

Everything Beautiful In Its Time

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[0 : 00] Good morning.

You'll find Psalms. It's probably the most easy book to find in the Bible. It's huge. Get to Psalms, turn to the right, you'll pass Proverbs, and then you'll come to Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

It appears that this book is written by Solomon. It is described as the words of the son of David, the king of Jerusalem.

It does everything but say the name of Solomon, but scholarship is divided on whether it's really Solomon or someone appearing to be Solomon-like.

I think it entirely possible to be Solomon at the end of his life when he had abandoned the Lord. Because we have a view here that does not sound like the Solomon of Proverbs, but sounds like a Solomon who has found life to be empty, sought for everything and found nothing that lasts.

[1 : 39] So, it's possible that it is him, and if that's so, it makes the words quite strong. So, as always, we want to read the text, and we'll ask the Lord to teach us, and then we'll dig in.

So, if you're able, please stand. There's a read from Ecclesiastes chapter 3. We'll be looking at verses 1 through 15. For everything, there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break 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 cast away stones and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to tear and a time to sow, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart. Yet, so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end, I perceive that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live.

Also, that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil. So, this is God's gift to man. I perceive that whatever God does endures forever.

[4 : 09] Nothing can be added to it nor anything taken from it. God has done it so that people fear before him. That which is already has been.

That which is to be already has been. And God seeks what has been driven away. What is past.

What has already been. God brings it back. So, reads this word. Let us pray for understanding. Father, we have beautiful words here.

Words that have been recited. Perhaps the most popular words in the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes. This poem of time. Help us understand how the author here is putting it into place as a perspective.

Help us to grasp this perspective that is here. And Father, to evaluate it from a biblical point. From your standpoint. That Lord, we might see what the full truth is.

[5 : 20] And what is truly meaningful and significant. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So, there are a number of things that we find frustrating in life.

One of the frustrations in life is time. Time. There's only so much of it. Right? We are given a limited amount of time every day.

And a limited amount of time in our life. That can be frustrating at times. But it's also frustrating in the sense that when is it the right time to do certain things?

When is it the right time to change job? When is the right time to get married? When is it the right time to have kids? When is it the right time to move? When is it the right time to retire?

I can't imagine ever thinking of that before. And I'm not planning that. I'm just saying we get to an age where you're, hey, what if I had to? So, what are those things, right?

[6 : 34] And then there's deeper things like when is the right time to confront an issue? Huh? When is the right time to let something go? So, Ecclesiastes 3 says there's time for everything.

Everything, there's a season. There's time for every matter under heaven. But how do you know the right time? And can we even control when these times occur?

Time passes quickly. We feel the pressure that we're losing time, losing opportunity. We can't redo what we've already done in the past. So, how do we find beauty?

Since God has made everything beautiful in its time. How do we find beauty of each event in its time? So, Ecclesiastes 3 brings forward different kinds of time.

Times that are positive, that might be viewed positive. Times that might be viewed negative. Times that are frustrating. Times that are fulfilling. Times that are beautiful. So, to frame this, I want us to think first of all about God's timing through the Old Testament.

[7 : 50] What is God's timing? How does God use time? God very definitely uses time. He's eternal. He's everlasting. And yet, He works within time.

Right? So, our Thursday night group, we're looking at the subject of the Old Testament in sense of, how do you make sense of the Old Testament? How do you get a handle on it?

It's so big. It's so vast. And so, we've broken it down into eight segments. Eight major eras of the Old Testament. How God, kind of mountaintop movements of God throughout time to kind of get a grasp on this whole story.

And they're time shaped. God shapes time and events. And so, the first major era of the Old Testament is Genesis.

And what's the major thing that happens in the book of Genesis? Besides, we think of creation and fall and flood. But what takes up the majority of the book of Genesis?

[8 : 59] What's it really about? Any Thursday night people here? The promise. The promise. God promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

He promises to make them a great nation. He promises to make them a great land. But then there's a delay.

He makes this promise. And it takes 400 years before they end up going to Egypt, before they ever come back to the land. A delay of 400 years.

They go then to Egypt, which brings us to the second era of the Old Testament. What happens in Egypt? What's the second book of the Old Testament?

