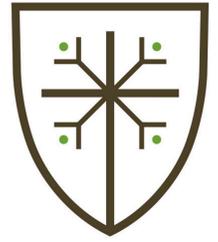


SERMON NOTES



A Whisper in the Wind

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES | LENT 2026 SERMON SERIES

March 8, 2026

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"The Complexity Of Our Times"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, 16-20

Hebrews 4:14-16, 11:1

Matthew 8:23-32

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you deal with the complexities of life under the sun? Who, or what, do you turn to?
2. Looking at Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, is there a side of the experiences that comes more easily to you? For example, is weeping more natural or is laughing more natural (v. 4)?
3. Are there any areas of your life where you ask, "Why did something happen?" How can you instead examine them with the new question, "Why did God do this in the way he did?"

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim continued our sermon series in Ecclesiastes and argued that the book was written for the hopeless, the cynical, and the slothful, and challenges them with the question, "Don't you want more out of life?"

The Complexities of Life

The Preacher paints a poetic picture of the breadth of experiences we all face in human life through his pairing of twenty-eight different experiences into fourteen couplets of opposites. This breadth of human experience was the way it was for the Preacher then, and for us now, because there is nothing new under the sun. Yet even with the consolation that the ups and downs of life are normal and to be expected, it is still challenging to make sense of suffering. The most common question that Tim has received in his time at All Saints is "Why?" Why did this injustice happen, why did a particular situation not turn out the way I wanted it to, and so forth? This tension, too, was prevalent in the Teacher's time, and he answers it in verse 11. God put eternity on the human heart. We are God's image bearers. We are made for beyond time and history, so we yearn for the one outside time and history. But we are not God. We know the one who can control and comfort and know, but we magnify our struggles by turning from him and trying to take on the yoke of control that only God can bear. And that is the human condition, not being able to understand the full breadth of life, which threatens to send us into a spiral where everything feels meaningless. We can look beyond our lives to remedy.

The Judgement After Life

Justice can be understood in two ways: retributive, which aims to right a wrong, and restorative, which is healing and returns something to how it should be. The end of scripture restoratively promises that God will wipe away every tear. In the meantime, however, there is wickedness where righteousness should be, and it is something that our sinful nature is inclined to contribute to. The gospel reading focuses on justice, how to be healed not only from our wicked tendencies but also when God's final justice may occur (at the appointed, unknown time). Rather than exacting retribution, Jesus cast out the demons from the men and waited for the appointed time. There are many times that we should be glad that judgment is similarly delayed because it allows more time for repentance and to be made whole before the final judgment. Yet some of us may still find ourselves feeling bitter. That is because we are not waiting patiently for this day while we experience suffering and the breadth of human experience. Sometimes, out of our bitter hearts, we want to judge others harshly; sometimes, out of our low self-esteem, we judge ourselves too harshly. But we are not qualified to be the judge; only God can bear this weight, and there is much mercy in this action since the judgment has already come to pass on the cross. Even though Jesus did no wrong, he bore the retribution for all wrongs. Through union with Christ in faith and baptism, we can share in a life that has already been judged.

With the context of this chapter of Ecclesiastes, we know that we can still ask why, but perhaps in a different way. Specifically, why did God order history and our lives in the way he did that permitted the injustice that we lament? Why did God do it in this way? It was done in the perfect way so that our hearts may be drawn back to God. So this gives us hope that we are not too far gone, that Jesus understands perfectly what we are going through, and that Jesus will be with us in all things.