

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Beautiful In Its Time

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Looking at a leafless tree in the middle of July might cause concern. But seeing the same tree drop all its leaves in the middle of December, one might describe the scene as beautiful. It is the scene for trees to not have their leaves. They are beautiful for they are in rhythm with the season. The leafless tree in July is out of sync with what is expected in the season and conjures up sadness, not beauty.

Solomon writes, “*He hath made everything beautiful in its time; also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end*” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We feel comfortable looking at changes if they fit with what we expect as the seasons come and go. But we need to look further out in life than just the four seasons and view the beauty of changes as God sees it.

He has just told us earlier in chapter three that there is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to weep, and a time to laugh... and time for war, and time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). I immediately see beauty in birth, laughing, and peace; but is death, weeping and war something of beauty? God says

yes, for all these events occur under His watchful providential care.

There is a beauty of relying on God’s care through the difficult times over which we have no control. We cannot control the events of our birth or death. From God’s broader perspective, they are beautiful for they are part of the seasonal change that we would acknowledge in distinguishing between the more limited horizons of summer and winter. We must learn to see the beauty of not only birth, but also of death through the eyes of God who has placed both before us.

God has made everything beautiful in its time to exercise us. Exercise of war, hate, weeping, tearing down and scattering can be difficult. But God has placed them in the seasons of life to draw us closer to Him, for we realize we have not the power, even though we try, to avoid them. We submit to them in travail by embracing God and seeing the beauty of that process.

Solomon says, “*I have seen the travail which God hath given the sons of men to be exercised therewith*” (Ecclesiastes 3:10). One minute one is planting a tree with great expectations; before long he must cut it down. One moment he is

planting seed for a great garden; the next moment he is plucking up that which he has planted. It is frustrating and full of travail. It looks like we travel in one place without gaining ground, like a hamster on a tread mill. What beauty is there in frustration? The beauty lies in acknowledging our dependence on God!

God has created us with a desire that looks out further from fleeting moments of time. He has placed “eternity” in our hearts, but through experience we cannot even determine with certainty what will happen to us tomorrow. Will it be gathering or scattering? Or will it be embracing or refraining from embracing? We do not know. Our moment of time may have us quarantining instead of assembling due to a worldwide pandemic. It may be a moment that will not occur for one hundred years. But God is sitting in eternity, ruling over His universe. We can always embrace Him and trust in Him as we experience the changes. This is what makes everything beautiful in its time!

Enjoy the beauty of life’s changes as God determines it. While we trust in Him, there is nothing better for man to do than, “*rejoice and do good so long as they live*” (Ecclesiastes 3:12).