



## ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

*There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:*  
 2 *a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,*  
 3 *a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,*  
 4 *a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,*  
 5 *a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,*  
 6 *a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,*  
 7 *a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,*  
 8 *a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.*

## MARK 6:45-52

*Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.*

*47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.*

*Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*

## NOTES FOR LEADERS

Encourage your group to join us for our upcoming prayer meeting on Tuesday, the 25th of July. Supper will be on sale from 6pm and childcare is available.

## START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

## START THINKING

1. The writer of Ecclesiastes emphasises the importance of living wholeheartedly in the present season. How can we practice living in the present and giving ourselves fully to the now? Are there any practical steps or mindset shifts that can help us accomplish this?
2. Reflecting on the passage from Mark about Jesus walking on water, what parallels do you see between the disciples' experience and our own journey through different seasons? How can we find comfort and reassurance in the knowledge that Jesus sees us, comes to us, and gets in our boat during challenging seasons?

## START SHARING

1. What are some examples of seasons you have experienced in your life? How did you navigate through those seasons? Were you able to find beauty in them, or did you struggle to embrace them?
2. Do you think finding beauty in every season is possible? Are there any seasons that you found it particularly challenging to see the beauty in? How were you able to find beauty in a difficult or mundane season?

## START PRAYING

Thank You, Father, that You know the end from the beginning and that everything under heaven is within Your authority. Thank You that You are in control of all that is happening in our lives and the world in general. Help us to trust You through all the seasons of life, and help us to find peace and beauty in whatever season we're in.

## START DOING

This week, take some time to consider whether you're still living in the pain of a past season. Ask God to help you release that pain so that you can live in the beauty of the present.



This Sunday, in part 3 of our Ecclesiastes series, Dusty shared a challenging message about finding beauty in our season.

In chapter 3, the writer tells us that we will go through seasons in life...

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*6 a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,*

*7 a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,*

*8 a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

What matters most when we go through these seasons is our perspective. Every season we go through is God-ordained.

In Proverbs chapters 6 and 30, Solomon tells us to learn from the wise ant. This tiny, seemingly insignificant insect knows what season it is in, storing food in summer and gathering at the harvest. Likewise, people who are wise know what season they're in.

The writer of Ecclesiastes is teaching us that we must live wholeheartedly in the season that we currently find ourselves in.

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11.*

Seasons in our lives will come and go. God makes every season we go through beautiful.

**So what can we learn about seasons from the writer of Ecclesiastes?**

### 1. Every Season is significant.

Just as seasons in nature have their own light, temperature and weather patterns (all significant), likewise, every season we go through is different.

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. Ecclesiastes 3:11.*

In Mark 6:45-52, we read about when Jesus walked on water. *Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. 47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*

Many of us are familiar with this story, and there are some valuable lessons in it:

1. Jesus made them get into the boat, and He knew they would go through a storm.
2. Jesus saw them from the mountain - the Father is watching over us in every season.
3. The wind was against the disciples - we will all go through seasons where it feels like the wind is against us.
4. Jesus got into the boat. If Jesus is not in your boat, the wind will always be against you.

Jesus sends us, He sees us, comes to us, and Hets in our boat. He knows the beginning from the end and He makes everything beautiful.

### 2. Every season has a beginning and ending

In the pain, we can't always see the season coming to an end, but the Father does.

One of the greatest challenges we face is that we live in seasons that have long passed or haven't yet come, so we miss the beauty in the "now". If we're living in the pain of the past, we have to release that and live in the beauty of the present.

Similarly, when we're unhappy in the present, we tend to think the future will be better. So we reach into future seasons to try to bring that blessing into our current season. But God has blessed the season we're in. We disrupt the order of things and the beauty of our current season when we try to live in a future season.

**How do we live in the present and give ourselves wholeheartedly to the now?**

#### 1. Hand your past over to Jesus

*There is nothing we can do to change our past, but we can hand our past pain over to God and release ourselves of that burden. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30*

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7*

#### 2. Hand your future over to Jesus

We don't know what tomorrow has, so we should focus on today *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this. Psalm 37:5*

#### 3. Prioritise your now

#### 4. Learn from your now

Every season we're in, we're learning lessons for the next season.

So, we need to let go of the seasons God has put behind us and hand over the seasons God has ahead of us so that we can EMBRACE TODAY!