

Your Time Is In God's Hands (Part 2)

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Date: 19 July 2026

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[0:00] I love hearing you sing that. I just be quiet and listen to you honor God in that song.

! I remember the first time I heard that song sung at a pastor's conference, there were about 4,000 of us, all male voices, and you should have heard them.

You get to that third stanza, and I'm glad I didn't have to speak after that because I was destroyed. It was a beautiful, beautiful thing. Thank you for praising your Lord and allowing your pastors to be a part of that with you.

It's a privilege for us to hear you honoring God that way. Well, beloved, if you'll take your Bibles and turn to Ecclesiastes, and let me make a couple of caveats here as you turn to that book of the Bible. So we are in Genesis, working our way verse by verse into what will be chapter 25. We're at chapter 20. We've been in Genesis for some time now.

[1:03] I'll take half the book, and when we come to the death of Abraham, I'll switch, and we'll jump over into the New Testament, and I'll be working through one of the books there. I don't know, maybe a couple, three more months to get through the last five chapters, maybe less.

You know, I have to take them in bigger chunks. But we're in chapter 20 in Genesis where Abraham is going to actually put Sarah in a compromising position.

And I switched over to preach these couple of sermons to you to better prepare us to think about what's going on in Abraham's life as this is the second time we'll see in Genesis 20 that he's done this to Sarah.

He's basically giving his wife over to another man to have her and to have intimacy with her. And God has promised Abraham that he will bring a child from Abraham and Sarah and that that child will be part of the bloodline that will eventually bring the deliverer that he spoke about in Genesis 3:15.

So there's a lot at stake with what's going on. Now, I've turned to this particular message. This is a part two. Again, to help better prepare us to think about what's going on in Abraham's life and identify with the issue that each of us, each of us repeat the same sin over and over again.

[2:25] I don't know what your bundle of sins are that you struggle with, but it's very likely in your Christian life if you've lived any time at all with the Lord that you find yourself asking for forgiveness for the same sin that you committed yesterday, an hour before, last week, right?

We all have this to deal with. Sin is insidious and we have an enemy, Satan, who wants to sabotage every aspect of our walk with the Lord. Michael, good to see you, brother. I just looked up and saw my brother.

I hadn't seen him a couple weeks. Physical stuff going on. Good to see you, my friend. So let's dig into this together in Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

I'm going to read through the entire chapter with you because we'll be finishing the chapter up for a part 2. Last week I did a part 1, obviously, and we took the first 8 verses.

So let's do that first. There is an appointed time, Solomon says, for everything. And there is a time for every event under the heavens. A time to give birth and a time to die.

[3:28] A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to shut embracing. A time to search and a time to give up as lost.

A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear apart and a time to sew together. A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love. and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

What profit is there to the worker that in which he toils? I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.

We took verses 1-8 last week and I'll do just a very brief review of that this morning in a few moments. In verse 11, He has made everything appropriate in its time.

[4:36] The He there, the antecedent, is God. God has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart. It's very interesting.

Yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime.

Moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor. It is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will remain forever.

There's nothing to add to it. There's nothing to take from it. For God has so worked that men should, here it is again, fear Him. That is, be in awe of Him.

That which is has been already and that which will be has already been. For God seeks what has passed by. Furthermore, I've seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness.

[5:39] And in the place of righteousness there is wickedness. I said to myself, God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.

I said to myself concerning the sons of men, God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts. Hmm.

For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies, so dies the other. For indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast for all is vanity.

That's so cynical, isn't it? All is air, all is empty, it's all worthless. All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all returned to the dust.

In verse 21, Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth? Well, I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities for that is his lot.

[6:47] For who will bring him to see what will occur after him? Hmm. Now, isn't that encouraging? But it is.

It's a good word. He sounds pretty cynical, but we're going to clean that up because by the end, he's going to say something very profound. Would you turn over to Ecclesiastes chapter 12? He's going to come around. Chapter 3, he's going to come around, but chapter 12 tells us much. If you'll look at verse 13. All right.

After all of this, he says, The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep his commandments because this applies to every person.

For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. In other words, we're all going to answer to the Lord and the best way to live your life is in awe of him, taking his wisdom into your heart and then living that out.

