

## Pause, Then Proceed (Week 3) - Telling Time Yesterday's Sermon Summary

1. Yesterday, we put our attention on the day 14 entry in the Trevor Hudson devotional (pg. 28). In that entry, Hudson points out that ancient Greek (the language of the New Testament) has two primary words for "time" - *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is clock time, seconds, hours, 24 hours comprising a day, etc. *Kairos* time is slower and longer, best understood as a season, like a chapter in a book or an act in a play.



2. The quintessential biblical text on *kairos* time is [Ecclesiastes 3.1-8](#) (which we read at the start of the service yesterday). One of the better Christian books on the seasons of life is by Canadian pastor [Mark Buchanon](#); in it he writes, "Our souls, our hearts, have seasons...The seasons of the heart are not tied to age or personality. Sometimes, the seasons come and go with no rhyme or reason, nothing can predict or prevent it, nothing can produce one season or another. It's just life, it's just the way that it is."

3. Eccl. 3.1-8, along with Mark Buchanon's comments on it, tells us a few crucial insights into life's seasons: a) they are unavoidable and inevitable, with each of us experiencing both seasons we love and seasons we'd rather forgo; b) unlike the four seasons of the year (spring through winter), life's seasons are unpredictable and can change either gradually or suddenly; c) life's seasons and their changing should not be confused with or blamed on God, but instead God navigates or traverses the seasons with us.

4. Hudson, in our devotional, observes that so much of modern life - and our own lives - is dominated by *chronos* time, so much so that we lose all sense of *kairos* time. Our lives end up having no seasons at all; we flatten out their contours, and our days become a tepid monotony. Better for us to heed the counsel of the late Frederick Buechner, Presbyterian pastor and writer, who said, "Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace."

5. One of the more common images of the life of faith in the Old Testament is a tree that thrives year-round. And this image dovetails with the idea that life comes in seasons. For example, Jeremiah 17.7-8 reads, "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord. They will be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It will not fear when heat comes, and its leaves will stay green. In the year of drought it is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit."

6. So we see that in a healthy life of faith a) we need not be afraid as the seasons come and go, even the harsh ones, b) we can persist and endure, even thrive, no matter the season, and c) we can even produce fruit during arduous and dry seasons.

7. The New Testament letter contains advice or wisdom that is applicable to each and every season of life. First, [Romans 13.11-12](#) tells us that in every kairos God is trying to rouse us from our tendency to sleepwalk. So we can always ask - how is God using this particular season of life to wake me up and make us more aware, and move us one step closer to our salvation/transformation?

8. [Ephesians 5.15-16](#) tells us that every season of life comes with its own evil (in these verses, the NRSV translates kairos as "days"). So in every season of life we can also ask - what wisdom do I need from God to navigate, pass through, and remain unaffected by the evil in this current season? This is similar to that line in the Lord's Prayer, "...Deliver us from evil."

9. Last, in one chapter later in Ephesians we're told to "pray in the Spirit at all times" (Eph. 6.18; the word "times" is the word kairos or "seasons"). N.T. scholar Andrew Lincoln understands that phrase "pray in the Spirit" to mean "Prayers that are inspired by, guided by, and made effective by God's Spirit." So in each season of life we can ask ourselves - About what is God's Spirit nudging me to pray, both for myself and others? These prayer prompts by the Spirit tell you what matters most to God in any particular season, and where your own attention may need to go.

10. Anglican priest and poet Malcolm Guite, in his book *Sounding the Seasons*, offers this beautiful summary of how we should watch and note the seasons of our lives:

"Tangled in time, we go by hints and guesses,  
Turning the wheel of each returning year.  
But in the midst of failures and successes  
We sometimes glimpse the Love that casts out fear.  
Sometimes the heart remembers its own reasons  
And beats in holiness as we sing our story,  
Tracing the threads of grace, we sound the seasons  
That lead at last through time to timeless glory."

## Exploring the Seasons of Your Life this Week

1. Spend some time with Eccl. 3.1-8 this week. Journal about which season(s) you might be in right now, or look back on your life and jot down the different seasons that you observe. Talk about it with a friend or in your small group. If you want to draw it, use the image of tree rings (from the sermon) - wide rings are during vibrant seasons, thin or narrow rings are for hard, dry seasons.
2. A prayer for the week, which we used yesterday at the end of the sermon:

Adapted from Grace Church (Ealing, London, United Kingdom)

O God, forgive me when I treat time as a commodity or an enemy, and when I abuse Your gift of time by rushing through it without thought or measure.

In my fastness and slowness, help me to keep pace with You.

Free me to live in Your time according to the season at hand. Give me eyes to see and a heart to discern the shape and texture of today, so that I might only ask it be what it is instead of wishing it were something else.

Transform me into a person who see each season of life as a gift and a friend, and who live as if I have all the time in the world because I know that Your time will never cease, amen.

3. Some short pieces on the seasons of life:

[Thriving in the Winter Season of the Soul - Miriam Dixon](#)

[Lessons From the Trees - Nathan Foster](#)

[The Deserts in Our Lives](#)

[Allowing Life to Wax and Wane](#)