



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
3:1-9

Pastor's Notes

Overview: The words of this poem are some of the most famous from Ecclesiastes. They are on plaques, cards, and pictures. But what do they really mean? Once the poetic sound wears off, what is actually being stated here?

V. 1 Life has a schedule. Things are circular. They don't happen by chance. God is in control. There is a design to life. 9 months it takes for a baby to grow in the womb. Crops must be planted in April and are harvested in the fall. People are born, live 80 years, and die. Houses need to be shingled every 20 years. Cars need new tires every 40,000 miles. There is a season—a pattern—to life. So, take heed! God is in control. This world is ordered.

V. 2 With birth and death—God does the scheduling. We should not try to play God through euthanasia or abortion. We are not God. Life is not ours to create or take. This is why we esteem life—fight for life. Our ethic is this, "do the actions that I take allow God's timing of death or do the actions I take cause death?"

We also see here that we humans are distinguished from plants. We humans have a conscience; plants do not.

V. 3 Keep in mind that these verses are describing life. They are not telling us to kill and break down. They are simply describing how life under the sun works. So, this verse is appealing to warfare. Warfare is crazy. Mankind kills and wounds, but then takes breaks to regain strength and gather the wounded for round 2.

After war, things get rebuilt. New structures go where old structures go. ...that is until there is another war and the new structures get knocked down. Around and around buildings go. They

get knocked down in war, only to get replaced with a new structure after the war.

V. 4 Think of this verse this way: emotions are going to be a direct result of life under the sun. People will weep at the same things; laugh at the same things; and dance to the same things? Why, because life under the sun has its ups and downs—its lefts and rights. As a result, mankind experiences this predictable patterns of emotions—emotions that respond to life as it happens.

V. 5 What is this verse about? Believe it or not, ancient Jews and Christians saw this referring to sexual activity. In other words, there are times to be intimate and times not to be. Such is marriage! Fights among couples will result in no sexual relations. Makeup sex, though, is a time of casting stones/embracing. Furthermore, for those who are not married, they are not casting stones (having sex) but merely gathering stones. But for those who are married? They should be casting stone—they should be giving themselves to each other in sex.

V. 6 The patten of life under the sun continues in this verse.

V. 7 There are times to keep a mouth shut and a time to speak—depending on what is going in life under the sun. This is one of the essences of Godly wisdom, is it not? The Bible calls us to be slow to speak and quick to listen; however, we like to speak much and listen little. As we come to Ecclesiastes chapter 5, we will hear more about the Christian faith being a faith not of 'doing' but primarily listening. Only the fool has all output and no input. But the Christian has two ears and only one mouth—called to listen to God's Word more than yap ones own opinions.

V. 8 This is life. Yes, verse 8 is life under the sun. Again this verse is not telling us to have war or to hate, but mainly showing us that the circularity of life under the sun leads to these things.