

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
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Series: Ecclesiastes  
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## God Working in Time

### Ecclesiastes

Good morning, Church! How are we doing? Let's go, let's go! I am glad you are here. When I was walking back here, I passed, or I saw through the window a gang of servants in yellow vests that help you find your cars every week. Whether it is raining or 20 degrees or sunshine or whatever the weather. Can we just thank them real quick? The problem with that expression of gratitude is they are not in here. So if you are married to one of them or know one of them – I love that a couple of them are our elders here – will you just send them a text message today and thank them?

We are going to continue in Ecclesiastes, and I want to start by asking you, “Have you ever been in a situation where someone has a certain amount of time to make something beautiful and they fail miserably?” Maybe you were that person. Or perhaps a contractor. You hire a contractor to redo your bathroom and you ask them, “How long is it going to take?” And they say, “Probably three weeks.” And then here you are seven weeks later, and it does not look more beautiful. It looks a lot less beautiful than when you started. The tile is not up yet. Some of you are having PTSD right now. Maybe it was a school project for you. You were supposed to make that volcano or the posterboard and make it beautiful and now it is the fifth hour and you are about to turn it in and as you look at what you have you are not real excited about it. Have you ever been given a certain amount of time, maybe make something beautiful, and it does not happen?

To give you a better understanding of what I am talking about, I want you to watch a clip from a show that someone sent me. It might help illustrate this idea – let's watch this. (Video of a man who was supposed to make a beautiful painting in less than minute and a half on TV show and he did. He completed a portrait. Throughout the video, the portrait looked like a mess of paint on a canvas until he flipped it over for the big reveal.) I want you to remember how you felt about 20 seconds ago. Because if we would have kept watching you would have heard the the judges say, “Wow – we were really confused. Because this was your moment. We brought out on and the country is watching and what you are supposed to be doing, you are not doing. It is not beautiful. We were just really confused.” Sharon Osbourne is like, “Well is it a potato”. And that is what I thought – maybe it is a potato. They brought him in and he is the best painter of a potato ever, you know. I don't know.

I think that we feel that way sometimes. We say, “God you have been given a certain amount of time to do something beautiful and you are not doing it. In this season that you have me in, I thought it was going to be good and it is bad. I thought that you were creator of the heavens and the earth. All powerful with all the things that you can do stuff with. And here I am, why am I

sitting in this really ugly situation? Could you make it beautiful?” And what we do is we start giving Him a certain amount of time to do it in. And if you are disappointed in God, if you are discouraged by God, I am telling you it is a timing issue. You are frustrated that He has not made something beautiful in your timing. That is really, at the end of the day, that is where your theology has gone off the rails a little bit. That is where you have come off track. Because we think that He is supposed to do it in our 76 years, our 80 years. Maybe you eat well and do Cross Fit and you get 100 years. And we think, “You need to make it beautiful now.”

So, we are in Ecclesiastes. Going to be in chapter 3 if you would like to turn there. This is where Solomon, who was actually a king – no one denies that. He was a really wealthy person, every atheist that you know who is well-studied will acknowledge there was a very wealthy king named Solomon. The wisest person to ever live. One of the most powerful people to ever be on this earth and we get to learn from Him. He is running this experiment where he is looking for meaning and he is looking for it in pleasure, rebellion, projects, education, power, and his professions. He has tried to find meaning under the sun in those things. And we learned that “under the sun” means apart from God. And he is coming up empty. We are three chapters in, and he cannot find meaning in those things. Which really discourages the younger people but gives words to how some of the older folks in this room feel.

We have subtitled this message, the search for meaning or searching for meaning. But I want to remind you that this is Solomon’s journal entry we are reading. So, we need to frame up our theology – our understanding of God – as we read his words knowing that he is just musing on the page. He is miserable. If I titled this book, I would title it *The Musings of the Miserable*. Because the most well-resourced, most powerful, richest, most wise person – wisest person to ever live – is coming up empty under the sun. And we said that the craziest thing that you could do – the most ignorant thing you could do – is to walk through those doors in a moment and repeat the experiment. Begin to look for meaning apart from God in these things because you too will be left despairing. You too, will come up empty.