Genesis. Exodus. Exodus. The Exodus. Exodus. Which is a theme of redemption. He redeems them out of slavery and brings them, right, to the edge of the land.

[9 : 58] But once again, there's a delay. God gives them the law. He gives them the covenant. He brings them to the very promised land, to the edge of the promised land. They send in these spies.

The spies go in and say, it's everything God said it was. But then there's giants in that land. We ain't going in there.

So they rebel. They don't trust God. 40 years delayed in the desert, right? That's the third era. Then you come to the fourth area, which is the book of Genesis.

Exodus. Numbers. Leviticus. Sorry, Leviticus. Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy. The Pentateuch. So after the wilderness wandering, come to Deuteronomy.

Reminder of the law. Then we're going to go to the book of Joshua, which is conquest of the land. Now they get the land.

[10 : 59] Promise kept. In fact, the end of the book of Joshua says, God kept every word of his promise. Not one word fell.

This is exactly what he said he would do, and he did it. But there's a time link. Then another 400 years go by, and God raises up David.

David becomes the king. They had had a king before, but he was a major disappointment. Good old Saul, he looked like a king, but he was a major failure and disappointment.

So God raises up David, who is a little runt of the litter, the least likely to be a king. He's just a little shepherd boy. But that dude's not afraid of anything.

Not a nine-foot, nine-inch giant that has a javelin that weighs, what, 25 pounds?

[12 : 09] With one little stone. He knocked him down, and what did Goliath say when that stone went between his eyes? I've never had a thought in my mind like that before.

Ouch. Ouch. So we have the united kingdom. And shortly after that, David unites the kingdom. And shortly after that, Solomon abandons the faith and divides the kingdom.

So we have the sixth era. It comes to the seventh era. The kingdom becomes so bad from Solomon on. The kingdom becomes so bad, as we read about people like Hezekiah and Manasseh and Ahab and others, who just ruin things.

Finally, God causes them to fall and go into exile. Another delay, 70 years delayed in another land, and then they come back.

The return is the eighth era. The return is the eighth era. So you go from promise to redemption to wilderness to conquest to united kingdom to divided kingdom to exile and to return.

[13 : 16] And then comes a 400-year delay once again before the great promise, before the fullness of time has come, and God sends His own Son.

Galatians 4.4 talks about when the fullness of time had come. When the perfect time had come.

In every segment in terms of the Greek language that was everywhere, the Roman roads that went everywhere, the place of the temple and the law.

Everything was perfect and prime for God to send His Son into that time. When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to do what?

To redeem those who were under the law. Why? So that we might receive adoption as sons. There's a Mother's Day term.

[14 : 20] Born under a woman. The fullness of time. That's what God was aiming at. And it went through all of this time.

All of these delays. All of these gaps. Yet God had a plan all along. And there's another plan.

We've just finished Revelation not too many weeks ago. And we see there's a whole other time that is planned and has been going on throughout the ages.

So that's God's timing. What about our time? How do we look at time? What is the fruitfulness of our time? Is there benefit to our time? Is there meaning to our time?

Do things just happen and pass? Does the timing of events in our lives have any lasting significance? Is there any gain?

[15 : 19] Does it matter? So there's two viewpoints that we have here in chapter 3. The first nine verses are the perspective of under heaven.

The first nine verses never mention God. They're just simply observations under heaven. Under the sun. Remember that's a phrase that this author is going to use over and over and over again.

Under the sun. Under heaven. On a horizontal man view only. That's the first view. Man's view. And then beginning at verse 10, he brings up God.

And for the next six verses, he mentions God six times. Nothing in the first nine verses. And then six times in six verses in verses 10 to 15.

Which means God's perspective. So two views we're going to have here. First nine verses, man's view under the sun. Last six verses, God's view.

[16 : 16] Okay? So let's look at those. So from man's view, from an earthly view, from an under heaven perspective, every event in our life has a time. But we can't control it.

We can't control it. We can influence it, but we can't control it. I can't control when I'm born or when I die. I can influence it. I can influence my death by doing unhealthy things probably.

Right? But I really can't control when I'm born or when I die. I can't control when I weep and when I laugh. Because things happen that bring that about.

