

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .

And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

Let’s Worship God

5th-10th September 2016
Ecclesiastes



Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Mon.
5th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 - God's Time

notes The opening eight verses of Ecclesiastes ch. 3 are very well known, so much so in fact, that they featured in a 'pop' song in the mid 1960's (Turn! Turn! Turn! By the Byrds). They are words that appear to sum up the experiences that are common to all men and yet they have often been misunderstood or misinterpreted to suggest that the passage is teaching that there is an appropriate time for all human activity. Such an interpretation ignores what the writer had been saying previously in chapter 2 where he speaks so plainly about everything being in the hand of the sovereign God of heaven. If indeed there is a season for everything and a time for 'every affair under heaven' as the opening verse of the chapter tells us, the question must be asked about whose activity is in view here. Is it simply suggested that individual people are free to choose the best time to carry out any particular activity? That would surely cause some difficulties, for it cannot be suggested that we are to arrange our death at the most convenient time! What is being taught here is that there is a proper time and season for God to do things - the focus of attention is surely upon divine rather than human activity.

If it is true that there is God's time in relation to individual human life and activity it is also true with reference to the Church. God has his times and seasons for his own dear people. The Church sometimes goes through periods of suffering and times of barrenness which come to an end when God's time has come! It teaches the child of God to look to God at all seasons and in all circumstances - when He blesses, we thank Him but we also know that times of blessing are often followed by times of trial. In times of dryness and barrenness, we look to the sovereign Lord who alone can send times of refreshing.

questions 1. Who controls the times of all things?

praise pray Ps.1B:all
1. Give thanks for God's sovereign control.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Sat.
10th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 - Judgement

notes The preacher is quite right that both animals and men die, but his assertion that man has no advantage over the animal is patently wrong! Inasmuch as both animal and man come from the dust and return to the dust man and animal share a common fate, it is what happens after the breath leaves the body that is truly significant.

If this life is all that men have to live for then the preacher is absolutely right in saying that 'there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work' v.22. If it is possible however to answer positively the questions that he poses in v. 21 and 22b, 'who knows if the spirit of man rises upward?', and 'who can bring him to see what will happen after him?', then the whole scenario changes.

We have a great advantage over the writer of Ecclesiastes for we live after the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the completion of the whole canon of Scripture which quite clearly answers the questions posed by the preacher. We know that 'man is destined to die once' but we also know that after death he is to face judgement. Heb. 9:27. The Lord Jesus clearly taught that after death life would continue either in heaven or in hell Luke 16:19-31, he also assured his disciples that after his own death he was going into heaven to prepare a place for them and for all who would believe in him John 14:1-5.

There is one absolutely certain evidence that the life of man is not simply for this world, and that is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus took upon him the 'likeness of sinful man' Rom. 8:3 so that He 'might taste death for everyone' Heb. 2:9 and having died for the sins of His people, God raised him from the dead 1 Cor. 15:3 - 8 and thus made certain the glorious promise 'because I live, you also shall live' Jn. 14:19.

questions 1. What happens after death?
2. What does the resurrection of Christ demonstrate?

praise pray Ps. 5:7-10
1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



Fri.
9th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
For everything there is a
season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading Ecclesiastes 3:18-22 - Death Comes to All

notes Since the pseudo-scientific 'discoveries' of Charles Darwin and his unprovable theory of evolution, it has been a common belief that there is no difference between men and animals. Indeed, anybody who suggests that there is an intrinsic difference between men created in the image and likeness of the almighty God and the 'brute' beasts, is dismissed as uneducated or stupid!

There is, however one way in which men and animals are alike, and that is highlighted by the preacher in verse 19 when he points out that both men and animals die! It is a very interesting observation made by the preacher in verse 18 that God tests men by making them face up to the reality and certainty of death.

This truth of universal death, both of men and of animals, is no surprise to anybody familiar with the Word of God. When God created the heavens and the earth and placed man in the garden he had prepared for him, death was unknown. Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony with the animals that God had created to share the garden with them and both humans and animals fed from the plants that God had provided for them to eat. Gen. 1:29-30. It was only when man disobeyed the commandment of God that death entered into the world and the first manifestation of it came when God himself killed an animal to provide coverings for Adam and his wife Gen. 3:21.

Although the fact of death is clear to all and cannot be denied, it is nevertheless, a truth that many people wish to avoid. The reality is however, that it is the one truth that nobody can afford to neglect or dismiss, for as the preacher comments with regard to men and animals, 'as one dies, so dies the other'. But is the death of men and women exactly the same as the death of animals - are the consequences the same? It is this that the preacher deals with in the following verses.

- questions**
1. How are men and animals similar?
 2. What is death a consequence of?

praise
Ps. 5:1-6

- pray**
1. Pray for the salvation of those who live around us.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.
6th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
For everything there is a
season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading Ecclesiastes 3:9-11 - Eternity

notes One of the problems that some people have with the sovereignty of God is that they say that if God is in control of all things, what is the point of trying to do anything? Why not just drift with the flow and let things happen as they will - the attitude of the old Doris Day song 'Que sera, sera' (whatever will be, will be)!

