

Trusting God with Tomorrow

Mark Beard 2016

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

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.

9 What do workers gain from their toil? 10 I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet[a] no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. 12 I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. 13 That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. 14 I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

Introduction

Sr. Isaac Newton's First Law of Motion states, "Everything continues in a state of rest unless it is compelled to change by forces impressed upon it."

It works much the same with life. Just when we feel we have reached a state of rest, some force seems to press upon us and here comes change. In our text we hear Solomon cast change in a new light. In poetic-like verse, he addresses the chaotic feel of change and helps us see the rhythm of life is what it has always been and that God is in control.

As we look at these verses we see human emotion and fear confronted with the *facts* of life from a divine perspective. **As we see in our text:**

I. Change Is a Constant That We Can Embrace or Fear (vv.1-8).

A. Life is composed of "seasons" or periods of varying experiences (vv.1-8).

B. Life is composed of good and bad events, but we have a choice in how we respond.

Charles R. Swindoll observed, "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than

the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church....a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.”

C. Knowing God is in control helps us to not fear change.

II. Change Is Easier When We Rely On God’s Divine Care (vv.11-14).

A. God counters life’s burdens by placing eternal hope in our hearts (vv.9-11).

B. No matter what we experience, God remains in control (vv.12-14).

C. Our task is to move forward in faith and trust God with the changes.

In an article titled, *Unpleasant Changes–What To Do*, Stephen R. Yarnall, MD, Fellow of the American College of Cardiology writes the following:

“When things don't go our way, we typically go through 10 stages which are a normal part of the coping and healing process.

1. Denial--"It can't be," "It can't happen to me," "It's not true"... The first stage of reaction to any sudden, unexpected event tends to be denial. Denial is normal if it lasts a short time, but persistent denial is unhealthy because it blocks further growth and healing.

2. Anger/Blame--"Whose fault is it?," "This makes me mad," "This isn't fair," "Why me?" The second stage of reaction looks backward in hopes of finding the cause and someone or something to blame it on. Although nothing can be done at this point to change the past, it's nevertheless a normal response. Like the stage of denial before it, the anger/blame stage is unhealthy if it persists for an unreasonable amount of time.

3. Despair--This stage tends to be characterized by tears, negative and hopeless/helpless thoughts, and a feeling of total emptiness and loss. Sleep and eating disturbances are common as the "reality" of the situation sets in. Relationships with other people can become more difficult at this time, but understanding and compassion must be given and accepted if one is to move beyond this stage.

4. Perspective--In this stage, the individual begins accepting the change and is no longer caught up in denial, anger, blame, or despair. The problem is seen in its proper perspective. Although the sense of loss may be significant, the individual does not feel that "all is lost."

5. Relationships--Coming out of the withdrawal and isolation that is inherent in the previous stages, the individual is able to talk and relate to other people and participate in normal activities.

6. Spiritual Changes--The individual's relationship with the spiritual side of life is strengthened as a result of having lived through (and survived) the experience.

7. Acceptance--This stage involves the restoration of self-esteem, and the acceptance of the consequences and boundaries of the new reality.

8. Humor--Smiles, laughter, and a sense of humor return to the individual and help in the healing process. There's a renewed sense of joy in life.

9. Activity and Action--Where once the individual had been restricted or immobilized by the change, he or she now returns to activity, action, and improved productivity. Travel and group activities become more interesting.

10. New Goals--In this final stage, the individual is able to focus on the positive aspects of whatever change occurred, and on new goals and activities....When faced with an unexpected, unpleasant change, you may not go through all 10 of these stages in this order, but it helps to keep them in mind. While it can seem as if life changes nearly drown us at times, by and by we see that it's only through meeting the challenges of change that we can grow.

Conclusion

The late comedian Grady Nutt observed, "Openness is essentially the willingness to grow, a distaste for ruts, eagerly standing on top-toe for a better view of what tomorrow brings. A man once bought a new radio, brought it home, placed it on the refrigerator, plugged it in, turned it to WSM in Nashville (home of the Grand Ole Opry), and then pulled all the knobs off! He had already tuned in all he ever wanted or expected to hear."

Grady Nutt, in [Homemade](#), July, 1990.

We can try to tune out the realities of life or we can choose to live fearlessly in faith. The *facts* of life are that change is inevitable, but also, that God is in control.