

Moments *for* You

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Theme: Seasons



GOD'S TIME

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Because everything has a season, nothing (at least on earth) lasts forever. God has appointed a “season” for everything. Seasons have beginnings and endings. They last, but not too long. Solomon’s thesis is this: Every activity of mankind has a proper time and a predetermined duration. Our lives will be a lot less stressful if we recognize that the omniscient hand of God has appointed a time when things are to be done, and He has a predetermined duration for those things to last.

Everyone goes through good times and bad times; together they make up the seasons of your life. Make sure you don’t live only for the good times; when the bad times come, and they will, you won’t have the strength to handle them. And make sure you don’t let the bad times defeat you. If you do, you’ll miss out on all the good times God still has in store for you. It takes both to make a life.

Why does Solomon say all these things about time? The answer is found in verse 11: “He [God] hath made every thing beautiful in His time.” At the appropriate point in time, God will make everything fit into the season of your life. It’s like the pieces of a puzzle. You struggle to piece things together, and then all of a sudden things just seem to fall into place. That’s what happens when you commit all of your ways to God.

God will never be late and He’ll never be early. Furthermore, He knows the proper duration for that

event. He never allows it to last too long nor cuts it off too short. When you live and die in the knowledge of God’s eternal plan, you live and die with this confidence—God makes all things beautiful in their time.

Are you tired of everything in your life going wrong? Are you fed up with trying to make things in your life lovely and easy and pleasant, only to have them turn out messy and hard and distasteful? Maybe you’ve gone the whole route. You’ve been through alcohol, you’ve been through drugs, you’ve been through sex addiction, you’ve been through climbing the ladder of success—and your life is still a colossal mess. But don’t give up yet. There is an answer. The answer is Jesus Christ in your life. It’s through faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior that God can make your life beautiful, and He does it in His own time. Maybe this is God’s time for you.

—Woodrow Kroll, condensed

A CONVENIENT SEASON

“Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25).

Felix, a Roman governor, was interested in Paul and his message. He evidently knew a great deal about Jesus. He knew about His crucifixion. He knew that it was commonly reported that He had risen in triumph from the dead. He knew how the gospel was spreading through all that part of the world, and how it was reaching out even to distant lands. Undoubtedly deep in his heart he wondered whether Jesus was who He professed to be—the Son of the living God. But to step right out and

accept Christ, to yield his heart to Christ, would mean facing the sin in which he was living.

We read that as Paul “reasoned of righteousness, as temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.” When Paul reasoned of righteousness, he must have brought before Felix the fact that he had no righteousness. And then he would not hesitate to witness to the fact that Felix, instead of living in self-control, was controlled by evil. Paul went on to tell of the judgment to come. “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Yet we do not read that Felix responded to Paul’s message. Undoubtedly, the memory of his sins rose up before him, and as he faced God about those sins, he was in trouble and distress. But there was no repentance. What folly it is to try to cover up and forget our sins! Remember, if unconfessed, God has never forgotten them. They are there in His books of record, and in His judgment day they will be manifested.

You may say, “I have violated God’s holy law, but is there no forgiveness?” Ah, yes there is! And Paul must have put clearly before Felix the glorious message of the gospel. If the sinner is willing to come now into the presence of God and face his sins, he will not have to stand before God in judgment. Remember this: the first time a person comes into the presence of God, he must come with all his sins upon him. If the first time you meet God is the day of judgment, you will stand there with all your sins upon you, and you will hear that Voice saying, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

But, thank God, if you are ready to come to Him in repentance—and re-

pentance involves a complete change of attitude in regard to sin—if you are ready to come now, earnestly desiring the forgiveness of sins, there is forgiveness with Him. That mercy was offered to Felix, but he answered Paul, saying, “Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

Let me ask you, reader, to face this question honestly. Are you saying as Felix did, “when I have a convenient season, then I will get right with God?” When do you think that more convenient season will arrive? When will it be easier to repent of your sins, to confess your need, and to trust in the Lord Jesus, than it is now? Now is the time to get right with God. Believe God when He says, “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

—Condensed from *Acts* by H. A. Ironside.

REFUSE AND CHOOSE

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:24-25).

All of a sudden Moses turned his back upon what had claimed him, charmed him, and allured him. What was the reason? Scripture says, “By faith.” Faith is the principle that links the soul with God. It is that mighty principle which sees beyond the things of time, and looks right into eternity. I wish that you, too, would

take a deep long look right into eternity! For although you are here today, you cannot tell how soon you will be in eternity. It lies before you, just as Moses knew it lay before him.

Moses was able to give up the present, in view of the future. By faith he laid hold on that which was revealed to his soul—the things of God and of eternity. By faith he refused that which was unsatisfactory. By faith he chose to keep company with the children of God. He was not ashamed to be found among God's people. The man who suffers for Christ has no need to be ashamed. The early disciples rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

The lost sinner has more than enough shame headed his way. He may have the pleasures of sin in this life, but the pains, penalties, and consequences of sin will be for *eternity*. Sin is a terrible thing. It separated man from God at the beginning, and if sin is not dealt with, it will separate him from God forever. The person who chooses the pleasures of sin rather than God's pleasures is not wise. The Psalmist truly said, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). And who may have them? *You* may have them right now, if through grace you are led to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is written that Jesus "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). To me, the profound sufferings of the Savior are an absolutely conclusive proof of the inevitable sufferings of the person who goes into eternity in his sins. Anyone who passes into eternity in an unsaved, unconverted, unforgiven, unbelieving state has made their choice with

eyes wide open, for God has spoken plainly through His word and through His Son.

There was great energy in Moses' faith. We read, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). Moses had his eyes on God. He knew God. The Christian knows God as his Father, and the Son of God as his Savior. The sinner who trusts in Jesus knows his sins are forgiven. "To Him [Jesus Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

Next we read about Moses, "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood" (Hebrews 11:28). God had told Moses that the blood of the Passover lamb must be applied to each house in order to secure redemption, in order to be sheltered from the righteous judgment of God (Exodus 12:13). You must imitate Moses if you want salvation. You must, by faith, put the blood of Jesus between your guilty soul and God. There must be a personal application of the truth. You must receive it for yourself. Will you receive it right now by turning to God and putting your trust in Jesus Christ? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

—W. T. P. Wolston, condensed

FRUIT IN SEASON

"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season" (Psalm 1:3).

The Bible makes it plain that *fruit* is the test of the Christian life (Matthew 7:16-20; John 15:8). What is fruitful-

ness in the spiritual sense? We are to go about doing good, as our Master did, but bearing fruit involves more than Christian *activity*. True fruitfulness is the natural result when the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) become evident in the Christian's life.

What is the purpose of fruit? It is not merely for ornament or decoration. The fruit of trees is for the feeding of hunger, and it is likewise not enough to bear spiritual fruit merely for the beautifying of our own life. The commandments to love God and love our neighbor are linked together (Matthew 22:36-40). He who loves God will love his neighbor also. Hence we must bear fruit which will be a blessing to others. It is one of the best proofs of our spiritual life that others are helped, cheered, strengthened, or comforted by the things in us.

Our Scripture says we should be like a tree that brings forth fruit in season. Different kinds of fruits ripen at different times of the year. Young Christians should not be expected to be just like older Christians. We must not look for the ripeness of mature life from those who possess the inexperience of youth. In the natural world, there are weeks and weeks in which the fruit hangs upon the tree, and though it has every appearance of lusciousness, it is still hard and sour. But, at the time of ripening, all is changed, and the fruit is mellow and sweet! So it is in life. Many excellent people, with much promise of fruit, do not bring their fruit to perfection until the late autumn of life. Paul was an old man when he wrote that he had learned in whosoever state he was, therein to be content (Philippians 4:11).

Some fruits do not ripen until the frosts come. Just so, some Christian lives do not yield their richest and

best character until the frosts of sorrow have fallen upon them. Many Christians go on through joyous days, amid prosperity, pure in motive, earnest in activity—yet not bringing forth the best fruits. But when trouble comes—adversity, sorrow, loss—the fruit is ripened.

If we would bear fruit, there is a condition we must observe—we must abide in Christ. The roots of our life must go down deep into His life—as the roots of the tree search for water. We must live so that the blessings of God's love shall reach us—through our faith and through the word and Spirit of God. The fruitful tree—and the fruitful Christian—must be planted by the streams of water.

