

Times & Seasons

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. FYI - HS parents, AP be talking about sex in the HS group a week from today.
 1. Our HS kids are looking at screens 9 hours a day. They **have been** getting a sex education. We would like to help them find God's heart & biblical answers.
- B. Slide2 City Serve - last time to sign up.

II. Slide3 Intro: Times & Seasons

- A. Slide4 Poem: The clock of life is wound but once, And no man has the **power**.
 To tell just when the hands will stop, At late or early **hour**.
 To lose one's **wealth** is sad indeed. To lose one's **health** is more.
 To lose one's **soul** is such a loss, That no man can restore.
 1. 36 people died while we just read that short poem.
 2. Every hour over 6,300 go to meet their Maker. Almost 2 a second. [90, 2052]
- B. What is the Purpose of life? Better yet, What is the Purpose of **your** life?
 1. Many **can't** answer this question. Many **give up** when they don't find out.
- C. Life, Death, Time & Eternity make up the ingredients of life. [all are in this chapter]
- D. Slide5 Also, we see where *The Birds* got their great lyrics to their 1965 song, *To every season, turn, turn, turn* from Eccl.3. [Written by Pete Seeger 1950's] [became #1 pop hit in the nation...w/the oldest lyrics]
- E. What we'll see here is **individuality**, we are **unique**. A special time for everyone to be birthed & a time appointed to die, etc.
 1. If we as individuals are **not unique**, then we are **not important**.
 If we are **not important**, then life has **no meaning**.
 If life has **no meaning**, then life is **not worth living**.

III. Slide6 TIMES ARE ESTABLISHED (1-8)

- A. They say **timing** is everything. **Time** is mentioned 31 x's in this chapter.
- B. (1) **Times** = an appointed time (1-8). **Season** = times are working out Gods purpose (9-15).
- C. (1) **Times & seasons** are a regular part of life. They are God ordained natural Laws.

1. Not only are there **seasons & times**, **but** there is also *an overruling Providence* in our lives.
 - a) From our **conception** to our **death**, God is accomplishing **His** Divine purpose.
 - b) **God** dwells in eternity, **but time** dwells in God.
2. In these next 14 statements, Solomon affirmed God is at work in individual lives, seeking to accomplish His will.
 - a) There is an appropriate time for *every* human activity. **And**, **positive** events are paralleled with **negative** ones to reflect reality.
3. If we cooperate w/God's timing, life will **not** be meaningless.

D. (2) Even in the original these verses were set up uniquely as *a song*.

1. You'll note some order to their alignment in your bible.

E. **Slide7** (2a) **Born/Die** – Birth & death are not human accidents; they are divine appointments, for God is in control.

1. We may **foolishly hasten** our death, **but** we cannot prevent it when our time comes. **Our days are numbered**.

- a) Ps.31:15 **My times are in Your hand**.
- b) Job 14:5 **Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass**.
- c) Job24:1 **Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, Why do those who know Him see not His days?**

F. **Plant/Pluck** – They were agricultural people.

1. A **successful farmer** knows that nature works for him *only when* he works w/ nature.

- a) **The secret of a successful life**...lean on Gods principles & cooperate w/them.

G. (3) **Kill/Heal** – God permits some to die & others to be healed.

1. When parents are praying their child won't die (at any age), *Sometimes God has compassion on the **parents** & other times on their **child***.
2. A few have been allowed *life extensions* (eg. Hezekiah in Is.38)
 - a) God can use both *means & miracles* to accomplish **His** purpose.

- H. **William Sangster** (British Methodist preacher) learned that he had progressive muscular atrophy and could not get well, **he made 4 resolutions** and kept them to the end:
1. **I will never complain - I will keep the home bright - I will count my blessings - I will try to turn it to gain.** [sounds like our friend Jayna]
- I. **Break Down/Build up** – can be different parts of 1 process, such as remodeling or building a new house.
- J. (4) **Weep/Laugh – Mourning rituals** were common in the ancient Near East.
1. **Job's** friends *mourned* for him for 7 days when they visited him. Job 2:11-13
 2. **David** sang a song of *lament* after hearing of Saul and Jonathan's deaths 2 Sam.1:17-27
 3. The statement here is reminiscent of Paul's encouragement for believers to **Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.** Rom.12:15
- K. **Mourn/Dance** – while *weep & laugh* were private, *mourn & dance* were public.
- L. (5) **Cast away stones/Gather stones** – Israel is so stony you must remove the stones before you plant.
1. To ruin an enemy's field you'd fill it full of stones.
 - a) **Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones.** 2 Kings 3:19
 2. Stones needed to be collected to build walls & houses.
 - a) They say, **If your enemy throws stones in your field, don't throw them back...build something with them. :)**
- M. **Slide8 Embrace/refrain from Embracing** –
1. This could be referring to a husband & wife. 1 Cor.7:5, or Lev.15:19,24.
 2. People in the Near East show their affections, kissing & hugging, when they meet & part. Paraphrased, *a time to say hello & to say good-bye.*
 3. **Also**, refraining from embracing could be **a timing issue** - it could refer to...**not awakening love before its time**, as Solomon wrote about (3x's S.o.S. 2:7; 3:5; 8:4) [actually it was the Shulamites wisdom to the daughters of Jerusalem]
 - a) **How many** (don't raise hands) **messed this one up by awakening love too early in your life & reaped the consequences from it?**