I can't control that. So this is his earthly perspective. Every event of our life has a time. But we can't control it.

There's no gain to it. So three parts here in verse nine verses. The perspective, verse one. Verse two through eight, he gives a poem. And then verse nine, he gets to the point with a question.

[17 : 19] Who is perspective in verse one? For everything there's a season and a time for every matter under heaven. There's time for everything. Every typical event, every activity, every purpose under heaven.

So again, the preacher's perspective takes the viewpoint of under heaven, under the sun. Horizontal, earthly, human view. Okay? Verse two. Now he tells a poem.

And this is probably the most famous part from the book of Ecclesiastes. This poem. We've all heard it. There are songs about it. Right? What's the name of the group that does the?

The birds. The birds. The birds. For every season, turn, turn. There is a something or other. La, la, la, la. I don't know.

I blew the song. Good. They stole it. All right. So we have this poem. Beautiful poem. A time to be born.

[18 : 14] A time to die. Time to plan. Time to pluck up. So there's 14 things he's going to describe here. And what might be called a positive and a negative.

A born and a death. Right? A planting and a plucking. A weeping and a laughing. So he's got 14 contrasts. But this is poetry. So probably the second line of each pair is explaining, further explaining the first one.

So in other words, in verse 2, you have four things there compared. Birth, death, plant, pluck up. They're probably all about the same subject. They're all about life cycle.

There's a beginning of life, birth, and there's the end of life, death. There's a beginning of plant life, planting, and there's an end to that plucking up. There's then verse 3.

There's a time to kill, a time to heal, a time to break down, a time to build. So killing and breaking and healing and building up. So probably about ending and beginning of things.

[19 : 25] So life cycle. So think biblically about a time to be born. So God promised Abraham a son. How long did it take before he got that son? 25 years.

And then his son had a son. But that took 20 years. For his beloved Rebecca had Joseph. Right?

So there's time and time. There's a time to kill, a time to heal. There's time that Jesus healed. And there was other times he did not heal.

Right? So there's time to break down, a time to build up. There's verse 4, a time to weep and laugh, a time to mourn and dance. About emotions. Verse 4 is about emotions.

Weep and laugh. Can I control when that happened? No, I might come to a thanksmas and plan on laughing. Right? But generally we can't, you know, those time situations occur and we respond.

[20 : 29] I can't control when I'm going to weep because I don't plan. Although I may know I'm going to suffer a loss soon. But when that time actually happens, I can't control.

Time to cast away stones. Time to gather stones. That could be about casting away stones. Could be about throwing stones on your neighbor's field.

You know, to disrupt their harvest. And gathering stones could be about clearing a field for my family to harvest. And then that goes with embracing and refraining from embracing. So verse 5 might be about relationships.

You know, the casting or gathering stones and the embracing and shunning embracing. There's a time to embrace friendships or people. And there's a time even in Jesus' life to shun that.

To refrain from embracing. The Bible recognizes there are people and times where we avoid. So there's different times.

[21 : 31] But we don't always control that. There's a time to seek. A time to lose. A time to keep. A time to cast away. Possessions. There's a time to clean house, isn't there? There's a time to clean out the heart.

No, no. I know my son's downstairs going, no, no, no. Gather, yeah, but not cast away. A time to tear. A time to sew.

A time to silence. A time to speak. Hmm. Time to keep silent. When's that? Jesus knew that.

It's time to be silent. And a time to speak. He, this list, by the way, is simply a description of observations.

It's not a prescription. He's not telling us morally, there's times you need to think about speaking up. He's just making observations. He's just making, there's just times that we do that.

- [22 : 29] There's times we speak and times we don't speak. We know it's not appropriate to always speak. Some of us handle that better than others.

Of us. So then we go to possessions. We go to reactions. Tear and sew silence.

So verse 8. Here comes the kind of the climax. Time to love. A time to hate. A time for war. A time for peace. A time for peace. Well.

Our world would want to say, a lot of people in our culture would want to say, well, we should always love and never hate. We should always have peace and never have war. Again, this isn't prescriptive.