In the light of all that he had stated in verse 9 the preacher once again asks what benefit anyone gets from all the work that he undertakes. There appears to be a measure of frustration in his mind for he suggests that it is as though God had put it in man to seek out that which he cannot find and so all his searching and all his labour is for nothing! He does, nevertheless have some very valuable insights in these verses:

1. He sees that God has given men work to do - he calls it a burden! God, in his infinite wisdom has placed each individual on the earth at a particular time and in a particular place in order to fulfil a particular function. The important thing to understand is exactly what that function is, so that in the fulfilling of it, God will be glorified.

2. He acknowledges that God has made everything beautiful in its time. When God made the world it was perfect, pure and holy - truly and wonderfully beautiful! Although polluted and corrupted by sin, it still retains something of the beauty of its creator - 'the heavens declare the glory of God'. Christians should seek to do everything to preserve the beauty of God's creation.

3. He realises that man is more than the brute beasts for he declares that God has set eternity in the hearts of men. This earthly life is not all that there is. The common end of man is death, but after the death of the body, life continues either in glory with Christ in the presence of God, or everlasting punishment with 'the devil and all his angels'.

- questions**
1. What happened to God's perfect creation?
 2. What has God put in the hearts of men?

praise
Ps. 2:all

- pray**
1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
7th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
For everything there is a
season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading Ecclesiastes 3:12-15 - The Hand of God

notes

In spite of all that he has been saying about the futility of life and the unprofitability of man's work, the preacher nevertheless comes to a rather surprising conclusion. He says that he knows that there is nothing better than to be happy and to do good v. 12, and to eat, drink, and to find satisfaction in the work that he undertakes v. 13. The reason that he gives for this is equally surprising - it is because it is the gift of God!

There is no doubt that in order to find true contentment, whether that be in the enjoyment of food and drink, or in the satisfaction gained through work, it is absolutely indispensable to recognise that everything comes from the hand of the almighty God and is perfectly suited for our individual circumstances at any one time. To glorify God, whether it be in eating and drinking, in pleasant or unpleasant situations, in work or at leisure, is the only sure way to be able to enjoy him.

Although the preacher says that man cannot fathom what God has done v. 11 he nevertheless offers three possible reasons to explain why God acts the way that he does.

1. Because God is the sovereign God and does what he pleases in accordance with his own unchangeable will, the preacher realised that God's plans and purposes cannot be thwarted or changed to suit man's wishes! v. 14. God knows what is best and always does what most promotes his own glory and the good of his people.

2. The reason that God acts as he does is so that men will honour him v. 14. The more we are able to see the hand of God in all the daily affairs of our lives, the more our hearts will be drawn out in worship and adoration of a God who does all things well.

3. It is always good for man to be reminded that God will call him to account for the way in which he has used all the blessings that God has poured upon him v. 15. If the very 'heavens declare the glory of God' how much more those whom God has made in his own image!

questions

**praise
pray**

Ps. 3:all

1. Give thanks for the hand of God in all things.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



Thur.
8th Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
For everything there is a
season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
Ecclesiastes 3:1

reading Ecclesiastes 3:16-17 - Justice

notes

That the Bible is very much up to date is brought into sharp focus by the words of the preacher in ch. 3:16 & 17. He speaks of justice and of judgement, two very important elements in a healthy society. There must be justice for all on an impartial basis that does not favour one group or class over another. Nobody should be able to circumvent the system of justice because of social or political status, or because they are wealthy!

The same is true with regard to judgement. The same standard of judgement must be applied impartially to all. There are occasions when people are left dumbfounded by judicial sentences that seem to favour the criminal over the victim. Certainly in the United Kingdom there is a much greater emphasis on rehabilitation than on punishment which oftentimes leaves the victims frustrated and with a sense that justice has not been done. It may be that the preacher in Ecclesiastes is thinking specifically here about the situation in the land of Israel. If that is so, there would seem to be a conflict with the doctrine of the sovereignty of God that he had just been outlining. If God is the supreme ruler of his people, why is there the perversion of justice in the places where it should be administered, and why is there such wickedness seen in the incumbents of judicial office?

The apparent conflict is resolved in verse 17 where the preacher is quite clear that God will ultimately take the issue in hand. Although justice and judgement are sometimes badly administered and wickedness appears to triumph over righteousness, it should not be thought that it is outside the knowledge and control of God! God will bring just judgement to pass but it will be in His time, 'men cannot hasten, men cannot delay the time that God's sovereign wisdom fixes'. (H. C. Leupold)

questions

1. What should be our standard of justice?
2. Can God's justice be thwarted?

**praise
pray**

Ps. 4:all

1. Give thanks that God judges justly.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.