—J. R. Miller, condensed

TAKING AND MAKING

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2).

Chrysostom, in one of his writings, breaks down this exhortation into two imperatives: *take* opportunities and *make* opportunities to preach the word.

If we are to preach God's word continuously we must *take* every opportunity—“Preach the word; be instant in season.” Every opportunity that is planned or programmed for the ministry of the word should be redeemed to the very best advantage. Our highly-organized religious life produces wide-open doors for an effective witness. Not only are there the regular church services, but the many other scheduled events which come through the normal channels of Christian work.

To go a step further, we must *make* opportunities—“Preach the word ... out of season.” We can become so conformed to and bound by the great machinery of Christendom that

we lose our inspiration and vision, our sense of freedom and anointing. The servant of God is to save himself from that. He is not only to *take* the opportunities given him, but also to *make* opportunities.

In exhorting Timothy in such a manner, the apostle was preaching what he practiced. You only have to study his missionary journeys, as recorded in the book of Acts, to see how Paul *took* opportunities to preach the word, and also *made* opportunities in city after city (e.g., Acts 16:16–34; 19:9). This was likewise true of our Lord. He not only *took* advantage of the opportunities to preach the truth in the recognized centers of religious life on the Sabbath day, but He also *made* opportunities for communicating the message of life. He transformed a mountainside into a Bible conference; a fishing boat into an evangelistic platform; a well-side into a counseling room; the shadows of evening into an opportunity to lead Nicodemus into the experience of the new birth. He preached the word continuously—and so must we. —Adapted from *Anointed Expository Preaching* by David Olford.

A WORD IN SEASON

“The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (Isaiah 50:4).

I read that Albert Einstein was the featured speaker at a dinner given at Swarthmore College. When it came time for him to speak, he astonished everyone by standing up and announcing, “I have nothing to say.” Then he sat down.

A few moments later he stood up and added, “In case I have something to say, I will come back and say it.” Six months later he sent a message

to the president of the college: “Now I have something to say.” Another dinner was held and he gave his speech.

Perhaps you have had opportunities “to speak a word in season” to those who are weary, but you didn’t feel as if you had anything to say. If so, follow the example of the Servant of the Lord, the promised Messiah, whom we read about in Isaiah 50:4–10. Because He listened and obeyed what He heard, He had a message to give to others.

Open God’s word with an eagerness to learn and do what He tells you to do. Think of the Lord as present and speaking to you, disclosing His mind and emotions and will. Meditate on His words until you know what He is saying. Then, as the Servant discovered, in time God will give you “the tongue of the learned.” If you listen to the Lord, you’ll have something worth saying. Open your ears to God before you open your mouth to others.

—David H. Roper, *Our Daily Bread*

SEASONS OF LIFE

Spring, summer, fall or winter ... which would you say is your favorite season and why? I would have to say summer is mine. I love the warmth of summer and being an educator, school is out ... it’s vacation time!

What if your favorite season lasted all year? What if there was only one season? God knew what He was doing when He created the different seasons. Just like nature has four different seasons, our lives seem to have different spiritual seasons, too.

SPRING

There are seasons in our spiritual lives when everything seems to be new and blooming! Spiritually, this may be when we first come to know Christ as our Savior: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old

things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Or, it may be a time when our relationship with the Lord has been renewed or strengthened. Reading God’s word, fellowshiping with other believers, praying and spending time with God every day is encouraging and exciting! Our Christian walk feels new and fresh.

SUMMER

In summer, life seems warm and relaxed. A level of spiritual maturity and stability has been reached for a time. And although our spiritual lives may seem consistent, there may be extremely hot periods of spiritual challenges and sudden storms to test the depth of our faith. God can use these times of turbulent trials or spiritual tribulation not only to test us, but also to strengthen us and make us appreciate His peace when it comes.

FALL

Fall brings the “falling away” of things in our lives like children leaving home, moving to a new place or leaving friends behind. Yet we must remember that it is all in preparation for new things God is bringing! There may be things that bring relief when they fall away such as bad habits or the chains of materialism, but there may be other life circumstances we don’t understand such as the loss of a job or the loss of good health.

