

ECCLESIASTES SERIES ONE
WHAT TIME IS IT?
PASTOR GLENN BARTEAU
12/14/07

(Hook) Colie was giving a little commentary on life one day in the car... under her breath she said: I can't wait until I grow up. Because I'm not going to eat a lot of protein... because on my protein and vegetables are the worst then carbohydrates and on the top of my list is sugar. When I grow up I'm going to eat sugar the most.

Q: Remember being a child and the way you thought about life?
 When I was a child I promised myself that when I became an adult I would live differently.

- ✓ I would eat candy and sugared cereals all the time.
- ✓ I would stay up late
- ✓ No more shots from the doctor
- ✓ No more hard work putting my toothbrush away or feeding the dogs

“Adults have it so easy...” I thought

- ✓ No rules
- ✓ No more going to bed according to someone else's schedule
- ✓ Watch TV whenever I wanted...
- ✓ Life would become fun... and carefree... **NO MORE WORRIES!**

And then of course... you actually become an adult...

↳ The freedom, the joy, the simplicity... Oh the life I had.

T>> Kid's play this game: When I'm thinking life will be better when I... and we tend to keep playing these games even as adults...
 Solomon would say you don't understand yet...

Ecc 3:1-8

Life is a constant turning of seasons... and we must learn to live with this truth and not try to work against it. Solomon makes an important observation about life here.

V:4 *A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.*

(ILL)

Wedding & Funeral

Wedding for two young people – Peter & Jenna who were kids when I came on staff... I've watched them for years. (Groomsmen held up score cards for the kiss)

Funeral the next morning for one of my dear mentors, friends, and Sunday School teacher of my youth. He made the Christian life come alive.

Ecc 3:11a

“He has made everything beautiful in its time....”

Solomon would say life is a constant turning of seasons...

Observation

We need to figure out what time it is in our lives.

Q: What time is it in your career?

Q: What time is it in your marriage?

(Story)

Years ago Angie and I were talking after she had a difficult day. And I'm thinking this simple... so I start telling her how to fix the problem she ran into that day... (Husbands... any of you have this happen?) She just keeps asking me more question until I start to get dizzy, so I explain in further detail... this is what to do...

She's a little frustrated, she tells me. "Stop trying to fix my problem, I know how to fix it." What? Why talk to me if it's fixed? "I want to just process it with you... Don't fix it, ask me how I feel about, what it means?"

This is very hard for me... I'm a fixer, I'm a little on the "process challenged" side of things.

App

Is it time to fix, or challenge, or comfort, or just listen...

Q;

What time is it in your spiritual journey?

Some of you are moms of young children running round... You want to focus on the spiritual disciplines of **silence**, and **solitude** – **FAT CHANCE!**

Don't beat yourselves up for not having nice long, quiet devotionals... It's not that time...

Maybe its time to practice the disciplines of **servant hood**, **steadfastness**... or the discipline of **not losing your mind**...

What time is it for you spiritually..?

- ✓ Sacrifice... or maybe it's time...
- ✓ Lean and depend on a friend...
- ✓ Walk greater faith – God has put a challenge before you at work, or family... health issues.
- ✓ Minister... this is the time for you to give yourself way by ministering to the homeless, or hurting
- ✓ Cultivate your inner spiritual life... this is the time to grow in prayer, Bible study.

A few lessons

1. Put effort in what you can actually control or influence.Ecc 3:2

A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to plant and a time to uproot,

There's the obvious truth here that we're all born and we're all going to die someday... but the critical underlying message is one of control.

No one controls when they will be born, or planted.... And no one has the ability to prevent eventual death.

- We don't have as much control as we think.

(ILL)

IF you're on a sail boat... is it better to try and change the direction of the wind, or the adjustment of your sails?

A lot of people spend the majority of their lives trying to control the winds of life... and they are constantly frustrated because nothing goes their way.

i.e.

If you're the parent of older teens and you're parenting them like they're in elementary school... you're going to have some problems.

i.e.

If you have a friend or a spouse who's cranky all the time... like they've got the spiritual gift of crank... don't try to control them... you can't .

You can be spiteful & manipulative... you might get a little compliance... but in the end it will fail.

Focus on what you can control:

We can treat them with respect... We can minister to their aloneness, or hurt. We can set appropriate boundaries....

2. Find the joy of the season you're inEcc 3:12-13

I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil – this is the gift of God.

This is not saying that we should live in denial about the difficulties of life... Solomon understands that life is hard and difficult... he's frustrated about it... look at verse 9 & 10...

Ecc 3:9-10

What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men." Solomon is a little frustrated w/ God, but that's out of his control.

⇒ Live w/ gratefulness over the good things in your past... Anticipation for the what's to come... and enjoy the gifts of today.

(ILL) Colie in pig tails... **I'M THE ONLY MAN IN HER LIFE!!!**

T>> look at how Solomon brings this passage to a conclusion.

Ecc 3:14 I know that everything God does will endure forever nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.

3. Revere God for the beautiful things in your life.

God is in control... God is in control of all eternity... and I can get down and frustrated about what I can't understand, and the limitations of my humanity...
or

I can give God credit for the blessing of life... and revere him for his greatness... and Praise for things that I can't fully understand.

But Glenn I don't know if God really did give me those good things... I'm not sure if God even exist... that's okay...

Ecc 3:11b He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

If you don't have God all figured out... that's okay... who's problem is that? It's God problem... He's the one who put a heart and desire for spiritual things in our minds... and He's the one who created us without the capacity to fully understand...

⇒ My job... your job **is not** to understand everything spiritual... My job... your job is to respond to what God has give.

Even if you struggle to believe in God... you can still offer him credit for what He might have done.

10 min on clock
Time to practice this

~ Don't just sing the words... express them to God... IF you're a Christ follower give yourself over to God... give him your heart.

Here I am to say that you're my God,
You're altogether lovely, Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

~ If you are still seeking to understand God... not quite sure... express the words of this song as a hope... God I hope you're real, I hope you're real... Express them as a request... God reveal who you are to me...

Here I am to worship

Think about the greatest blessings of your life... a spouse, child, parent, friend... job opportunity... a gift... With a grateful heart express this song back to God