So, the series/the message today I call God Working in Time. Which really has a double meaning because it is like: Is He going to do something in time? Is he going to get there in time? Is He going to make it happen in time? And also, God who sits outside of time is working in this chronological sequence, this human made construct, that we call time. That does not exist in His kingdom. There is no time in heaven. But all we know and understand – all our minds can grasp – is this sequence of events called time. So, God Working in Time. And I think we have all given Him a particular amount of time to do something great in and some of us are here today and we are discouraged. I just want to tell you a statement up front that is theologically sound – I can support it with Scriptures. If what you have is not good, God is not done. If what you have is not good, God is not done. You have not given Him enough time.

As we move into Ecclesiastes chapter 3, we are going to see how there is a time for everything; how God is in charge of everything; and how He makes everything beautiful in its time. And I just want to remind you that you cannot read Ecclesiastes like you would 1 Corinthians or even Genesis. It is a journal entry. It is poetry. He is saying things that when he says them we have to ask, “Is this true?” Which is different than when the Holy Spirit says something to the church or a historian is recording history. This is a journal entry. It is poetry. Is it true? Let’s go.

He says this, **“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to**

**kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”**

And every young person in this room is very confused as to why I would sing right in the middle of it, but does anybody know this passage was turned into a number #1 Billboard song? Does anyone know who wrote it? (Song plays in background.) There we go, singing along. That is special for you – they did not do that in the first service. You said, “The Birds”. It is actually Peter Seeger who wrote the song, but then The Birds picked it up. So no need to Google, you are right. But, Peter Seeger wrote it in the 60s. The Birds grabbed it and made it famous. If you have ever seen Forest Gump, it is featured in Forrest Gump. If you have not seen Forest Gump, what is wrong with you? Also, The Wonder Years. How many of you have never heard of The Wonder Years – the show. Do not lie to me right now. If you have never heard of The Wonder Years because I have asked several people. How sad is that? How sad is that? You are watching Saved by the Bell or something... The Office – that is better. The Wonder Years! So, yeah this is actually a record holder for the oldest lyrics in any #1 song on the Billboard, because he plagiarized Solomon. Peter Seeger almost took verbatim these 8 verses and put them to a melody that was picked up by The Birds and became a #1 song in the 60s.

It is a poetical took called the merismus. It has nothing to do with the word mirror, it is where you take the idea, and you present the exact contrast. So, King Solomon does that in a really brilliant way – in a multiple of seven which is the perfect number in the Bible. Right? He begins to present to you these 14 pairs of contrast. He says, “Here you go – 28 items.” And it is not prescriptive. You do not leave here thinking the Bible says there is a time to kill – you parked in my spot, this may be the time – that is not why this is in here. He is describing the human experience in poetic way. This is what he comes up with.

It is like you are watching...for example next week will be Baylor Homecoming Parade. Everyone has been to a parade, and you see the floats go by. It is like you are watching a parade – you are inside a building; you are looking through a window - and you see one float at a time going by. You see the different experiences, the different expressions of creativity, The different things that are happening on those floats. Meanwhile, God is standing on top of the ALICO building and He sees the end of the parade to the beginning of the parade. He sees it all at once. He knows everything. He is outside of time. We are experiencing it in seasons, but God is outside the seasons. That is, you know, in comprehensible. That is very difficult for us to understand – impossible I would say for us to understand here.

1. There is a time for everything.

This is my first point, directly from the text. There is a time for everything. Which is to say there is an appointed time for every kind of experience. Which is really important because it flies in the face of the prosperity Gospel. It says that when you are saved, you do not get to avoid the

problems and the pain and the penalties and the punishments. All of the things, those are still very much available to you – even poverty. That that can happen to Christians. To which you might say, “Why would I be a Christian?” Because it is right and true. Because there is a God, and He sent His son Jesus to die for your sins. He raised Him from the dead, happened in history, and every soul that you know will be in one of two places one day and God has purchased your right to be with Him in His kingdom. It is true! That is why you would believe it, because it is true. You should believe anything that is true. And it is true.

