

Let's Have a Conversation

"God's Gift of Time"

Going Deeper:

Devotion 1: Consider your favorite season of the year, what makes it so?

- Create a mental picture of your favorite activity for each season and sit in the stillness of your mind's eye.
- Divide paper into quarters and create a depiction of the seasons of your life.

Devotion 2: In the parings of "times" which ones resonate with you?

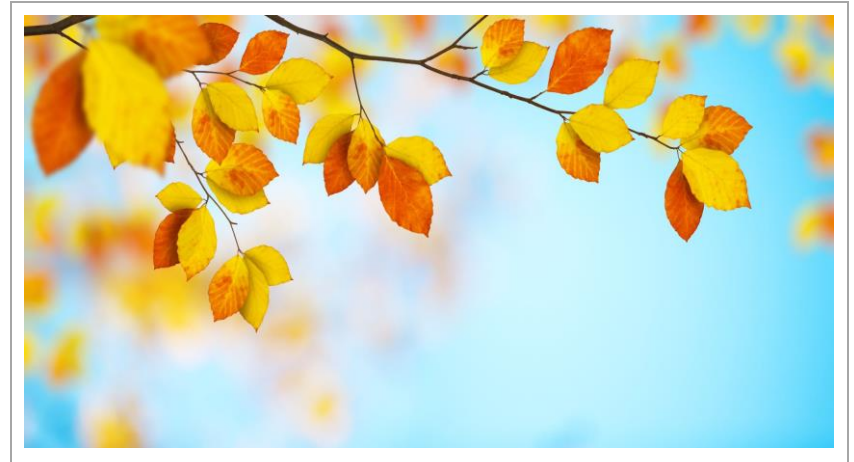
- If you could add wisdom to this passage, what times would you add to *Qoheleth's* "times"?
- If it were possible, are there moments of time you would like to pause, rewind or fast-forward.

Devotion 3: Make a gratitude list.

- Notice what emotions, moods, facial expressions, body-tensions arise within you as you ponder the list.
- Pray for, write a note, send a card, call someone on your gratitude list.



The Jarvie Journey



ORDINARY TIME

Wisdom Literature

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Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

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 throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to throw away;

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate;

A time for war, and a time for peace.

JOY



Ecclesiastes 3:12

We cannot slow the revolutions that our planet takes around the sun, nor can we speed up the seasons. We cannot press pause, reward, or fast forward. In everything, we are called to simply enjoy life as it comes.

Even though the teacher reminds us in verse 11 that we “cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end,” the teacher implores us all to “eat and drink and find satisfaction in all (our) toil.” Why? Because even with the incomprehensibility of the big picture, God has given to all the gift of enjoyment and happiness.

Qoheleth teaches us that joy is the great commandment for humankind. In everything, what the teacher is calling us to learn is to view the span of the seasons as God’s gift to us. To accept this gift of life is to be obedient to the will of God.

Let us ponder and give thanks to God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, for the joy we find in all times and in all seasons of our lives.

I invite you to listen to “For the Fruit of All Creation”

TIME



Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11

Time never stands still. It keeps on ticking, perpetually moving. In the most recognizable section, *Qoheleth* teaches and provides wisdom on time.

Within these familiar verses, we find fourteen balanced pairs of action verbs. The writer's point is that there is an appropriate time for each of the activities listed in 3:1-8. The listing of times offers a sampling of the events and moods that make up the span of human lives.

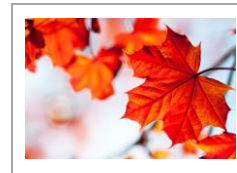
But the writer has noticed something problematic here. We humans cannot determine these "times," nor can we control them. We cannot press rewind to retreat to an earlier time; we cannot press fast-forward through parts we would rather get through quickly; nor can we hit pause and stop time from continuing onward.

"God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end" (3:11).

God, help us to determine the right "times" for our actions that we may rest and find comfort in you. Amen

Wisdom of Ecclesiastes

SEASONS



"For everything there is a season..."
(Eccl. 3:1).

TIME



"...and a time for every matter under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

JOY



"Nothing better...than to be joyful and to do good" (Eccl. 3:12).

A Note from Pastor Shelley

There is no better season than fall. In the life of the church, the fall typically marks the beginning of the programmatic year with the return of activities that were on a well-deserved hiatus or respite over the summer. There is a distinct welcoming, gathering, communal feel to autumn.

In the Jewish faith, the fall is marked by the festival of Sukkoth, celebrating the harvest and commemorating the temporary shelters used by the Israelites while wandering in the wilderness. During this pilgrimage and celebratory gathering, the familiar words of Ecclesiastes are read aloud, reminding the listeners of the temporal nature of time and seasons.

Of the twelve chapters of Ecclesiastes, there is none more widely known than chapter 3 and the poem about the “times.” As I find myself noticing the certain signs of the changing season, the Pete Seeger tune sung by The Byrds readily comes to mind.

As we enter the season of fall and continue to journey through the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, let us ponder the experiences of time both Chronos and Kairos. Chronos: the sequential, linear passage of time measured by clocks and calendars that marks a duration of time; and Kairos: the numinous, circular time without beginning or ending when we rest in holy moments, experiencing the appointed time and purpose of God.

Grace and peace be with you, Pastor Shelley

SEASONS



Ecclesiastes 3:1

I enjoy living in the northeast where the seasons are distinctive, and we can experience and eagerly anticipate the change each season brings. After a cold winter of sleet and snow, we find the refreshing breeze and warmth of spring. After the dog days of summer with heat and humidity, we look forward to cooler temperatures and sun filtering through the colorful leaves of fall.

While we have no control over seasons, we are subject to them and affected by them. The author of Ecclesiastes, *Qoheleth*, meaning teacher of the assembly (often translated as Preacher), provides us with a collection of wisdom sayings and teachings that ponder the mystery of the created order and life in this world. Like a tree that blooms and grows in its season, there is a seasonality to our lives that happens within the context of time.

There is a constancy and continuum with the seasons. One season is distinguishable from the next; yet we never know exactly how a particular season will unfold. Seasonality teaches us to appreciate and experience things as they come because we know that each season is fleeting.

Let us ponder the handiwork of our Creator as we experience the changing seasons of our lives.