These times may even cause us to doubt God. Even Elijah went through such a period after his heated “summer season” dealing with Ahab, Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. Following his great victory for God at Mount Carmel, Elijah ran into the wilderness filled with fear and doubting God. He experienced a season of coolness and falling away, yet God was consistently faithful.

WINTER

Finally there is winter, a time when the joy and beauty and variety of the other seasons have faded away. A time for the weary soul to take a break from its labor and rest. Although this season may appear dreary and confining, even these times are needed for the new growth coming in spring.

God, in His wisdom, provides intervals of rest for the earth. He knows that we, His children, also need times of rest. So no matter which of the spiritual seasons it feels like we’re in, there is good taking place because of God’s work in and through us. On those dreary, overcast days, it is important to remember that even though we can’t see the Son, He is there!

THE CYCLE CONTINUES

Seasons come more than once, and so during our spiritual lives we get to enjoy several springs, summers, falls, and winters. Thank God for His loving care in every season of life.

—Adapted from creativebiblestudy.com

SEASONS OF SUFFERING

“Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (1 Peter 1:6).

All that God plans and performs in this life is in view of what He has in store for us in heaven. He is preparing us for the life and service yet to come. Nobody yet knows all that is in store for us in heaven, but this we do know: life today is a school in which God trains us for our future ministry in eternity. This explains the presence of trials in our lives—they are some of God’s tools and textbooks in the school of Christian experience.

Peter illustrated this truth by referring to the goldsmith (1 Peter 1:7). No goldsmith would deliberately waste

the precious ore. He would put it into the smelting furnace long enough to remove the cheap impurities. Then he would pour it out and make from it a beautiful article of value. It has been said that the Eastern goldsmith kept the metal in the furnace until he could see his face reflected in it. So our Lord keeps us in the furnace of suffering until we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ.

—From *Pause for Power* by Warren W. Wiersbe.

“Affliction may be lasting, but it is not everlasting.” —Thomas Watson

REAPING IN DUE SEASON

“Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

Sowing will bring a harvest. No matter what we choose to do with our lives, there are always consequences. Paul makes certain we understand this when he says in verse 7, “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Then he gives the two choices in verse 8: “He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Now, in verse 9, Paul has a caution, a warning for those who are doing it right, who are living and walking by the Spirit of God. He tells us to not lose heart in doing good. It shouldn’t surprise any of us that the flesh lurks around us at all times. When we’re doing wrong it’s got us in its grip. But when we’re doing well, it’s there to get us off track. It’s always there. We have to be conscious of it.

There’s a trap to watch out for when we’re serving the Lord. The trap is that the flesh wants to see the result of what is being done. The

world’s way is to measure everything: if it’s not big then it’s not right. This is a trap. Paul’s warning to us is, “let us not be weary.” He continues and explains, “For in due season we shall reap.” Every harvest comes when it’s ready. A farmer can’t predict that all the time. It’s going to be ready when God says it’s ready. We must remember that we don’t reap overnight. That’s part of the law of the harvest.

If it’s not happening quickly enough, or if it’s not happening big enough, we have the tendency to go back to doing it our way. Only God knows the end, and only He knows the time, and only He knows what He’s doing. So therefore we serve Him and we simply trust Him, even when there are no visible results. We just continue to trust Him, because we know that if we’re sowing in the right field, at some point the harvest is going to come.

My dear friend Dorie Van Stone worked with the Dani tribe in Irian Jaya for eight years. Her children got so sick she had to come off of the mission field. She never saw a convert; no one came to know Christ. Years later, Dorie received a letter from the chief of the Dani tribe. It said, “Dorie, there are over 250,000 believers now in the Dani tribe. They have become the leading evangelists in all of this area of the world.” Dorie just stood there with tears streaming down her face and said, “I just thought it would never happen.”

Paul says don’t lose heart, don’t grow weary, because you will reap *in due season*. Don’t back off. Trust God. Sow the good seed of the Gospel. If you don’t see a result, that’s fine. You’ll experience the joy of Jesus just knowing Him. But the harvest will come. Keep sowing!

—Dr. Wayne Barber, condensed