

What time is it?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, as we enter another New Year, lead us to learn from the past, to look to your Word for guidance, peace and promise in the present, and to be prepared for whatever you have planned for us in the future. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction

There are certain times in life that call for reflection: the birth of a child, a death in the family, a diagnosis of disease, the turning of a calendar to another new year. Such events may lead people to reflect upon the different "seasons" of life, the purposes our experience may have served and the lessons we have learned along the way. The Bible tells us that King Solomon was a man of unparalleled wisdom and understanding. His fields of interest and areas of knowledge were vast, ranging from plant and animal life, to philosophy and theology, to architecture and governance. The book of Ecclesiastes contains the Spirit-inspired reflections of a well-seasoned King Solomon whose accumulation of knowledge, experiences and observations had taught him some humbling and marvelous truths. As we embark on another year, let's look to a single chapter of this book, Ecclesiastes 3 to help us reflect upon the times.

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Review & Consider

The first verse is a general theme for what follows, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Our life is filled with different experiences, some lasting for only a moment and others for quite awhile. They include the good, the bad and the difficult. Solomon goes onto to use seven sets of pairs for a total of 14 pairs found in verses 1-8 to describe the variety of experiences that make up our lives.

1. As we read through the pairs in verses 2-8, what did you notice about them?
2. Most of the pairs are relatively self-explanatory, but there are a few that might use some further thought or consideration. In verse 5, what do you think is meant by "a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them"?
3. We might also think about the pair, "A time to love and time to hate." Is there ever a time for a Christian to hate?
4. What point is Solomon trying to make as he provides this extensive lists of "times" in our lives?

Take It Home

What season of life, what time(s) do you find yourself in? What have you learned from the different times that God has brought you through or are living in now? How have you or others benefited from those times?