

GOD HAS A PLAN

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)

...In the 1960's the musical group The Birds sang "Turn, Turn, Turn." This was intended to be a war protest song using Solomon's words from Ecclesiastes. Though it is a good song, it totally missed the meaning of the text.

...God has established all the boundaries of the universe. This includes all things physical and metaphysical. It includes outer space and the physical properties of our world. It includes our lives, and every single facet about them. It is as if God said, "this far and no further!" Boundaries!

...Solomon is saying to us, "Don't let what you cannot understand or control, destroy what you can enjoy."

TWO TRUTHS HELPING US AS WE MAKE OUR WAY THROUGH LIFE.

...Solomon tells us how to live in a world that is out of our control, and where God does not always make sense.

I. God Does Have A Purpose In This "Weary Cycle Of Life." (vv.1-9)

...For His sovereignty has determined all of life's activities...every event is part of God's plan.

- A. This principle is given to use in verse 1. God has ordained a "time" for everything.
- B. Solomon illustrates this principle with 14 opposites...(vv2-8) This is a double 7 and shows to us utter completeness. Also, the polar opposites point to the totality of life. There are times of happiness and times of great pain. God has appointed all of these things...
 - 1. "a time to be born and a time to die." God determined both of these... (v.2)
 - 2. "a time to plant and a time to uproot."
 - 3. "a time to kill and a time to heal." (v.3) Even man's actions are under God's providence.
 - 4. "a time to tear down and a time to build."
 - 5. "a time to weep and a time to laugh." (v.4)
 - 6. "a time to mourn and a time dance."
 - 7. "a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them." (v. 5)
 - 8. "a time to embrace and a time to refrain."
 - 9. "a time to search and a time to give up." (v.6)
 - 10. "a time to keep and a time to throw away."
 - 11. "a time to tear and a time to mend" (v.7)
 - 12. "a time to be silent and a time to speak."
 - 13. "a time to love and a time to hate." (v.8)
 - 14. "a time for war and a time for peace."
- C. The reality is, we do not know from moment to moment what life will bring. (v.9) What "profit" is there?" It seems so weary. The answer: All life unfolds under the appointment of Providence.

II. God's Beautiful, But Puzzling World Is Too Big For Us, Yet, Its Satisfactions Are Too Small. (vv 10-15)

God has given us the desire to know how all of life fits together, but we are incapable of knowing it. It is beyond us. Our only recourse is to trust Him completely.

- A. Though life in our FALLEN world is hard, God has made all events and relationships beautiful.
 - 1. Everything as it came from the Creator (Gen 1) was "good" or "very good."
 - 2. At times, life does not appear to be beautiful, but when seen as parts of the whole work of God...they are beautiful. (v.11) Only God sees the whole.
- B. Man yearns deeply to trace the providential dealings of God...but he cannot! (v.11b)
- C. Life and all its "goods" are sweet gifts from the hands of the living God. (vv12-15)
 - 1. Life will remain a puzzle and frustration until men and women come to trust God. ...for it is God who alone enables us to find enjoyment and satisfaction in this life. (13)
 - 2. God's plan is sure and His purposes are unchangeable. (vv14-15)
- D. So how do we live in this fallen world of ours?
 - 1. Know that God's plan is wise. "It is beautiful." Like music from a piano... (Ill.: Joseph)
 - 2. Know that God's plan is mysterious. "At times we squint, but we can't see..." ...God owes us no answers. He is God and we are not. We have to trust Him.
 - 3. Enjoy your life. Don't allow life's troubles rob you of God's intent for you to enjoy life. Don't think that you are not allowed to do so. This is God's gift to you.
 - 4. Rest in God's sovereignty. This should not trouble you, but give you comfort.

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES: