

“God of All Seasons”
Pastor Wally Contreras
December 27, 2020

“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 sew; 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 perceived 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—this is God’s gift to man. I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; 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.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)

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Pastor Wally outlined Ecclesiastes to be Solomon’s attempt to test wisdom apart from God and noted in Ecclesiastes 1:18 that Solomon found “For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.” (Rick’s translation is that the more I know, the less I understand.) Practical exercise: The human body is a complete organism made up of different components and each performs its own function; the study of cells would not have been possible without the invention of the microscope. Scientists estimate that our bodies contain anywhere from 75 to 100 trillion cells. Like the human body, cells are complete organisms and have different components and each performs its own function within the cell. Cells contain DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) and RNA (ribonucleic acid), the genetic information necessary for directing cellular activities. When a cell becomes damaged or undergoes some type of infection, it will self-destruct by a process called apoptosis. Based on this knowledge (some which may be new information for me), do I understand more or less about the human body and why?

Pastor David Gibson from Aberdeen, Scotland once said (desiringGod.org, June 18, 2018), “Scripture says there is a time for all things, but our world counters that, instead, all things can be done all the time. Most technology, for instance, has harnessed us to the lie that we can throw off the creaturely restraints of time and have access to everything always, without waiting, without stopping, and without needing to rest... Wise people respect time’s rhythms. Dawn, morning, afternoon, evening, night. God made six days to work, one day to rest. This structures a week, which repeats over a month, and the months in years. Many people try to live rhythm-free lives by simply doing whatever they feel like doing in any given moment, without proper attention to whether it is the right time to do that thing; this actually tears at the fabric of what it means to be human... There is no particular season for anything. We do what we want when we

want.” He then asked, “What do we do with those seasons which bring wrecking-ball damage to our tidy little realms? Where do we turn?” To which I answer?

Pastor Gibson went on to point out that “[i]n years of pastoral ministry, I have not seen many families unravel who unswervingly observe the Lord’s Day together with deliberate joy and routine hospitality.” Have I allowed certain “seasons” in my life to interfere with me (and my family) observing the “Lord’s Day together with deliberate joy and routine hospitality”? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Pastor Gibson concluded by saying that, “[f]oolish people seek all the answers to life in each and every season of life. But some seasons yield only questions, not answers. Some seasons bring a wound that will not heal; it might take a lifetime to learn that we “cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Have I had a season in my life which “yield[ed] only questions, not answers”? If so, what questions has God placed in my heart and mind?

Pastor Wally spoke of a sentiment of good riddance to 2020 and the mindset that 2021 will be so much better. Why do we tend to assume that the future will be better?

Charles Spurgeon said, “The seasons change and you change, but the Lord abides evermore the same, and the streams of His love are as deep, as broad and as full as ever.” There it is, the promise in every season: God is unchanging. Does this promise resonate with me in a special way as 2020 draws to a close? Explain.

Is there someone in my life who needs to hear God’s unchanging promise today (maybe my “Who’s Your One)?

Charles Spurgeon, speaking on Job 22:29 (“When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.” (KJV)), “To this end, FAVOURABLE SEASONS, a well-timed occasion, a suitable hour, should never be lost sight of. “When men are cast down.” You cannot talk with some men until you do find them cast down. They are too shy and reserved, too proud and unapproachable; or perhaps too profane and blustering, to allow

you to say a word to them about eternal things. But you can catch them sometimes... Do any of you say, "If we speak to these people, what are we to tell them?" And???

Spurgeon concluded that thought by pointing out that "'No hope' is a cry which no human tongue should utter, which no human heart should heed. Oh, may God grant us grace whenever we get an opportunity to go and tell all we meet with that are bowed down, "There is lifting up." And tell them where it is likewise. Tell them it is only at the cross. Tell them it is through the precious blood. Tell them it is to be had for nothing, through simply trusting Christ. Tell them it is of free grace, that no merits of theirs are wanted, that no good things are they to bring, but that they may come just as they are, and find lifting up in Christ." What will I tell my "Who's Your One" who may be thinking that there is "no hope" for him or her?

"The idea of destiny pervades our culture, showing up in everything from astrological predictions that say our fates are governed by the stars to romantic movies in which the message is that the two protagonists are destined to be together. In all of these cases and several others, however, it is an impersonal force of some kind that is supposed to be governing things. Rarely, if ever, is there mention of a personal being who is directing and giving purpose to all things. As many Christian philosophers and apologists have pointed out, however, impersonal reality cannot give anything meaning and purpose. By definition, purpose is the property of personal design. Only personal, thinking beings can act with purpose; a mere force just is. For example, gravity in itself does not act with intentionality; it is simply there, a given reality that does not make plans or direct things to an appointed goal or end. Things do not have an ultimate purpose merely because we want them to—if there is no creator God directing all things, the idea that everything happens for a reason is mere wishful thinking." (R.C. Sproul) Have I, at times, felt that "it's just my destiny" to do something or be someone and what are some of the feelings that are associated with that idea?

To what degree do I agree or disagree with R.C. Sproul's assertion that "if there is no creator God directing all things, the idea that everything happens for a reason is mere wishful thinking" and why?

How will my life be changed if I do as Pastor Wally asked and simply "resolve to take the rest of [my] life one day at a time"?