[7:54] So the title of my message, as you see, Your Time is in God's Hands. Again, this is a part two from what we started last week. And I want to begin by sharing with you some insight that Pastor Paul David Tripp had written.

And here is what he says. Most people have a view of life shaped by their conclusions about five areas. And here are those areas.

Their past experiences shape them. Their present situation shapes them. Their future prospects. Their personal identity, that is, the way that they view themselves.

And then finally, God and what he is doing shapes them, even if they're not aware of it. It's a reality. Now, if your conclusions, friends, about these areas of your life are based in the wisdom of Scripture in the Bible, then you can respond to life biblically, wisely.

You can respond to life in a heavenly wisdom for earthly living. And you can grow in a high and holy reverence for God, the fear of the Lord.

[9:07] But Tripp goes on to add this, and I think it's very insightful. Look at this. Many people, many people do not use the Bible to make sense out of life. Instead, they use their life experiences to make sense out of the Bible.

To dictate what they believe about God, His work, His Word. But, God's Word is the great interpreter of life. Its conclusions should determine how I explain my experiences.

So, we're not coming at life as if to say, life is the measure of all things. My view, my perspective, your view, your perspective, we can agree to disagree, and that kind of...

That doesn't work when it comes to God's wisdom. God gets the last Word. And His Word is the truth. That truth penetrates into self-deception, satanic deception, the wrong views of other people, culture, society.

God's Word cuts through all of that, and that is why we say His Word is the great interpreter of life. This is what we're seeing in the book of Ecclesiastes. Now, as you encounter this list of seasons that you see here outlined from verse 2 down to verse 8, there's a time for everything, and He goes back and forth through it all.

[10 : 27] As you encounter all this list of seasons or times that we all face in the course of our lifetime, here's the question that I want to ask you to contemplate. What conclusions are you operating from?

What conclusions about these seasons and while you're in these seasons do you operate from?

How do you understand and interpret these seasons as you experience them?

Because we all do. All of us experience this. No one's immune or exempt from the way life is. Life is what it is, and we all have to live it this way. How do you understand and interpret these seasons as you experience them?

Your responses, hear this now, your responses in them and to them set the tone for the entire course of your life. There is a reason why we have this list in chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes the way we do.

It's a broad way of saying here are the way that here's the way that life does. It ebbs and it flows and it experiences the changes of the seasons.

[11 : 40] Not just the fall, the spring, the summer, the seasons of life. As you grow older, as you get grayer, you got all kinds of challenges. As you're a young family raising children and the children are grown and flown and now it's you and your spouse again.

And that's a change in the season of life. These things come and go. You experience death. Death of a loved one. Death of people near you. You see tragedy.

You experience wars. People dying by the thousands. Famines. All of this is part of life's experience that are encapsulated in this issue of the seasons of life outlined here in chapter 3.

Now, how we view and live life in these seasons that we all experience, that view needs to be shaped and defined by Scripture because it's the wisdom of God.

That's why. So this isn't what Jeff says or what Greg says, Pastor Greg says. That's not what I'm up here doing. I'm trying to give you what the Scripture says.

[12 : 48] This is God's Word to us about these seasons of life. God, hear this, God is the author and He is the appointer of these seasons in your life.

If you'll notice again in verse 1, there is an appointed time for everything. Well then, beg the question, who's doing the appointing? Christians don't believe in chance.

Christians don't believe in luck, fate. We believe in an appointer and that every detail of our lives is appointed by the appointer.

He is sovereign over all that He's made to include us. Now, I'm glad about that. That doesn't bother me. That doesn't test my sense of free will, whatever that is.

I'm glad I have an appointer. God is the author of the Bible and every event in our lives is about God as the appointer of that event. Now, I'm going to say that again.

[13 : 57] God is the appointer of every event in our lives. And so, every event in our lives is about God as that appointer. The issue and the question is, do I live my life responding to that appointer?

Or do I try to duck and dodge and deny the fact that He even exists and that He's working like that in the details of my existence?

Because I can tell you fighting that is like beating your head up against a stone wall. It doesn't hurt God, but it will hurt you for sure. The only way that it hurts Him is to grieve His heart for the sin in our lives.

So, God has a plan and God has a purpose. So, make it about God. This is the appeal that Solomon is making in this chapter.