He's simply making observations. There have been times always for war and times for peace. There have been times for love and times for hate. He's not making a moral judgment of these things.

- [23 : 31] He's just simply observing there's different times. So there, there, there, even in the Bible, there's times for war.

Joshua was appointed for war. David was appointed to be a man of war, which is why he could not build the temple. Your hands are full of blood. So your son will build the temple.

That will be a time of peace. Peace. In fact, Solomon's name means peace. Solomon, shalom. So God designs times.

And we don't control that. We can't control that. We cannot control our birth, our death.

We cannot control when weeping comes upon us, when dancing comes upon us. Right? So what's the point of all of this? Verse nine, he raises a question.

- [24 : 30] This is the context of his poem. Right? What's the point of his poem? Verse nine. He raises the question that we've heard him say before. What's the gain?

What's the gain? What's the advantage? What's left over after all of this? After all my toil, after all my work, after all the trials I've gone through, all these different activities I've experienced, what's the gain?

What's left over? Is there anything significant left? And the implication of his question is no.

No gain. Why? Because death cancels out birth. Weeping cancels out laughter.

War cancels out peace. See, each of these have an opposite. Each of these cancel each other out.

- [25 : 34] In a negative sense, our author is a negative person. Okay? That's his. From an under the heaven perspective, from merely a man's earthly perspective, is there any gain to all of these activities?

At the end of the day, no. Nothing. I mean, birth's great. Death is sad. What's the gain?

We gain and we lost. Factors out to zero. That's how he's simply looking at it. Okay? That's the earthly perspective. That is the earthly.

We cannot control that and there's no lasting significance. So, we as Christians who read the Bible beyond Ecclesiastes 3, not just beyond as in New Testament, but even before, like the original Solomon, Proverbs, does not take a negative view of these things.

What's the Christian's view of time? How are we to view time? Is this the way? This is the way the earth can look at time. If God is not a factor, that's how time is.

- [26 : 56] It's really, it's it. Eat, drink, and be merry because tomorrow you die. So, it's just enjoy what you can, but there ain't much. So, what's the Christian's view of time?

Is it true there's no gain? Is it true that there's no meaning in it? Well, here's Paul's exhortation to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6. Paul says to Timothy, this is toward the end.

Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession, the presence of many witnesses.

I charge you, Timothy, in the presence of God who gives life to all things and of Jesus Christ who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.

I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach. How long? How long, Paul? How long do I keep the command?

[27 : 57] Until. There's a time factor here. Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Which he will display when?

When is he coming back? At the proper time. At the beautiful time. At the exact fulfillment of time. Keep the command until the appearing of Christ which he will display at the proper time.

He who is the blessed and only sovereign. The king of kings and lord of lords. He who alone has the immortality. Who dwells in unapproachable light. Whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. What's the Christian view of time? How we use our time does matter.

It does. It's extremely significant. We're even called to redeem our time. To buy it up. To consider carefully how we use our time.

[29 : 06] Not to go overboard with that as if I'm stressed out about how I retire. But to have a good balance of time. To evaluate my life from time to time. And look at, you know, how am I spending time?

That's just simply why. So our time matters. In fact, Paul says take hold of the eternal life. What does that mean? It means that we're already living in the eternal.

When we are born again, we're born. We already receive an eternal life. We're already living in the eternal life. We already have a new life from God.

We're already, in a sense, stepping over the line. There is an aspect of us that will never, ever die. Right?

Jesus said, if you believe in me, you will. I am the resurrection and the life. If you believe in me, you'll never die. In one sense. And then when your body dies, you will live again.

[30 : 07] There's a sense where we already live in the eternal. So that means our life has purpose. We're not just living for now. We long for a time of Christ appearing when all will be rewarded.

Paul calls it to Timothy a fight of faith. Why is it a fight of faith? To take hold of our eternal life. To consider that our life has meaning and that we're already living in the eternal.

He says it's a fight of faith. In other words, we trust what God has said. We trust his promises. Our best life is yet to come. Not now. There are good things now.

But it's not our best. Not even close. Our best life is to come. And that's what we long for. And the theme of scripture and especially the New Testament as we suffer now.

