

June 12th

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV)

Main idea: The normal condition of a family is change.

God is a God of order, process and precision.

- In the fullness of time Jesus was born, and at just the right time Christ died for us (Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:6)
- He appointed our times and our boundaries. (Acts 17:26).

I. Embrace the Present Season

Verse 1 “A time for everything”

God is at work in what is going on at present – not just when it becomes something else. God is no less at work right now than He will be in the future. Right now, He is being faithful. He is being precise right now.

“The Station” by Robert Hastings

We see ourselves on a long, long trip, traveling by passenger train, and out the windows we drink in the passing scenes, but uppermost in our minds is the final destination. On a certain day at a certain hour we will pull into the station, and once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true, our lives finally will be neatly fitted together like a completed jigsaw puzzle.

However, sooner or later we must realize there is no one station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us.

"When I'm 18, that will be it ! When I buy that new Mercedes, that will be it ! When I put the last kid through college, that will be it ! When I get married! When I have paid off the mortgage, that will be it ! When I get that promotion, that will be it ! When I retire, that will be it ! That's when happily ever after begins !"

Unfortunately, once we get it, then it disappears. The station somehow hides itself at the end of an endless track.

Psalm 118:24: "**This** is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

To rejoice in the “now” of our families we can ask, “Lord, let me receive the full benefits of my present situation.”

II. Accept the *changing* of the seasons

Vs. 5 A time to embrace and a time to refrain, (i.e. a time to let go).

Do we think this generation caught God off-guard?

God's truth is always absolute but its application is always relative to the present culture.

- 1 Timothy 2:9 **"Modesty in dress."** The call to modesty is still God's desire for us, but what it looks like today is very different than what it meant in Paul's day.
- In Acts 15, the elders and apostles came together to discuss Christian standards for new Gentile believers. They came up with some behavioral changes but didn't overhaul their whole culture.
- Ephesians 4:29 **Wholesome speech.** Speech today is very different than it was in the past.

We don't want our kids to be clones. Sooner or later, everyone has to find their own way. Family can help, but ultimately each of us has to find our own way. As great as was the faith of **Abraham**, God had to reintroduce Himself to his son Isaac personally. And no matter how treat was Isaac's faith, the Lord had to reintroduce himself to his son, Jacob.

People who resist change and are always "against" stuff suffer from chronic joylessness.

One practical way to accept the changing of the seasons is to surrender our distress. "Lord, You know the bigness of what I'm feeling and I surrender it to You and trust You to handle it with care."

III. Appreciate all the seasons

Vs. 11 – He has made everything beautiful in its time.

In everything give thanks. In all seasons. Giving thanks is **eye drops** to enhance our faith vision.

- **Dr. Seuss** wisely observed, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

No matter the season, God's love is a constant. Regardless of what transpires in a given day or in my family. No matter what comes out of the doors in this corridor of life or which ones we enter, God loves remains a the given. **In fact, His desire is to use the changes to make us more fully aware of His love.**

Finally, the past is like a photo album. It has a way of hiding its blemishes from the present. That's why it was refreshing for me to think of my life in terms of seasons and not "golden

ages.” Each season brings with it the birth of new things as well as the death of old things and each has a richness of its own.

- We have as much to enjoy and look forward to today as we ever had before because “the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (Proverbs 4:18).