Make it about God. Don't make the mistake He says that I made. If you had been going through this with me verse by verse up to this point, we would have already seen that Solomon spent a lot of time and a lot of money because he was the wealthiest man on the planet at the time.

[15:07] He spent a lot of time and money and resources building all these great monuments and gardens and all these pleasures gathering himself all these women all that kind of thing.

He said, you know, I'm going to go for it. And he did. And at the end of the day he stepped back and he said, what in the world am I doing? This is worthless. This is empty.

This is vanity. It means wind. A puff. And it's gone. That's why he came to the end of all of this and said, you know, at the end of the day I have learned the hard way after a lot of waste in my life that to fear the Lord is the best life that you can live.

To be in awe of God is the best life you can live. Now, let's ask this question. What biblical truths will help me respond to God in this situation? Whenever I face these different seasons of life since God is the one appointing them I need to wise up and figure out how to respond to God in them because he's doing something through them in my life.

There's a purpose for him assigning these things in my life. So I need to get on his page and respond to him. What biblical truths are going to help me do that?

[16:21] Well, we're looking at three biblical views of God's use of time to control every event in your life and by which you can trust God in everything because that's a big deal.

Look, when the heat of life gets turned up on you it's really, really tempting for you to try to take the controls and run with them in your way. God's timing kind of fades out of the thing.

Get that problem solved. Get that pain over with. Get that suffering done. And yet, God is wanting to work as the appointer. He's wanting to work something in your life as his child.

So this is what we're dealing with. Now, last Sunday morning's message dealt with the first view that covered these first eight verses and here was the first point. The God of time.

The God of time. We need to accept that time is in God's hands. We established from verse one that it's God who stands in and behind these appointed times and events in our lives.

[17:24] I'm going to continue to repeat that. Get it into our heads and our hearts. The greater context of Ecclesiastes as a book shows us this. If you look at verse 24 and 25 of chapter 2, look at how he sums this up.

There is nothing better for a man or a woman than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. So this is God saying, I want you to have the good life.

I want you to have a good life but not at the expense of knowing me because there's no life apart from me. I'm the appointer of life. This also I've seen.

It's a gift from the hand of God. Your good life comes from the hand of God. Even people who hate God, who don't believe in God, who have no time for God, they experience the joys of having babies and seeing little babies and holding them and raising them.

They have cars and clothes and money. God blesses us. He sends the rain. They have food. They have friends. They have life. It is from the hand of God.

[18:32] Then verse 25. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without him? The answer is rhetorical but it comes. No one. No one can have this without him.

The phrase that we use or the little clause under heaven that you see there. There's an appointed time for everything and there's a time for every event in verse 1 under heaven.

heaven. Under heaven is a way of saying under the authority of the God of heaven. Everything under heaven belongs to God and is taken care of by God.

Well, Jeff, everything is under heaven. There you go. Then you seize the point. He is sovereign over everything and everyone. Now, I'll put it up here on the screen for you.

The Lord controls the details of our lives. He's managing every aspect of the season. He determines the timing. He determines the timing, intensity, duration of any of these seasons in your life.

[19:37] Again, that's very comforting to me. Now, we saw this kind of intricate involvement last time and so here's what I want to do at this point. I want to put a chart up here.

Please don't let it confuse you. Remember, I went over all of this in an entire sermon last week if you weren't here. But here's the seasons from chapter 3, verse 8 and you'll see that they have parallels to them.

There's all kinds of wonderful Hebraic issues going on here that the Hebrews would have picked up on right away. But you see that they have corresponding or parallel ideas.

You're going to give birth and there's going to be death. So life and death. You're going to plant and then you're going to uproot. You're going to kill and then there's going to be healing. There's going

to be tearing down.

There's going to be building up, etc. All the way down through this. So these are arranged.

Ecclesiastes 3, 1 through 8 are arranged in a parallel literary structure to convey the main idea.

[20:38] This entire chart is about conveying the main idea of this particular section of Scripture. And what is that? It is God's perspective on time.

God's perspective on time. Time is a fixed reality of God's creative wisdom for His world. It is orderly.

It is purposeful. And it is founded on God's design for how life works. God knows how life works because He invented it.