Glory later. We follow our Savior now. We deny ourselves. Take up our cross. And follow him.

[31 : 12] And there's a day where that will be so much glory. Every event in our life has a time. We can't control when those events occur.

But we can live with purpose and meaning for him in these times now. That's the first perspective.

Every event in our life has time but we can't control them. So what's the other perspective? Verse 10. Now he brings up God. He had asked what gain is there from all these times.

None. Verse 10. But I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also he has put eternity in a man's heart.

So there's another perspective here. A heavenly view. A God view. God shapes our times. God has made everything beautiful in its time. God has given to the children of man.

[32 : 15] God has put eternity in their heart. On and on he talks about God working here. So God. The heavenly view is this. God shapes our time. Why?

God has ordained our time. He has made our time. He's made everything beautiful in a time. He's put eternity in our hearts. He's given us gifts. Why does he do all of this?

Why does he do it in the way that he does? Because he gives us these things but he doesn't explain everything to us. There's still things we can't find out.

He puts eternity in our heart but. What does he say? Verse 11. He has put eternity into man's heart. Yet.

So that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. So there's a limit. He's given us a sense of eternity in our hearts but he's limited it. Why does he do it this way?

[33 : 15] Why does he give us a sense of something bigger? Something grander but doesn't satisfy us with what that is? Why? Why does he do what he does?

So that we may fear him. So that we may fear him. God shapes our times so that we fear him.

In other words, it's not about us. It's about him. See the first view. The earthly view.

Is all about us. It's all about me. It's all about how I view it. What's in it for me? The second view. It's not about me. It's about God. And that's when it all comes together.

If I make it about me, I'm never going to get it. I'm never going to be satisfied. Because it's not about me.

[34 : 13] Okay? So here's the other perspective. God shapes our times so that we will fear him. So this is the God view here. There's three different ways that God brings us about.

Verse 10 and 11 reveal God's plan. How he's made things beautiful. He puts eternity in our hearts. Verses 12 and 13 are about God's gifts. Talks about how God gives us things to enjoy.

And then verses 14 and 15 are God's purpose. So three perspectives here on God's view.

So what's God's plan? Verse 10. Verse 10. I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. So this is God initiating.

God has given a business or a task or an opportunity or a life. To spend. God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

[35 : 11] What is that? Verse 11. He has made everything beautiful in his time. He's made everything beautiful. He's made everything appropriate. He's made everything good. In fact, the language here kind of is reflective of creation.

God made. Right? He made things. He separated things. He designed things in Genesis 1. And at the end of each day, God would say what?

God saw that it was good. It's good. So he spoke. He saw. He said. Right?

That's creation account. It's good. It's good. It's good. It's good. It's good. Right? So here. He's made everything good. He made everything beautiful.

Everything perfect for its time. And then verse 11. Also. Not just that. But also. He has put eternity into man's heart.

[36 : 10] Yet. So that he cannot find out what God has done from beginning to end. So he's given us a sense of eternity. Yet. He's kept it.

Mysterious. For us. So what does that mean? He puts eternity into our heart. What does that mean? So remember.

This whole text. He's been talking about time. Right? And he's talking about specific times. Times for birth. Times for death. Times for weeping. Times for laughing. Times for love and hate.

Time. Those are specific occurrences. Now all of a sudden. When he's talking about God. He talks about. Big time. Eternal time. He puts eternity.

So we know all about the. Specific limited times in our life. But what do we know about eternity? So what does it mean that he put it into our hearts?

[37 : 10] Well it means. He's made us conscious. That there's something. Bigger. There's something. More. Or something.

Beyond us. That's Romans 1. Isn't it? Romans 1. Paul says. No one is without excuse. God has made himself evident to everyone.

They can say I'm agnostic. They can say I'm atheist. But they're lying. Or they've suppressed the truth so far that they believe their lie. They're going to stand before God and go.

Because. They have no excuse. God has made it heaven. Not only that he's created everything. Because we don't see evolution. We see creation.

If we're rational. Yeah. You like that? Yeah. That's what I'd do if I were super smart and ignoring God.

[38 : 17] When I stood before God. I'd be. Yeah. But he also. But Romans 1 also says that he makes us to know within ourselves.

