

Tis the Season **Ecclesiastes 3:1-11**

These words are often read at funerals, at the end of life, but they are words that need to be heard in the midst of life as well!

These verses speak of the many changing realities we face this side of heaven.

There is good & bad, joy & sorrow, life & death, & everything in between!

Things have been a changin' in year 2020. Though this is a season we all wish would pass quickly, there is an eternal purpose in it. We may not see it, but **God has made a season for it, therefore He has a sovereign purpose behind it!**

How do we process it all & respond as followers of Jesus, trusting in our God? **For many, we distract ourselves with other things!** Ex: Celebrating Christmas!

The sights, the sounds, the smells; they all point to a joyous occasion!
But just as quickly as Thanksgiving has come & gone, so too will Christmas!

Now, Christmas can be a healthy distraction from all that 2020 has brought, **but if the changing of the season is our only hope than we are in trouble!**

But maybe the joys of this season can be more than just a distraction, maybe they can be a glimpse into something more – something eternal, something unchanging, something that is transcendent & immanent in all seasons!

Vs. 11a – “He has made everything beautiful in its time.” There is **beauty to be found in every season** because every season is a gift from God, that serves the purposes of God, and God is present with us through them all!

Much of the Christmas season is a reminder of that, so we will be spending the next several weeks being intentionally distracted by the joys of Christmas!

What is your favorite Christmas tradition? **Mine is the Christmas tree!**

On the weekend after Thanksgiving, we go to a local tree farm & cut down a Christmas tree. This is still by far my favorite holiday pastime & current tradition

I love everything about it - finding it, cutting it down, dragging it back, standing it up, decorating it, seeing it, smelling it, & enjoying it all month long!

The Christmas tree has an interesting history and meaning behind it! Some people reject it as a pagan symbol of a pagan holiday, while others see amazing symbolism in it for what this day of celebrating Jesus' birth really represents!

For instance: Did you know...

- **That the evergreen tree symbolizes eternal life!** It's the one tree that stays green and gives evidence of life all year long.
- **The Christmas tree has ties to the Reformation!** Martin Luther & the German Christians not only brought us good theology, but also the Christmas tree! It was for them a reminder of God's faithfulness thru the darkness of winter!
- **Even the shape of the Christmas tree points us in the right direction – heavenward!**

Vs. 11, not only says that **“He has made everything beautiful in its time”**, but also that **“He has put eternity into man's hearts...”** God gives us the ability to see eternal things in the visible and the tangible! Ex: Parables

General Revelation has much to teach us about God & Heaven. Are we looking, listening, learning, and being moved by what is all around us?

My Old Testament professor use to use a tree limb as a phone – a two-way line of communication between us and God! God's creation calls to us! And so do...

The Christmas tree can be an iconic picture of not only a passing season, but an eternal reality! It is Christmas itself that makes heaven our eternal reality!

Jesus Christ came, He lived..., He died..., He rose again, He will come again, & He will establish an everlasting Kingdom where the words of Eccl. 3 no longer apply

But what about today and these passing seasons? How do we live into the unknowns of today, tomorrow, until Christ returns? **We find the beauty in the everyday & look to the eternity that God has placed within our hearts in Christ!**

At the end of Vs. 11, the wisdom of Solomon himself proclaims that we will not know what God has done and is doing from the beginning of time to it's end (except for what He has already revealed to us), but we don't have to!

For God has painted for us a beautiful picture (in His general & special revelation) of the surpassing beauty of that which is yet to come in eternity!

So let us accept the season we are in, this 2020 year, & find the beauty in it. But also look to the beauty that will follow the changing of our earthly seasons!

And let us celebrate Christmas, & celebrate it well around the tree, knowing that this is just a foretaste of that which is yet to come – eternity in Heaven!

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