

Sermon on Ecclesiastes 3

Scripture Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1

In Solomon's effort to understand the "true meaning to life," he sees that good times and bad times come to all, and this repeats itself in each coming generation.

1. This process repeats itself with such certainty that Solomon concludes – Ecclesiastes 3:15
2. The wise man will understand this, and prepare himself for the ups and downs in life

Solomon is going to remind us in Ecclesiastes 3 that there are things beyond our control

1. For example, no matter how rich and power one may be, he can not prevent sorrow, sickness and death
2. Solomon is going to help us to see that true comfort and happiness will only come by placing our trust in God
3. Man should make the best of life while seizing the opportunities God offers

In our text of study for this lesson (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15), we will see Solomon contemplating the providence of God

A. TIMES AND SEASONS APPOINTED BY GOD

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
2. All the items Solomon has mentioned here we will come to know if we live long enough
 - a. Solomon is confirming his assertion made in chapter 2, that wealth, wisdom and success are not really in man's hands
 - b. Notice how James puts it – James 4:13-16
3. There is a time:
 - a. To be born and die
 - 1) Our birth is outside our control, and concerning death -we cannot prevent it – Hebrews 9:27
 - 2) The contrast is that birth and death each have their appointed seasons which comes to past without man's interference
 - b. To plant and pluck up that which is planted
 - 1) Any farmer can attest to the truth of this statement
 - 2) Food for survival depends on knowing when to do either
 - 3) There is a spiritual application:

a) Luke 8:11-15

b) Matthew 15:13

c. To kill and to heal

1) This has reference to the execution of criminals and the healing of the sick

2) Biblical examples ...

a) Deuteronomy 13:6-10

b) Luke 5:31

d. To break down and build up – simply, there is a time to tear down old dilapidated buildings and replace them with new ones

e. To weep and mourn, and to laugh and dance

1) This deals with the feelings of the heart

2) Good times and bad times comes into the lives of all

3) I am reminded of Romans 12:15

f. To cast away stones and gather stones

1) The idea is the throwing away to clear a field or the gathering to build a fence

2) There is a time and place for everything

g. To embrace and to refrain from embracing

1) This refers to illicit and legitimate love

2) The Bible says:

a) Proverbs 5:18-21

b) 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

h. To seek and keep, and to lose and cast away

1) In life there are gains and losses

2) The wise known when to exert energy in pursuing wealth, and when it is prudent to submit and to loss.

i. To rend and to sew

1) This is usually understood of rending the garments as a sign of grief, and the repairing of the tear when the mourning season is over

2) An example – Genesis 37:29, 34

j. To be silent and to speak

1) There are times when we should speak out and other times when we should keep our mouths shut

2) For example:

a) Proverbs 15:23

b) Proverbs 17:28

k. To love and have peace, and to hate and have war

1) Both emotions, love and hate, are common to life

2) There are things to be loved -John 13:34-35

3) There are things to be hated – Proverbs 6:16-19

4. The lesson to be learn in all of this is that we should depend on things in which we have no ultimate control

B. MAN'S DUTY REGARDING THE TIMES AND SEASONS

1. Because there are laws governing the issues and events of life that are beyond man's ability to regulate, Solomon asks – Ecclesiastes 3:9

a. The implies answer is that of Ecclesiastes 1:2

b. All efforts to circumvent God's appointed seasons and times are futile

c. Man's duty is to recognize and accept the circumstance beyond his control

2. Ecclesiastes 3:10-15

a. Man's needs to realize that everything has a purpose in God's overall scheme

b. Man cannot fully appreciate the beauty of God's over all scheme, because they cannot see the finished product.

c. The human view of life has been compared to looking at a bedspread from the under side that appears only as rags, seems, and knotty strings. God sees the upper side of the beautiful pattern His hands have made.

d. To help us understand and accept the times and seasons of our life, we must view things from eternity's perspective.

e. Man's duty is to make the best of what he is dealt

f. We face only what people of past generations have endured – 1 Corinthians 10:13

A. Lessons of Lasting Value

1. Life changes often, and wise preparation is needed to make the best of it

2. There is a Divine order that pervades human life, and it is proper and wise to accept it with meekness

3. We should seek God's guidance as we deal the changing times and seasons

4. Man's true happiness depends on God

B. Even though there many things we have no control over, we can:

1. Choose our own conduct

2. Form our own character

3. Decide to obey God or not

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