And He gives it to us as a gift. That's what this structure that I had up here emphasizes. All of that. God's perspective on time.

Alright, now. What that does is it begins to move us into the next section that Solomon wants to talk about. What it doesn't tell us is when these seasons will come into your life.

[21:37] You don't know when any of those seasons are going to hit you. You don't know when death's going to hit you. You don't know when it's going to be a time for tearing down or uprooting. You don't know any of that.

You also don't know how long any of these seasons will last in your life. Especially the ones that are tough. The ones that are painful. You don't know.

You don't even know how intense or mild that season or that time or that trial might be in your life.

And so that brings us to verse 9 and view 2.

Let's look at that together. Verse 9 again. What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils? Because I've seen the task that God has given to every single person on the earth that they occupy themselves with.

I've seen it. I've observed it. And so I'm asking the question what profit is there in all that work in all that toiling and all that saving up in working yourself to death to get all this.

[22:38] He's asking this question. A lot of people ask that. That brings us to this second one. The gift of time. It's a gift. It's a gift. Our God-given knowledge of time is God's gift to help us reach out to Him in and even beyond this life.

Remember, I told you last time, God is not constrained by time. God doesn't operate within time because He is constrained by it like we are.

We have 24 hours. We have to sleep. We have to rejuvenate. God doesn't sleep. He doesn't slumber. So God stands outside of time as its inventor and appointer.

And so God manipulates time. He's not constrained by it. So as we come to this particular verse, He is using time to help us reach out to Him as it were.

And it corresponds, this verse corresponds to chapter 1, verse 3. Look over at that verse with me, would you? Chapter 1, verse 3. He's asking the same question that He started this book with.

[23:46] What advantage does man have in all of his work which he does under the sun? What advantage is there to all this work, this frenetic activity?

Work, work, work, work, work. Labor, labor, labor, labor. Do, do, do, do. Get done, get done. All this intensity and stress and pressure that we feel under this. Got to make more money.

Got to have more stuff. Then I got to build a fence around all my stuff to keep everybody from stealing it. That kind of thing. This is the question. This is what's behind Him asking this.

What profit, what advantage, what benefit is there in all that you do in one season only to find that the opposite season comes along and then wipes all of that out?

He even says later, you know, it's going to be hard for me. I've worked really hard to build all this stuff and do all this stuff and I realize I'm going to die one day and somebody else is going to get it and they may not care two hoots about all that I've done to do this and it'll just rot.

[24:49] He said, what good is that? He's really trying hard to look in and say, all right, what's the deal here? What is really the priority of life? Why does God give us the gift of life?

What am I supposed to do with it? If not all that, then what? And the refrain comes back, no, I want you to live a good life. I want you to feel the warmth of these relationships that are important to you. I want you to know joy. I want you to laugh. I want you to feel the depth of human relationship. He even says later, enjoy the life of your youth.

Suzanne reminded me this morning while I was making her coffee that I'm to enjoy the wife of my youth. I'm not youthful anymore so much, but she's still the wife I married in my youth.

See? And God says, enjoy. And so, baby, I'm enjoying it. Right? Look, I don't apologize one single bit as a Christian for wanting to milk every drop of goodness out of the life God's given me.

[26:02] Every drop. One of my great frustrations in my own life is when I get distracted from that reality. I get selfish or prideful and have to ask for forgiveness from the Lord and oftentimes whether it's my wife or a friend because I get in the way of what God's doing and giving me this wonderful gift of time.

Well, the point is that nothing in this life lasts, friends. It's always changing. So don't build your life on the here and now. Don't build your life on what's constantly shifting and changing.

Don't do that. Now, verse 10 helps us out a little bit. I've seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.

The fact is God has appointed to mankind the various issues of life which they have to navigate. So this is the question that verse 10 then brings up yet again.

And here it is. I'll put it up on the screen for you. What is God's end game? This is what Solomon this is where he wants to take us right now and what he's writing. What is God's end game?

[27:13] That brings us to verse 11. God has made everything appropriate in its time corresponding to its time. He has also set eternity in their heart.

Now, folks, that is a profound statement. God has set eternity in the heart of every human being. What does that mean? Yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

It almost sounds like a setup for failure. failure. It's one thing and then he snatches it away. What are we talking about here? Listen, God has put into every person the knowledge of eternity.