N. (6) **Gain/Lose** – obviously speaking about your weight? :)

1. Actually maybe like Job said, *Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.* 1:21
2. Jesus said, *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.* Mark 8:35

O. **Keep/Throw away** – Garage sale verse.

P. (7) **Tear/Sew** – Possibly refers to the practice of *rending a garment* (during grief/mourning).

Q. **Keep Silent/Speak** – if only we could learn *when* to do each of these.

1. Prov.26:4,5 *Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.*
2. *Restraint in speech* is a recurring theme in wisdom literature. In Proverbs, *a fool's speech brings trouble* (Prv.18:6,7), while those who *keep their tongue avoid trouble* (Prv.21:23).

R. (8) **Love/Hate** – *Are there things we should hate?* Of course: *senseless killings, abortion, foolish wars, children starving, our God dishonored, injustice, & most importantly we should hate the sin in our own lives.*

1. Ps. 97:10 *You who love the LORD, hate evil.*
2. Prov.8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*
3. Amos 5:15 *Hate evil, love good.*
4. Like different drugs a pharmacist/chemist works with... *Taken alone one ingredient may kill you; but properly blended, they bring healing.* eg. Table salt.

S. **War/Peace** – We saw a time for both in the O.T. (*compare* David's reign *vs.* Solomon's)

T. So *Time* is very important to us. Our days are very scheduled.

1. *We have busy lives, we are so scheduled.* Yet if you're waiting at a doctors/ dentist appointment & you plan on an hour total for your check up. *Yet* the wait was that long...at 1st you're bummed as this just messed w/your schedule...*but* then you quickly adjust your schedule to accommodate.

a) Why can't we adjust so quickly to **God's** timing? W/man's we're so quick to adapt?

IV. Slide9 **TIMES ARE ESTABLISHED BY GOD (9-13)**

- A. People have a desire to understand how **they** fit into the plan of life.
- B. We may not understand His time & purpose now, until we step out of **our time** (under heaven) & into **His purpose** (eternity).
1. Bringing God into the picture always gives us *the better perspective*.
 2. Solomon glances *above the sun, into the heavens*.
- C. His promise is that *He will make everything beautiful...in its time*. Even the most difficult experiences of life.
- D. (9) Same question that was brought up in 1:3, **but now** he has **2 answers** in light of **new** evidence.
1. **Is work a routine for you? Is your work only Toil** (exhausting labor, drudgery)?...
Are you badly waiting for the answer right now?
- E. Slide10a Remember work can be **enjoyed** (13) **If** you remember these next **2 things**:
1. **Remember our work is God-Given** (10)
 - a) Ask any person that **can't** work if they would trade you places.
 2. Slide10b Remember *the fruit of our labor is a Gift of God* (13)
 - a) Don't take all the credit for your job or successes. *W/o Him you can do nothing*.
- F. Slide11 (11) **Can you believe the one word everything** in this verse?
1. Solomon is not saying, *Hakuna matada* (Swahili), *Don't worry - be happy*.
 - a) He is promoting **faith in God**, not *faith in faith*.
 - b) Faith is only as good as the **object** of faith & the greatest object of faith is **the Lord**
- G. **Eternity in our hearts** – Every man knows there's more than just this life.
1. **Yah, but His time** is a long way off. Like the old joke...
Now Lord, a 1000 yrs is to You like a minute right? *Yes my son*.
And Lord, 1 million dollars to you is like a penny right? *Yes my son*.
Then Lord, can I have a penny? *Yes, in just a minute! :)*
- H. Slide12 Let's remember **4 things**...

1. God has given us a spiritual thirst.
2. We have eternal value.
3. Nothing but the eternal God can satisfy us.
4. We were designed for eternity. [our only replaceable part in our part assembly is our shell. The motor & drive train stay the same]
 - a) This is why *the world* can't satisfy us.
 - b) Slide13 Thomas Watson (Puritan pastor), Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.
- I. (12) Rejoice & do good - People should enjoy life & be content with what they are given.
- J. (13) *Enjoyment of life* is also a gift of God.

V. Slide14 **TIMES ARE ESTABLISHED BY GOD AND FOR GOD (14,15)**

- A. (14) Forever – Life seems to be transitory, but whatever God does is forever.
 1. Therefore, being in tune with God, He makes life not only meaningful but manageable.
 2. 1 Cor.10:13 *God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*
- B. Nothing can be added to it - God's work cannot be improved.
- C. Fear Him – *not the cringing of a slave before a cruel master, but the submission of an obedient child to a loving parent.* www
- D. (15) And God requires an account of what is past.
 1. NIV *and God will call the past to account.*
 2. Scholars have a difficult time agreeing on the translation of this phrase.
 3. It literally says, *God seeks what hurries along* (or, is pursued).
 - a) Solomon seems to say that **time** goes by swiftly and gets away from us; **but God** keeps track of it and will, at the end of time, call into account what we have done with time.
- E. Prayer: God you are Sov & we trust in You.