

What Really Matters Ecclesiastes 3:9-15

Introduction

- This week's snow is one of the earliest snows I can recall
 - Research from National Weather Service, www.weather.gov *Earliest Snowfall Climatology* (relevant to Columbus, OH) accessed November 13, 2019.
 - Dates back to 1885
 - Earliest date of measurable snowfall- October 10th, 1906 (0.1 inches)
 - Most snowfall on any day in October- October 30th, 1993 (3.6 inches)
 - Average date of first measurable snowfall from 1981-2010- November 20th
 - It appears that this winter season has come earlier this year!
 - How many of us, when we heard the forecast for Tuesday, moaned and groaned?
 - Did it make a difference?
 - I thought for sure that our kids would be home from school. After having Monday off, I'm not sure I could have taken another day with my kids!
- What kind of encouragement might King Solomon offer to us from the Book of Ecclesiastes?
 - "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity! (Ecclesiastes 1:2; ESV)
 - It doesn't sound like much encouragement.
 - "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1; ESV)."
 - Solomon doesn't mention a time for snow and a time for the beach. Maybe that season is covered under "A time to mourn, and a time to dance (Ecclesiastes 3:4b ESV)."
 - Oh, but before we find Solomon's words to only bring us despair; there is more to what Solomon has to say than what we might suspect.
- Sermon Series, "A Season for Everything"
 - Ecclesiastes 3
 - Solomon shares the joys and frustrations that many of us feel throughout the seasons of our life.
 - Most of us would attest that Solomon has covered the gamut of human emotion, and Jesus would agree that Solomon is right on target with his assessment.
 - So if there is a season for everything, "What do we do now?"
 - This is the focus of **Ecclesiastes 3:9-15**
 - Since we can't stop time, or even the seasons in our life- what we need to do now is to focus on what really matters.
- Do you find, that as you are going through the seasons of life that there are times that
 - The real purpose of things gets lost?
 - The moment gets in the way of the bigger picture?
 - The more that you try to take control, the less control you have?

- In the midst of what seems like mere ramblings, Solomon provides words of wisdom that can speak to our lives.

What is our purpose?

- **Ecclesiastes 3:9-11a**
 - Work all day but feel like you accomplished nothing
 - Monday-tired and tried to catch up on things
 - Laundry
 - Dishes
 - Clean the floors
 - By the end it was time to take Jackson to basketball practice and then come home and go to bed!
 - What was the point?!
 - I worked to make our house look beautiful, but it still looked like a barn for wild animals!
 - Monday night I slept really good and I got up refreshed and was productive!
 - There's a season for everything!
- Example of Adam and Eve
 - "And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28; ESV).'"
 - Times of rest are necessary (7th day)
 - However, we were created to work
 - Just as the seasons have a cycle, work is a necessary cycle that gives purpose to our lives.
 - Simply put: Some things have to get done!
 - Laundry, Basketball practice, your job, etc.
 - All of it has its place or season
- How does our work speak to our purpose in life?
 - "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:23-24; ESV)."
 - It comes down to who are we working for?
 - Solomon realized that it was God who provides purpose
 - God provided Adam and Eve with jobs in order to bring glory to God
 - It's when they got caught up in working for themselves that they lost their purpose!
- There are seasons in our life when it can be hard to figure out the purpose of what we are doing.
 - "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58; ESV)."

- We can work for a lot of things, but Solomon realized that if the work we do is not done with a God motivated purpose, then we are really are just wasting our time!
- It's only when we work for God that a day of chores becomes a day of greater purpose.
- Or an early morning or late night of work, becomes a moment to worship God.
- When God drives the purpose of everything we do, then the seasons of life can come and go, but our purpose remains in tact!
- In all that you do, in this particular season of your life-who are you working for? What is your purpose? What really matters?
- Warren Wiersbe, "The inference is plain. If we cooperate with God's timing, life will not be meaningless. Everything will be 'beautiful in its time,' even the most difficult experiences of life."¹

Capture the Bigger Picture

- **Ecclesiastes 3:11b-13**
 - Myrtle Beach looking into the horizon
 - Stretches farther than what we can see
 - Europe is on the other side, but you can't see it
 - All you can focus on is what is happening on the beach right in front of you.
 - Capturing the bigger picture is hard without a map!
 - Solomon says that eternity is within our heart, but it's so vast that we can't quite capture it.
 - It's not a reason to give up on eternity, however Solomon points to the fact that there is more to life than what we can see.
 - How much do you think about eternity?
 - I remember being asked, "Where will you spend eternity?"
 - It used to be a very powerful question, however I'm not sure it has the same impact it once had.
 - Shouldn't eternity be what matters most?
 - Eternity appears to be far from the minds of our culture and society
 - Everything seems focused on what is right in front of us
 - "But didn't you say that God has given us the work we have right in front of you?"
 - We do the work, but the focus is on God. It is the eternal aspect, the bigger picture that provides hope in the midst of the current season in our life.
 - It may be difficult to see beyond this season in your life, but the picture is much bigger and has a greater purpose in the picture of eternity.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Study Bible (NKJV)*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018. Pg. 960.

- God's plan is much bigger than we can conceive.
 - Each season comes and goes, but with God there is a greater purpose for our life.
 - This is the reason that in all that we do, we do it for the glory of God whether we understand the season of our life or not.
 - In God's timing, we find what really matters!

The Sovereignty of God

- **Ecclesiastes 3:14-15**
 - The purpose of Solomon's book: For Everything Season God is Sovereign
 - Time changes, but God does not. His promises remain true today just as we find them in the Bible.
- TV show or movie moving toward something
 - If it wasn't moving toward something then you would probably lose interest
 - You keep engaged because you want to see how the story plot will end
 - If you are watching a TV show, you can usually tell when something major is about to happen. The show breaks for a commercial, or worse they say "tune in next week to see what happens." You are left on edge.
- "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" Is moving toward something
 - What are we moving toward?
 - The Bible provides with two pictures: Destruction and Restoration
 - A picture of destruction
 - Climax of judgement
 - World ending
 - Absence of God's presence
 - A picture of Restoration
 - Reward
 - New Heaven and New Earth
 - Eternity with God
 - Eternity matters because it provides the bigger picture of hope!
 - In this bigger picture is the sovereignty of God
 - Despite the season, the world is moving toward a climax
 - How will your story end?
 - Destruction
 - Restoration
 - The answer provides the purpose of your entire life!

Conclusion

- Since we can't stop time, or even the seasons in our life- what we need to do now is to focus on what really matters.
 - Who are you working for? All for the glory of God
 - Eternity provides the bigger picture for our life
 - No matter the season, God is in control!

- Don't get lost in the season you are in, focus on what really matters and let God have control!