

YOUR TIME IS IN GOD'S HANDS

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (Part 1)

“The war created this loss of certainty in everyone’s lives, this loss of a prescribed calendar that said, ‘I will finish college. I will enter the workforce. I will find a mate. I will have children. I will get on with life.’ This puts forth the question, ‘what would I have done if I were in the same circumstance?’”

Tom Hanks, interview in World War II magazine, October 2020.

“We’re currently in the middle of something that is perhaps as stressful and anxiety-causing as some aspects of World War II itself. We didn’t know we were going to be releasing Greyhound at the time of a worldwide pandemic. But it ended up being a thematic match to what’s going on right now: when we’re in the middle of something with no end in sight—just like Krause is in the movie—we can trust procedure, luck, fate, and instinct, and we might be able to pull through.”

Tom Hanks, interview in World War II magazine, October 2020.

Three biblical views of God's use of time to control every event of your life, and by which you can trust God in everything

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.” (Ecc. 3:1)

An appointed time for everything and every event must have an Appointer.

These first 8 verses are arranged in a parallel literary structure to convey the main idea of God’s perspective on time.

<i>Verse 2</i>	+ giving birth + planting	> >	- dying - uprooting
<i>Verse 3</i>	- killing - tearing down	< <	+ healing + building up
<i>Verse 4</i>	- weeping - mourning	< <	+ laughing + dancing
<i>Verse 5</i>	+ throwing stones + embracing	> >	- gathering stones - refraining from embracing
<i>Verse 6</i>	+ searching + keeping	> >	- giving up searching - throwing away
<i>Verse 7</i>	- tearing - being silent	< <	+ sewing together + speaking
<i>Verse 8</i>	+ loving -making war	> <	- hating + making peace

A for everything

B an appointed time

B' a time

A' for every event

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

What does this kind of arrangement emphasize?

Time is a fixed reality of God's creative wisdom for His world; it is orderly, purposeful, and founded in God's design for how life works.

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

The Bible teaches that a meaningful life is a selfless response ... to God for a selfless sacrifice... by God.

It's how we each live in response to God in each of these seasons of life that matters most.

Why is the emphasis on *responding* to God so important when it comes to these different times of life?

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

What is the one constant, unchanging, stable reality about your life?

God!

Prayerfully condition yourself to respond to God in these ever-changing seasons of your life.

How?

Apply a heart attitude of thankfulness to any of these seasons as they ebb and flow in your life.

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

“Being thankful helps us to interpret our lives (vv. 2-8) in the light of His faithfulness (v. 1 “*under heaven*”). As soon as you are thankful, you start to see not only your situation but yourself—your own heart—through God’s eyes . . . this means you learn how to apply what Jesus has done to the specifics of your life.

“. . . God not only encourages us to be thankful for the good things He gives us, He also calls us to be thankful for who He is as our starting point . . . as our baseline, as something we do first as a way of life. For lack of a better term, we should ‘front-load’ thankfulness because of what we know about Him.” (Susan Lutz, emphasis added)

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

These truthful responses to God in everyday life are not

- coping strategies
- a Christian spin on reality
- a way to escape reality

These truthful responses to God in everyday life are

- spiritual truths from Scripture which you nurture as you follow Jesus in loving obedience
- ways that you walk in a manner worthy of your calling
- practical applications of Jesus' call to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

These truthful responses are heavenly heart-attitudes and human actions for honoring God in your daily life.

They are God-provided perspectives for biblical behavior...

so that you can maintain a God-first outlook...

on your daily circumstances, challenges, trials, suffering, and even the joys of your Christian walk.

I. The God of Time (Eccles. 3:1-8)

What does all of this mean as we take in the emphasis of this pattern?

We can deal with the uncertainties and hard realities of life by knowing God.

God is controlling the timing, the duration, and the details of the ebb and flow of your life.

Because that is true,

you need to respond to God in the matters of life;
He is behind them and He is controlling them.

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