That he is the eternal one. We not only know from what we've seen. But we know from what has been placed in us. That he is eternal.

That he is right. And that we are accountable to him. Every person knows that. No matter what they say. Because I believe Romans 1 over what everybody says.

So he's put that. So we know. We all know. There's something bigger. And you hear people say that all the time. Right? I quoted Tom Brady last week.

Right? Or two weeks ago. I guess it was. You know. He's done all of this. He's accomplished. He got all his dream. He won the Super Bowl over and over and over and over again. And in an interview he still says.

[39 : 16] There's got to be something more. He's achieved his ultimate dream. It's not enough. He retired. He hadn't retired.

Why? Well he may have a reason. But I think it's because. He still wants more. And he hadn't found it yet. And bless Tom.

Looking in the wrong place. So. We all have that sense of something more. Something bigger. Something mysterious. So what difference does that make?

Well verse 12. Why does God do that? Well. Then he comes to a practical. He comes back to his carpe diem motto again. Then there's nothing better than to.

Right. Seize the day. Right. That's all you got. So seize the day. Carpe diem. Live life now. So that's what he says in verse.

[40 : 16] Where are we? 12. He said it at the end of chapter 2. He says again. I perceive there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live. Also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil.

This is God's gift to men. Enjoy it while you can. That's the best thing you can do. If you're living under the sun. That's the best thing you can do. Paul even said that.

Didn't he? In 1 Corinthians 15. He said if there's no resurrection. If there's no life after death. If Jesus didn't raise from the dead. Then nothing matters.

Eat. Drink. And be merry. Because tomorrow you die. Get all you can now. If that's it. Right. So in a sense he's saying that. But he's recognizing God's involved too.

He says that's a gift from God. So that is a gift. Now he's saying it kind of pessimistically. But we can understand that God's gift.

[41 : 14] God has given us work, toil, pleasures to enjoy. He's also by the way given us hardship and trials.

But remember what Paul says about trials? What about James says? James, remember what James says about trials? Consider it all joy. When you encounter various trials.

Why? Not because of the trial. I'm not an idiot. Because of what they produce. Because God's doing something good in it.

God's going to bring something good out of it. That's the Romans 8.28. Right? We trust that God is always doing something good. Even though we don't see the good yet.

It will be good. Joseph didn't see the good. For being, right? Beaten and thrown away. And thrown into slavery.

[42 : 16] And lied about. Until God raised him up. And then he says, now I get it. You brothers, you rascal. You meant it for evil.

But God meant it for good. All right? Jesus' suffering was all meant for good. Our suffering is all meant for good.

So find the joy and the pleasure in it. This is God's gift, he says at the end of verse 13. This is God's gift to man. It is a gift.

Do we see it that way? What's your perspective, in other words? If it's all about me, then I won't see it as a gift. But if it's about God and I see that he's involved and he's planned and he's set times, then I'll see, no, okay, it's good.

Because I trust what he says. I'll see the good because I trust him. I accept it from him. I'm debating whether to share the part of my journey.

[43 : 30] I've shared it before, but my journey from depression to recovery. I couldn't find release from my depression until I accepted it from God.

I truly accepted his lot that he allotted to me. And I was depressed because it was about me.

And when I remembered it was about him, you know, especially when he made me look at his son and think, okay, what am I complaining about?

Right? I'm not going through anything compared to what his son did for me. Goodness. Anyway, that acceptance is huge.

I accept his sovereignty. I accept his plan. I may not get it. He's put eternity in my heart, but I can't find everything out about that. There's still mystery.

[44 : 39] I still have to trust him. Right? So we accept what he's given.

We receive. Everything is from him. It has purpose and meaning. So what is God's purpose ultimately? Verse 14. So I perceive that whatever God does endures forever.

Now, I think the author is saying it a little bit more, you know, like, frustrated. Whatever God does endures forever. Nothing can be added to it.

Nothing can be taken from it. There's nothing I can do about it. Whatever God does, I can't change it. I can't take away from it. I can't add to it. Because God did it.

Now, that might be his attitude. What he's saying is also true. Whether you have, if you have a bad attitude about it or a good attitude. Whatever God does is forever.