People have a God-given drive, an innate desire to know about life and death. We can't escape it. Everybody's going to ask questions about this.

Everybody's going to have it come into their mind. Some people want to deny it, become apathetic about it, get calloused about it, push it off. They don't want to think about dying. They don't want to think about answering to their creator.

[28:21] So God doesn't exist or whatever. They find all kinds of ways to medicate themselves away from the reality that God has put eternity into every single human soul.

So that you have to think about it and you cannot escape it. He wants them to consider their existence and to look beyond this life. We have to look beyond ourselves for meaning.

That's the point of putting eternity in your heart. It helps you look for meaning outside of yourself so that you're not defining everything by you.

That's a mistake. Solomon is saying that's what I did and I blew it and I knew better because God told me not to do a lot of the things that I did. Don't take all these foreign women for your wives because they'll turn your heart away.

And what did he do? He took 600 pagan women into his harem. 600! And then he added 300 more as concubines. And the word says then they turned his heart away from the Lord.

[29:24] Huh! Imagine that. God told him that would happen and he did it anyway. Don't put your eyes on riches. Don't take in too much wine. What did he do?

He said I'm going to experiment with it. I'm going to see where it takes me. I'm going to get drunk and just see what happens. See if I can keep my faculties and if that will heighten the experience. And he said you know that was all empty nonsense. God said well I you know I told you. God made you and I to anticipate and to search out eternity.

So don't feel bad if you wrestle with that. God put that in you. It's a time when nagging questions and plaguing issues unexplainable hardships terrible injustices and the ever shifting imbalances of life start to come into focus as we contemplate eternity.

That there's something bigger something better something beyond all of this injustice war killing rape man no there's something else some other conclusion we're all hardwired by God to desire closure for this life and the thing that God has ordained for this life is what we will never find our fulfillment in and that is what's here that's what he's saying you will never be able to find fulfillment in what's here the kind of fulfillment that brings peace to your soul I don't mean that you can't laugh and have fun and that kind of thing but at the end of the day when you lay your head down on your pillow and the other things of life kind of start coming in is your soul at peace with who you are with who God is with how you're living your life where you're spending your resources in life what kind of wake are you leaving behind you what's that look like is it just a bunch of ruin and destruction in

relationships is it all about you

[31 : 32] Solomon said been there done that and it's not good it doesn't end in a good place we must look to the Lord it's experiencing meaning in the labors of our lives along with the rejoicing and enjoyment of verses 12 and 13 are all gifts from God I know that there is nothing in verse 12 better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime I know that I realize that having a good time doesn't have to be a bad thing moreover every man verse 13 who eats and drinks sees good in all of his labor that's that's a gift your ability to see good in your life and good in your life and feel a sense of purpose and accomplishment that's a gift from God and you know what it transcends this life and it counts for eternity the Lord tells us to build treasure in heaven how do you do that by having eternal priorities as the focus of your life the only way you can know eternal priorities is to know what

God says about what's important and so Christians are people who are constantly growing to love what God loves now I wasn't born like that I spent the first 20 years of my life apart from the Lord I could care less about Christians and all that stuff I thought it was a bunch of manby nonsense I couldn't stand to be around you people always talking about God and Jesus and I'm at the lake on Sunday having a good time God gripped my heart God opened my eyes to see don't waste your life son because sooner or later chasing all that stuff can catch up with you can be a very lonely man didn't take long for that to come true God began to open my eyes to show me my need for his forgiveness for my sins for living for Jeff emptiness and vanity trying to make something out of nothing

God is really really good at taking a nothing and making something out of it in the Lord Jesus and so Christians are constantly living a life where we are trying to learn how to please the Lord by increasingly increasingly taking on the character of Jesus we want to be changed into the image of Jesus every day constantly so that I'm kinder I'm more patient I'm gentler these are the attributes of Jesus more and more love I'm learning to love the things that God loves I'm learning to put priority on the things that God has already determined are priority for this life anything less than that Solomon said it's not going to end well this is what these gifts mean look with me if you would at verse 14 I know that everything God does will remain forever now notice that did not say this okay I know that everything Jeff does will remain forever now you put your name in there I know that everything God does will remain forever there is nothing to add to what God does there is nothing to take away from what God does for God has so worked that men should be in awe of him fear him what God does and is doing is what matters because God's work in your life is what will stand the test of time will you let me say that one more time what God does and is doing is what matters because only God's work in your life is what will stand the test of time that's it and God is working in your life God works in your life so that you will stand in awe of him he is working worshipful humble trust in your heart for him because to know God and to get close to God is to live a meaningful life boy