So Solomon is saying everyone will laugh and everyone will cry. Everyone will be born and everyone will die. That no one gets to avoid the highs and the lows of life. There are some weird theologies that are born out of Christianity. I hear all the time, “Well if God is good then He wouldn’t...” or if “There is a God then I wouldn’t experience, feel, or have.” I spend a lot of time with single friends and one that I run into the most looks like, “Well God would not have given me a desire for marriage if He did not have someone for me to marry.” No, you can replace that with whatever it is for you. “God would not give me a desire to work if He did not have a job for me to have.” “God would not give me a desire to make six-figures if He was not going to allow that to happen” Or, “God would not give me a desire for health if He was not going to make me healthy.” Or “God would not have...whatever that is for you.” “God would not have given me a desire for children or a desire for these many children if it was not in His plan.” That is a bad theology.

Here is why – Genesis 3. All sorts of things are available to you. You could have a deep, deep, deep desire for a husband. Walk out your front door, get hit by a meteor, and fall to the ground and die. You are like, “That escalated quickly.” But it makes my point. You can take out meteor and insert cancer or all kinds of suffering that is available to us under the sun, because the world is fractured. God in His timing is going to make it beautiful. But that might not be today. Today, it might just look like a potato or ugly. It will be ugly.

So, we sit in this weird dichotomy where we get to experience both of these extremes. Jesus says it like this, **“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10** So, Jesus does indeed give us an abundance of life, but the enemy is still here, and he is still after you. And he still tempts, and he still attacks, he still leads astray, he still steals, kills, and destroys. So we lean into Jesus who has come so that we may have life. It is a roller coaster. It is a roller coaster.

I do not know of any greater way to explain the roller coaster ride than that you really learn you are not in control when you have children. Or even when you find out that you are pregnant, ok. You are going to have a child. So let me just set this scene for you. I get home from work; we do not have any kids and I get home from work and Monica has the stick with the two lines on it and it is not Covid this time. It is, “Hey – I am pregnant. We are expecting! You are going to be a Dad.” And all of the feels, all of the emotions, all of the joy, all of the excitement in that moment – this is amazing! But then the next day comes, “But wait, we do not know what we are doing.” And all of the fears, all the anxieties, and the navigating this for the first time begins.

Call the doctor. You go to the doctor. At the doctor appointments this is fun, because we are learning lots and as we continue on that journey, we get to go see a heartbeat. We go to see a heartbeat and we are in the room with the sonographer and there it is. In this black and white, grainy image on a screen. There is the heartbeat! “Oh, there is a life growing inside of you! This is crazy!” And then I am like, “What is that? What is that – is it her neck? What are those

bubbles? What is that stuff there?” And they are like, “Oh, it looks like the umbilical cord is wrapped around her neck.” “Oh, so is that bad?” “Well, you are going to want to talk to the doctor about that.” “So, is it wrapped around a couple times?” “Yeah, those are great questions for the doctor.” “I will ask the doctor, but right now I am asking you. Is it wrapped around a couple of times? Can you give me some more information? What does that mean?” And now all of the sudden the joy and the excitement has a governor on it. You can only be so excited because what is going to happen. Where does this go? “Yeah, we are really excited! It is just there are a lot of things that can happen.” You have to manage that, navigate that. The doctors say, “Hey, yeah you might want to have a C-Section. It does seem like she has a little bit of a necklace there.” “Ok. Ok.” So now we are just stuck in this roller coaster of emotions.

Hey today is the day! This is the day where you are scheduled to become a father – let’s go! We get up early to go to the hospital. We have not done this before; there my wife is laying on a table and it is just a little bit – a lot of bit – anxious. A lot of, “Wow! How should we feel.” All of these emotions hitting at once. And they bring Presley into the world. They unwrap the umbilical cord from her neck, and they hand her to us – and everything is fine. And all of the feels, and all the joy, there it is. I am a dad! I am a dad! And we go into the hospital room and people come and visit us and they put this pink wreath on the door because it is a girl. And we get to experience all the things. There is hollering, and shouting, and high-fives. Right? And all of the joy in that room and in the room right next door to us is deep sadness, despair, and loss. Happening right next door. The same experience, different outcome – right next door. And therein lies the human experience. All of the things under the sun happen to all of us in different seasons and there are times to laugh and to celebrate and times to cry and be sad. And they are right there.