[45 : 36] I don't add to it or, I can't control that. That's how, he's God, I'm not. Right? So then he says, so God has done it.

Why? Why does he do things the way he does it? Why does he give us a sense of something bigger but then leave it a mystery? Why does he do things and I can't control that?

Why? Why does God act the way he acts? Why does he make, why does, why, what's, what's in his head? Sorry. What's the last line of verse 14?

God has done it. Why? Why? Why? So that people will fear him. Because it's about him and not me.

And that's good for me. That's really good for me. It is really. We don't think of it that way, but when we come to his way of thinking, we go, why did I fight so long?

[46 : 48] Why did I try to fix everything myself? Because I mess it up. Why didn't I trust him?

Why didn't I wait for him? Why didn't I just stay on that road? Because I got a soul that wants to go, ooh, look over there.

Ooh, that'll be fun. This runs too hard. Let me go over there for a while. We all got a soul that says that, right? And my soul wants pleasure.

My soul wants relief. My soul wants escape. That's why Jesus said, hate your soul in this world. So that you can save your soul.

Cannot trust your soul. I'm talking about our affections, right? That's where I get depressed. That's where also I have elation.

[47 : 54] So that we fear him. What does that mean to fear him? Well, certainly in this context, it means to acknowledge him, to wait upon him, to orient my life centered upon him.

It means to recognize that it's about him, not about me. To fear him. Now, we have to let the word fear be everything that it is.

Let us not reduce it to just reverence or just awe. Yes, it involves those things. That's part of it. That's only part of it. If we don't see the whole thing, right?

It's the aspect of the disciples being in awe of Jesus. But then Jesus calms the storm with a word. And they were no longer awed.

They were terrified. Who is this man? And they're suddenly on their faces. A little bit more than awed, don't you think?

[48 : 58] He is much bigger than I thought. It has both that sense of dread and that sense of awe.

It's both. It's all of it. So fear him. So let's look at this. So how do we do this? Fear God.

And how does fear of God relate to joy and peace? Because remember, he's talking about enjoying things. God wants joy and peace in our lives, right? He promises that.

So that's a result of fearing him. So fear doesn't mean I want to take away all your joy. Fear means I want to give you joy. You fear me, I will give you peace that passes understanding.

Okay? Don't think of fear as just, ooh. There may be moments where we need to, ooh. Thank you, Lord, for reminding me.

[50 : 02] You're more than my friend. Okay? So here's Paul's perspective. Philippians 4. This is interesting. Here's Paul's perspective. Remember, Paul doesn't know if he's going to live or die in Philippians.

Remember, he's, hey, hey, hey. To die would be great. But to remain is good, too. Here's what he says. Rejoice in the Lord always. Always?

Always. And again, I say, if you didn't hear me the first time, again, I say rejoice. Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

The Lord is at hand. And do not be anxious about anything. That's easy for you to say, Paul. No, it's not.

No, it's not. Do not be anxious about anything. Okay, what do you have to say to replace that? Well, but in everything, by prayer and supplication.

[51 : 00] With thanksgiving, underline that part. With thanksgiving, even when you're anxious, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And what happens then, Paul?

Then the peace of God. You know, the kind that passes. Doesn't make sense? Then the peace of God, which surpasses on it, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In those anxious moments. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable.

If there's any excellence, if there's anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me.

Practice these things. And what? Now, before it was the peace of God. Now, it's the God of peace. The God of peace will be with you.

[52 : 07] I looked up this with. Greek has different withs. This one is a significant with. Means he will stand with you.

He will be on your side. Because it means more than he's just with you. Because he's always with us. Right? I will never leave or abandon you.

This means, okay, when you think about these kind of things, God will be standing with you. On your side. Helping you.

It opens an avenue for that grace to come. When we think on these things. Okay? So, I want you to notice two things Paul talks about leads to peace.

He says, when you feel anxious, don't be anxious about anything. Don't be worried. Well, we do, don't we?

[53 : 06] That's natural. So, what do I do when I become anxious? Okay? Because I can't stop the feeling. But I can respond to my things.