I've heard the criticism God is a narcissist no God is a holy God and a creator and he draws you to himself because he knows that only in him will you have a meaningful life a life filled with purpose anybody who accuses God of narcissism needs to take a hard look at this symbol behind me on the wall and realize what God did to win men to himself he sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on a cross taking the punishment for your sin on himself and dying to pay your punishment for you your sin requires death if God didn't send Jesus you die in your sin and go to a devil's hell when Jesus died on the cross he died bearing your sin as if he had done it as if he had lived it instead of you and so bearing your sin required death the death penalty so

[36 : 52] Jesus had to die when he willingly took the sin of his people onto himself he had to die it was a necessity there's no getting out of that now the time for Jesus to say no way was in the garden Lord let this cup pass from me I changed my mind I don't want to do this and he said nevertheless not my will but your will and he went to the cross bearing your sin on himself God credited Jesus with your sin and now Jesus has to die to pay for it he acted as your substitute at the same time now having born that sin and died being killed for it that penalty it now is paid in full it is on God's books on his account and so your sin being credited to Jesus cost him his life and that's done now he has paid your penalty for you now now

God takes Jesus sinless life and he credits that to you as if you had lived it the sinless life that Jesus lived you get that comes to you just as he credited your sin to Jesus now God credits the life the sinless life of Christ to you as if you had never sinned but you did and Jesus paid for it so God's

not looking at it and going well we'll just overlook that you're a pretty good chap we'll let you on in that's not what's happening Jesus died to make that possible to make that happen and then you get the righteous life of Jesus righteous means right with God life holy blameless that's how God sees you as a Christian folks this is marvelous this is the best gift that's ever been given to humankind we get to enjoy it as

Christians say Jeff what what is it that has to transpire for that to be real for me how do I get Jesus righteous life for me as if I lived it how do I make sure Jesus died for me well that's what you're going to see in these three baptismal candidates they all had to come to the place where they yielded!

in believing that Jesus is that person Jesus did that for them and they confessed it with their mouth and they believed it in their heart and they said I want to make my life about following you I want to make it about what you love what's important to you see isn't that what you did Sophia yes I was there I witnessed it that's right Aidan that's what happened to you Hannah that's what happened to you and this is why we're baptizing them this is the beauty of what God is doing as we look to him and learn to worship him look our human limitations and our weaknesses should drive us to God in humble dependence and in grateful submission this is a miracle of God's grace that we can live like this look at this statement the fact that God works and purposes for your life cannot change is out of your control will accomplish

God's purposes for you should make you worshipful before him I'm not I'm not any longer intimidated by the fact that I'm not all that I don't have it all together I don't know everything I have to ask for forgiveness I have to say I'm sorry I sometimes have to say yeah I don't know I don't know the answer to that those weaknesses and limitations drive me to the Lord Lord this person asked me as a pastor about this and I don't know the answer to that one so I come to your word to ask you how do I answer them about this I got over that a long time ago because I know who does you'll notice in your text here that it says God seeks what is passed by do you see that that's the end of verse 15 for God seeks what is passed by now don't miss this because

[41:25] I want you to understand how this works I mentioned to you last week that the Lord will purpose these events in your life to refine you and to teach you and if you resist if you pitch a fit and if you act like a brat or you otherwise refuse to heed or learn this is what God will do he will circle the event back to you time and again you hear me now some of you need to smile at me and say yeah I know that right come on Clyde help me out brother amen 100% he says that's right me and my brother were right there in the same boat rowing right got the two by four yes you see this is getting us ready for Abraham why did Abraham do that again and why did he do such a nasty thing to his wife we thought he was beyond that listen listen to me now please hear this wisdom from the

Lord if you don't! receive what God is purposing for you in these trials by looking to the Lord and being aware and humble and receptive God will bring that trial right back around into your life again and off you go again in fact I want to quote Dr.

