



SONGS: "My Testimony", "Touch of Heaven", "Freedom is Coming"

TITLE: Living Life Backwards - GOD'S BEAUTIFUL TIMING

ICE BREAKER: Share about an experience where you got the timing wrong and missed out on an opportunity.

BIG IDEA: Under the sun our relationship with time is broken, only life under the Son can fix this.

MAIN SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

A Time for Everything

- 3** There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.
9 What do workers gain from their toil? **10** I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. **11** He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet^a no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. **12** I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. **13** That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. **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 people will fear him.

¹⁵ Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account.^b

¹⁶ And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

¹⁷ I said to myself,

“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.”

¹⁸ I also said to myself, “As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. ¹⁹ Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath^c; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. ²⁰ All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. ²¹ Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”

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?

OPENING THOUGHTS:

We can see this just by looking back at the Teacher and his writings, he's been on this quest to find gain and profit in his labor, satisfaction and meaning that he can hold on to and he seems to always be missing it just when he's about to take hold of it, it becomes smoke in the hand, a chasing after the wind. It seems like he's always in the wrong place at the wrong time. And here he reflects on the timing of life and the purposes of God. He's realizing that humanity is out of step with God's timing.

MAIN POINTS:

1. In life under the sun we have a broken relationship with time.
2. We can know that God's timing & purposes are beautiful but we still live in a fog and cannot fathom it.
3. God designed us with a yearning for eternity that only he can satisfy.
4. Those who fear God live under the SON who has a perfect relationship with His purposes & time.
5. Walk by the Spirit and you will sync up closer to God's timing & purposes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (questions taken from the book “Living Life Backwards”)

1. What things do you seek to control? What might it look like to surrender control?
2. How could you have a wiser perspective on your time?
3. What might it look like to “grow small” (see pg. 58)
4. How can we help one another “embrace the fact of change in advance” (see page 61)?
5. “There is a time for judgment”(pg. 56). What difference could the truth make to the worries you have at the moment?

FURTHER STUDY (IF APPLICABLE)

CHALLENGE: Walk by the Spirit and you will sync up closer to God's timing and purposes.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, help me have the mind of Christ as I walk in step with the Holy Spirit. Help me see everything beautiful in it's time, help me sync up with your timing, and to trust in your eternal purposes for all that happens in my life. Amen.