So, when I'm getting anxious, what do I do? Well, I turn to prayer. But not just any kind of prayer. Prayer and supplication. Prayer meaning talking to God.

Supplication meaning asking for something. And with thanksgiving. Why thanksgiving? What in the world can I be thankful for when I'm anxious about something? What does it take to be thankful when I'm anxious?

I think it's called faith, Bill. I think it's called faith. See, I think that's the secret element in finding peace in unpeaceful times.

And then he talks about what you spend your time thinking about. He says, think about these things. He lists all these things. True, honorable, just, pure, lovely.

[54 : 14] Think about these kind of things. Practice retraining your thinking to be on these things. And what will happen is then the God of peace will stand with you.

Why? Because I'm thinking of those things that he's made beautiful.

Instead of dwelling. So, okay, here comes that pastor question, right? So what do you dwell on? That's where I go. Okay, what do I dwell on?

What do I tend to think about? Well, if my faith isn't active, if I'm not intentional, what do I dwell on? Well, I'm a half glass full guy. Right?

I'm a, okay, no focus on me. I can go bad in my thinking. Easy. So what do we think about?

[55 : 19] So this word think about is interesting too because it's not the normal. So I went back and looked at that. So there's a normal word about thinking, right?

This is not the normal word. It's the word logidzo. You hear the English in that? Log, logic.

It's a word that means logical reasoning, you know, bank on something. So I'm like, why that word? Reason through.

Think logically. In other words, when I'm thinking about bad things, I'm being illogical. I'm just being reactionary. I'm not being intentional in my thoughts.

So it's where I think he used that word because he's saying, be sane about this. What's good for you? It's not good to dwell on what you can't control.

[56 : 18] So dwell on good things. Dwell on what's pure, what's lovely, what's commendable. Well, gee, do I know any of those things? Oh, yeah. Jesus is full of them. Scripture is full of them.

The church is full of them. So retrain yourself to think that way. So whatever we dwell on, so look at what it brings.

What do I dwell on? Does it bring me anxiety and depression? Well, okay, there I go. Or does it bring me peace? So all that to say this about fear.

Remember, he said God does all this so that we fear him. So what is fear of God? Fear of God, and I've been thinking about this for a long time, and that's one of the themes of this book.

The last conclusion of this book in chapter 12 comes to the whole thing. When we've heard everything, what is it? Fear God. Okay, so that's going to be the main theme. So what does that mean?

[57 : 17] Isaiah, not Isaiah, Solomon, right? Proverbs, the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord, fear of God.

And he says it over and over and over. So if I'm going to learn wisdom, I'm going to be smart in this world. I'm going to live with faith. I need this fear of God.

So what is it? I realize Solomon describes it in chapter 3 of Proverbs. Some of my very favorite life verses. They were my original life verses when I was going through cancer.

They were my original life verses that I held on to. And you all know these verses. Proverbs 3, 5. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

And lean not on your own understanding. See, hear the concrete language in that? Don't lean on how I think. So trusting the Lord has something to do with don't think it your way.

[58 : 24] Then it goes on, what? So trust the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will. If I want to know where to go and I want to know the right time, in all your ways, acknowledge him.

In all your ways, acknowledge him. Then it goes on. Do not be wise in your own eyes, but fear the Lord.

There it is. That's the point he's getting to. Do not be wise in your own eyes, but fear the Lord. Fear the Lord means, first of all, don't be wise in your eyes.

It will be, what? Health or healing to your body. That sounds good. And nourishment, refreshment to your bones.

Trust what he says. In all my ways, acknowledge him. All of that together is that picture of fear the Lord. That's what he gets to at the end. Fear the Lord. Not wise in my own eyes.

I mean, it gets way in. That's good for me. Fear the Lord is not something negative. It is something totally sane.

We will not be wise in our own eyes, but fear him and turn from evil and receive his healing and his refreshment. I'm good with that. God has made everything beautiful in its time. Embrace it.

But Father, we thank you that you give us the opportunity to evaluate what he says, to recognize the truth in it, and then to recognize how does Scripture fill this out for us. So we thank you. Thank you, Lord, that you show us. And we all know this, that life under the sun here has nothing apart from you.

Amen.