Barak here he was quoting Charles Swindoll in this particular one listen to this we are the ones to pass it by we are the ones who walk away so God brings us back to the same lesson to learn it again and he doesn't give up when we pass it by he brings us back again and again to learn our lessons well well we get weary of learning the lesson and we run from it we turn it off yet he repeats the same lesson he repeats it and repeats it and repeats it until finally!

learn it why great question why were you taking me through this Lord because God seeks what you and I try to escape God pursues what you and I turn off God makes a permanent lesson out of what you think is a temporary and passing experience did you hear that only God can pull that off it's one of the reasons I love him because he's so much bigger than me what around manipulate control God brings me back and says take a breath dude calm down there's a lesson to be learned here now look to me look to me Jeff are you listening yes sir all right and we learn and we grow it's how we grow right what's going to happen if you resist what's going to happen if you turn it off try to escape try to deny it what are they that karma thing isn't it funny how these religions think they invented all this stuff this is

God right this is not karma this is your God working in your life to bring you back around till you learn the lesson you do the same thing with your kids you don't just give up on your kids and say well fine go out and play in the street and get killed see if I care God uses time for our good and that's finally view three why is time good in what sense is it good how do we make sense of what God is doing well look here's the answer time is good because God uses time in a believer's life to

make the most of that believer's relationship with God with other people and with the world if you look with me at verse 16 furthermore I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there's wickedness now you've seen that in your life if you've lived any time as an adult you've already seen this you know this is true and in the place of righteousness there's wickedness right [45 : 42] I said to myself God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man for a time for every matter and for every good deed is there it's there oh yes now I said to myself concerning the sons of men God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts what in the world is going on here with this guy well your life is bracketed by two major events ordained by God you know what those are right your birth and your death now what you do with what is in between is all about a keen heavenly perspective on eternity this is what Solomon is saying think about eternity don't be scared of it don't run from it let it sober you in the things of God you can't control the timing you cannot control the duration intensity of God's appointed events and here's the kicker life is very hard it life here is broken the reason life is this way is due to the sinful hearts of people just like you can't control

God's appointed times you cannot eliminate injustice or wrong in this world from your life you can't do it God is in control of all this life if you've ever been involved in the court system anywhere you know that the justice that you would seek isn't always what happens is it right we see this in this life you're going to expect and want justice but you'll experience wickedness you'll expect and want people to do right and to live right by you but you'll receive wickedness and then you you will think and behave in wicked ways you sinned against people so life isn't fair under the sun this side of heaven it's not fair life is not about what's fair it's not fair folks we're in a broken system people in the systems they use can be corrupt there's no perfect humanly invented measure of life there isn't this idea that just the right amount of this and just the right amount of that to create a context which will finally lead the human race into some type of utopia of justice and equity and freedom and peace and all of that will be so great that's what we're aiming at and science will get us there and all these kinds of things even the corruption that we face here look

God's purposes are always done and are never ever in danger of being thwarted God will judge the acts of every person so that each person is going to receive from the Lord what he the righteous judge deems just and but I will get justice in heaven where it's going to matter for eternity this is what God is saying weigh the breath the puff of here and now against eternity forever weigh that up let that sober you let it draw you to me God says one day all things will be made new and made right it might be best to understand verses 18 through 21 where you're hearing and seeing this cynicism in Solomon it may be best to understand that he is reflecting on what he once thought about all this uncertainty about all this injustice and evil look at all that

I did and it still didn't turn out the way I wanted it is all vanity it all futility it all emptiness you can't get or expect justice from anybody nobody wants to do what's right you see this refrain constantly nobody wants to do what's right everybody is out for himself that kind of cynicism about life after all you do are you really any better off than the animals that's verse 19 look at that with me for the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same really as one dies so dies the other okay that's true they all have the same breath do they now for real is that true and there's no advantage for man over beast for all his emptiness that's that's is that true see he used to think like!

listen he spiraled he spiraled down and out all this stuff up and he felt the emptiness and the weight of it and so he got really cynical toward life now do you know anybody like that you ever met anybody like that life beats the you know what out of them and they end up hating everybody and being cynical about everything most of what comes out of their mouth is poison because why they taken poison in what does the Bible say long before you hear the dejection coming out of them because they are dejected as far as they're concerned everything is just blown up in their face this is what solemn is saying man I did all that I tried all that I looked at all of that and I don't know what did he see a deer or

