our lives and world, but a time of laughter and healing will come... I could reflect on each of the times Solomon mentioned, but since that would take too long, I’ll leave that time of prayerful reflecting to you... 😊

In our world today, we might add some other times... There is a time for staying home and a time for going places. A time for wearing a mask and a time not to wear a mask. A time to embrace and a time give virtual hugs. A time for going to worship services in person and a time to watch them online. A time to go to school in person and a time to be schooled virtually. A time to stand up for what is right and just, and a time to ignore a slight and let it go. (What times/seasons would you add?)

Reading these times and seasons may be helpful—because they remind us that each of these seasons is temporary; none of them will last forever. Therefore, let’s not spend lots of our limited time worrying about these times and seasons or spending our lives trying to find happiness in temporary things. God wants us to enjoy the life he’s given us and the eternal life he offers us. Unfortunately, though, Solomon, after wasting much of his life, learned that his efforts to find happiness in worldly things were futile. At the end of his life, he concluded that the purpose of life and the only way to find true joy in life is to love and follow God (Ecc. 12:13). Perhaps we can learn from Solomon’s mistakes and what he learned?

God gives to us all life and the opportunity for various kinds of times and seasons in our lives, but how we spend those times and seasons is up to us. Therefore, choose for yourself, this day (Joshua 24:15) to make the most of your time and each season of your life. Choose to follow and find forgiveness, healing, and new life in Christ. Choose to find freedom and joy that you cannot find in any earthly pleasure. Choose to live not for yourself, but in serving Christ and others. Choose to live a life in which you plant seeds of love and faith in others.

None of us knows what the next season will bring, but we can know that God will be with us if we want to be with Him. “For God so loved the world [you], he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Our jobs and homes, our hopes and dreams, our family and friends, and even our earthly bodies will perish. When the times and seasons of our lives come to an end, what will we have to show for it? We came into this world with nothing, and we will leave it with nothing.

But, if during our season of life on this earth, we make the most of our time by giving our lives to Jesus Christ and sharing his love with others, we (and hopefully they) will live forever! When our time on earth ends, our time in heaven will be just beginning. You see the best time or season, is yet to come...!

PRAYER:

Eternal God, help me to appreciate the rhythms and seasons of life... and to trust your timing... Forgive me for times I have wasted my life chasing after temporary pleasures in this world. Help me to know that only you can satisfy! Help me to make the most of each time and season of my life—that I may glorify you and point others to you... in every time and season of my life. To you be all the glory, now and forever! Amen.

LIVE IT!

Prayerfully read and meditate on Ecclesiastes 3:1-13. What is God saying to you in this time and place? Listen... and make the most of each season of your life by living it for Jesus!