

The Changing Seasons

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

- A. This lesson is the second half of a sermon presented on April 5, 2020 titled “Solomon’s Seasons” in which we considered:
 - 1. The constantly changing conditions of life under the sun
 - 2. The difficulties presented by living in a constantly changing world
 - 3. How to live spiritually and bear up faithfully with those changes
- B. Today, by examining these changing seasons, we will learn:
 - 1. That we have a role in adapting to the changes
 - 2. That we must cooperate with God in effecting these changes
 - 3. Because God has put beauty in all of these times, we should do more than just endure the seasons of unpleasantness; we should find a reason to rejoice in them - Ecc. 3:9-11

I. BORN... DIE; PLANT... PLUCK UP

- A. Born, actually “yalad - to give birth” (active, not passive)
 - 1. We have no control of the day we are born. We have no control over to whom we are born. We have no control over our gender. We have no control over how we look when we are born.
- B. We only have limited control over length of our lives, but of a surety death will come - Job 7:1
 - 1. We do control our choice of eternal destination when Judgment inevitably comes - Heb. 9:27.
- C. Sowing and harvesting
- D. A man can no more reverse the times and order of planting, and digging up, than he can alter the times of his birth and death. To try to plant out of season is vanity, however, it is good in season; likewise to make earthly things the chief purpose of life is vanity, however good they are when in season
- E. What is true in agriculture is also true in human life - Hosea 10:12; Gal. 6:7-8

II. KILL... HEAL; BREAK DOWN... BUILD UP

- A. Specifically, judicially, criminals; or, in wars of self-defense; not in malice.
 - 1. Out of this time and order, killing is murder.
 - 2. God sends judgments, and multitudes fall; if they repent, He heals them
 - a. Hosea 6:1
- B. God determines the time of building - 1Kings 5:3-5 - They must cooperate
 - 1. And the time for breaking down - 2Peter 3:3-7, 10-11 - We must comply

III. WEEP... LAUGH; MOURN... DANCE

- A. “A time to weep (libkot), and a time to laugh (lishoq); a time to mourn (sapod), and a time to dance (raqod)” Note the similar sounds of the Hebrew poetry in this verse. I can only imagine the beauty of this text as it was read to the people by the priests - Matt. 5:4

1. The Pharisees erred when they required solemnness out of season
 - a. Matt. 9:14-15; Psalms 126:1-2
- B. All have known or will know times of sorrow. Much can be gained from sorrow - Ecc. 7:2-4
 1. Sorrow increases our appreciation and gratitude for times of joy
 2. 2Sam. 6:12-15; Prov. 17:22

IV. CAST AWAY STONES... GATHER STONES TOGETHER; EMBRACE... REFRAIN FROM EMBRACING

- A. Cast away stones out of a garden or vineyard where they are a hindrance; gather stones for building a wall around the garden or vineyard where they are protective
 1. Time when energies must be directed toward defense; times when one can relax in safety.
 2. Now is not the time to rest - 1Peter 5:8; Eph. 6:10-18 - armor of God.
 3. Heaven is our place of rest.
- B. Embrace... Refrain from embracing
 1. When two friends meet, it is morally good to platonically embrace in greeting. A sexual embrace with one who is not a mate is never acceptable. It is not appropriate for married persons to behave passionately in public.
 2. There are times when a choice must be made between the faithful and heretical - Matt. 10:37; 1Cor. 15:33; 2John 10

V. SEEK... LOSE; KEEP... CAST AWAY

- A. A Christian should make the most of his opportunities in life: job, education, influence - Col. 3:22-23
 1. But, there comes a time when pursuit of these matters must be set aside as they interfere with our goal of going to heaven
 - a. Matt. 10:39, 6:33, 16:26
 2. When God wills losses for us, then it is our time to be content.
- B. Keep - not to give to the idle - 2Thes. 3:10
 1. Cast away - in charity - Prov. 11:24-25
 2. Be willing to part with a dear or precious object, rather than the priceless soul - Mark 9:43
 3. To be careful and prudent in fiscal matters is right in its place, but not when our choices about material things come between us and the Lord

VI. REND... SEW; SILENCE... SPEAK

- A. In Biblical times, mourners would tear their garments as a sign of grief. Since the way this is stated implies that the rending is intentional, it suggest to me that the render is in sorrow and sewing the clothes indicates that the mourner understands that mourning must come to an end and he is mending his life in view of his loss. Sewing implies there will come a time when grief and its symbols and behaviors must be put away
 1. Sometimes a permanent parting must be made.

2. Rending must happen in the church if the erring will not repent.
3. 1John 1:9 - The parting can be re-knit if repentance occurs.
- B. Silence... Speak
 1. Hab. 2:20; Lev. 10:3; Amos 5:13; Job 2:13; Prov. 13:3, 10:19, 17:28
 - a. James 3:2-12
 2. We should remain silent when our words will do harm.
 3. Three people are hurt by harmful words: the object of discussion, the listener, and the speaker.
 4. Don't we realize that the person we gossiped about will eventually hear what we said and that we said it, and especially that God hears that juicy tidbit we passed on to another?
 5. There are times to speak out, where silence would be sin.
 - a. When injustice is being done; when society endorses sin, and especially when someone needs the gospel.
 - b. Luke 19:37, 40; Rom. 10:9-10

VII. LOVE... HATE; WAR... PEACE

- A. Love is the greatest positive emotion we can have - 1Cor. 13:13
 1. God is Love - 1John 4:8; Matt. 5:43-44
 2. However, there is a time for those who love to experience hate.
 - a. Rev. 2:6 - He did not hate the Nicolaitans, He hated their deeds.
 - b. Psalm 119:104 - If we hated sin as much as God hates it, sin would no longer be a problem in our lives.
- B. A time of war - Ex. 17:12-13
 1. And a time of peace - Micah 4:3
- C. We must love truth and hate sin; be at war with error and at peace with God and man - Rom. 12:16-21

Conclusion:

A. "What if you could pick one day of your life, and everything would stop changing, every day would be similar and comparable to that one day, and you'd always have the same people with you? ... We crave for things to stop changing, we wish that things would never change. But if we got what we wanted, there are so many things that are better that we would never, ever know about. Sure, things would stay the same as that one wonderful day, but then there would be nothing else out there, ever. ... Maybe we all carry around inside us that one day we wish we could keep forever, something we wished never did change. It's time to let go of that day, and soar. When a caterpillar bursts from its cocoon and discovers it has wings, it does not sit idly, hoping to one day turn back into a caterpillar. It flies." (C. JoyBell C. & Kelseyleigh Reber)