[51 : 02] I don't know something some animal a cat or something said no my life isn't any better than theirs we're both going to die so cynical he temporarily lost sight of God's gift folks people are not beasts hear me please people are not beasts we are not the same as animals we have a soul animals don't have a soul Solomon knows humans are not like animals but humans can certainly act like animals you ever heard that only an animal would do something like that we can act like them like all we're living on is instinct which is what they live by verse 20 look at this all go to the same place all came from the dust and all return to the dust in the end he says both humans and

animals end up in the same place they both return to the dust because everything dies and decays what you are right now what you see in me in this frame right now is one day going to be dead and decayed yuck but that's not the end of the matter for human beings

Solomon you're wrong and you know it quit being so cynical so this is the test God uses to show each person the end of all living things that like the animals we all eventually!

die yes but listen now and then what and then what you can't avoid death that's the point but unlike the animals each human being will die and his or her spirit will return to the God who gave it you sure Jeff does it say that yeah I want you to look at it with me when he ends the book in chapter 12 look at the back let's go to how the story ends chapter 12 and verse 7 well I'll read from 6 because then it'll move into it remember him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed all he's saying he's using these metaphors to say this remember God before it's too late because pretty soon you're going to die now verse 7 will return to

God who gave it see as human beings we've been given a soul spirit synonymous your soul unlike the animals is going to return to the God who gave it to you and you're going to give an account to the Lord again what is he saying think about eternity let eternity weigh on your heart and then finally verse 21 who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast ascends downward so what's the point what's the point of this verse people though made in God's image can live their lives apart from God with no more appearance of purpose in life than that of the animals they live by instinct and natural desires you've seen these folks and I've seen these folks they're on the news all the time and you ask yourself how could somebody do that and so while it may seem that men and animals are alike and that they share a common end which they do in terms of death God has purposed and ordained that every person's spirit will go upward and then they will give an account to the

Lord verse 22 I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities that behind you can't know what anyone coming behind you is going to do with what you have done and with what you have owned they might appreciate it they might benefit from it they might take it all for granted they may curse you or just forget about you as if you never even existed they may squander all that you worked for you know what when you die you have no control over any of that control is an illusion it can also be a satanic scheme to trick you into wasting your life so I put it up here on the screen bottom of the screen so nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities for that is his lot in other words that is his appointed way or his portion

[55:35] God is going to portion out or appoint out what he designs and purposes for each person in any given season of their life and so I can put this up here at the bottom unlike the animals God provides or portions you the opportunity for your activities to be meaningful and enjoyable as defined by him but only as you live them in response to him as his gifts!

to you animals can't do that they don't have the privilege of living their life back to God and so we're back to finally end I want to show you 12 and 13 I know that there's nothing better for the man than to rejoice and do good in one's lifetime moreover that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor because that good life is only from God and it's our privilege to live it!

So the main point of this appointed way of the Lord for you to live in these seasons and time is this here it is to develop and grow in a humble way with a worshipful heart toward the Lord in every detail of your life because it's all his gift so what are you doing with God's gift beloved what are you doing with God's gift will you join me in prayer Almighty God and Father your word is so full and rich and wise and I pray that you will help your people today take it into their hearts and God I know that each one of us at some point in this message probably thought of other people in our lives people that we know people that we love maybe from our family from our immediate context in life maybe some very close friends or perhaps work associates that we've known we have people in our lives that we see their lives are just being destructed before us they're dejected they're down they're constantly moving in and out of one drama after another with little or no answers maybe we've seen them turn to things that are serving to destroy them rather than to give them life and they're not enjoying the gift of the life that you've given to them as

God and so we pray for them now each of us have lived like that before we knew you so we pray that you would help us to be patient and gentle and kind and that we would offer them the same hope that lives inside of us and his name is Jesus Christ help us to offer them forever more we pray that we would lead out with that and that we would be bold and loving in how we share the gospel

thank you for your truth and may you bless us now as we gather together and hurriedly leave this place to join everyone again at the hoag's to have lunch and then God to work our way to the river to have these baptisms It's a Thank you.