

A Time for Everything Part 1

by Chuck Smith

Pastor Chuck Smith explores the divine purpose behind the seasons of life and the importance of yielding to God's timing and work in our lives.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1, Matthew 6:20, Philippians 1:6, James 1:2

Topics: "Time"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith reflects on the observations of life made by Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon, having experienced all that life has to offer, realizes the emptiness of life under the sun. He acknowledges that there is a time and season for everything, as appointed by God. Pastor Chuck uses the analogy of a potter and clay to illustrate how God shapes and molds our lives according to His purpose. He contrasts various aspects of life, such as birth and death, planting and harvesting, weeping and laughing, to emphasize the cyclical nature of life and the importance of surrendering to God's timing and plan.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you
With His Spirit and His love
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you
And His Spirit like a dove
Will descend upon your life
And make you whole
And now with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. As Solomon, the preacher, continues his observations of life from the standpoint of a man who has lived, has tasted it all, has found the emptiness of the life under the sun, and now is reflecting upon the things that he has learned in his observations of life. And for everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Our times have been appointed by God. There are seasons and times for every purpose under heaven. And it's always exciting when you come to one of those special times that God has appointed for work in your life.

Now, he puts several things into contrast here, some fourteen of them. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal.

A time to break down, a time to build up. A time to weep, a time to laugh, a time to mourn, a time to dance. A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones together.

A time to embrace, a time to refrain from embracing. A time to get, a time to lose. A time to keep, a time to cast away.

A time to tear, a time to sew. A time to keep silence, a time to speak. A time to love, a time to hate.

A time of war, a time of peace. Speaking of everything having a time, a place, he then asked the question, what profit has he that works in that wherein he laboreth? Life seems to move in cycles. There are opportune times.

There are apt times for every purpose under the sun. He said, I have seen the travail which God has given the sons of man to be exercised with it. And he has made everything beautiful in his time.

Also he has set eternity in their hearts so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. So he begins to talk now about how that God has given to each of us an awareness and a consciousness of infinity. Years ago when I was sort of being weaned from the faith that I had received from my parents and the beliefs that they had instilled within me and was seeking to come to my own understanding and decisions, there came a short space in my life where I began to question the existence of God.

I wondered if God really did exist or was this all something that man just made up. That didn't last for long because I found that it was much easier to believe in God than not to believe in God. When I tried to sort of take the position of an atheist that there is no God, I found out there were too many unanswerable things in life, life itself.

And so I concluded that God must exist. And the conclusion largely came from the study of the human body and all of the marvelous facets of the human body. I realized that it could not have just come about through fortunate accidental circumstances, that there was a design.

Design declared a designer, a creator. And so I concluded that God did exist. And that was the first foundation stone of my own faith that I began to build upon.

Yes, there is a God. But you can't just stop there. If there is a God and His existence is proved by His creation, then He must have a purpose for creating man.

I exist. And the fact that I exist by divine creation would indicate that there was a purpose in the mind of the creator when He created me. And as I began to deal with that premise, I realized that if He had a purpose in creating me, it would be necessary that He reveal Himself in such a way as to reveal His purposes for me.

And I concluded that God in creating man, having a purpose in creating man, would have to reveal that purpose early in the history of man and would have to maintain that revelation to the present time. So I immediately just set aside all of the religions that have existed in history but have been cast aside as not being of God. Because God, if He was great enough to create man and had a purpose in it, would be able to maintain the revelation of Himself to the present day.

I also discounted all of the new religions that have come on the scene of late. Because that would be saying that God wasn't interested in the earlier men who existed but suddenly He now has an interest in His creation and thus He is revealing Himself in this new light, new revelation or whatever. People are always claiming to have some new revelation of God, new light.

But that sort of discounts all of those who have lived up till now. So God would have to reveal Himself early in the history of man, would have to maintain that revelation to the present time. And God would be interested in all men, not just a select few.

And thus there would have to be something within that revelation of God that would have sort of a missionary impetus to it so that those who came to the knowledge of God would have a push to share that knowledge with others. Because I concluded that God would be interested in all of His creation. And I was left with basically Judo-Christianity, Mohammedism and Buddhism.

Through a process I eliminated Mohammedism and Buddhism and came to the conclusion that the Bible had to be the revelation of God. The prophecies of the Bible intrigue me. An area that is not really entered into in Mohammedism or Buddhism.

God revealed Himself early to Adam. God has maintained that revelation to the present day. The Bible still stands.

And I became convinced that the Bible was God's revelation of Himself to man. Now, here Solomon declares that God has placed eternity in man's hearts. I could not get away from the consciousness that life has to be more than three score and ten years of existence on this earth.

There was that sense of the eternal that was just innate within my heart. The awareness of the existence of God. To not believe in God takes a real struggle.

You have to work at it constantly. The natural bent is a belief in God. God has put eternity in our hearts.

So that belief in God is a very natural thing. Not to believe in God is unnatural and it takes a lot of effort and a lot of work. Now, the Bible began to really speak to me at that point.

I began to study it to understand and to know God. And it became very satisfactory. The more I read it the more convinced I was that it was indeed God's word.

To the point that having studied as much as I have now I have not the slightest qualm. Not the slightest hesitation to declare to you I believe that the Bible is the infallible inerrant word of God to man as He has revealed Himself to man in the Bible. Now, here He declares that God has established times and places for all things.

And that God makes everything beautiful in His time. If we will yield our lives to God, God in working in our lives will bring beauty out of every situation in time, in His time. The Bible does picture God as a potter and man as the clay.

It's a rather awesome picture because it teaches the awful sovereignty of God. Awful unless you know Him. But knowing the potter, I have no difficulty in surrendering my life to the touch of the potter.

The potter has sovereign power over the clay to make of it whatever kind of a vessel he wants. The clay has no right to challenge the potter. Clay is very common, one of the most common substances on the face of the earth.

In its native state quite worthless. And yet, through the skill of the potter, that worthless clay can be made into a priceless treasure. And when the potter places the clay upon the wheel and begins his work, there is within the mind of the potter what he desires to make of that clay.

The vessel that he is seeking to form. It's in his mind. And he begins to work with the clay to express in the clay that which is in his mind.

And the clay can only understand what is in the mind of the potter by yielding to the touch of the potter. And if the clay resists the touch of the potter, then the vessel becomes marred in the hands of the potter. Jeremiah uses that picture.

The Lord spoke to me and said, go down to the potter's house, I'll speak to you there. So I went down to the potter's house, he said, I watched him as he worked his work on the wheel and the work became marred in the potter's hand. And so the potter took that clay and he began to work it again, working out the lumps the stiffness, put it back and made a vessel.

And God spoke to Jeremiah and he said, is not Israel like clay in my hands? I can make of it what I want. And the vessel Israel was marred because of its stiffness, its resistance. But I'm able to work it and still create my purpose.

And you know, God makes all things beautiful in his time. And a lot of people have, like the clay, been marred in the hands of the potter because of their resisting or rebelling against that work of God. People have tried to run from God.

They've rebelled against God and the purposes of God were thwarted. And many times they can mess up their lives royally until the vessel is so marred you question whether or not anything could ever come out of that of worth or value. But I love the fact that the potter doesn't give up.

That he takes and reworks that clay to make of it a vessel that will be pleasing to him, useful for him. And I see so many lives that have been marred, messed up. And I see how God has begun again a work in them.

And I see the beauty that God has brought out of messed up lives. He makes all things beautiful in his time. Providing we are yielded to his touch.

He's put eternity in our hearts so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end. We don't know what God has purposed, what God has planned. God knows the end result that he is seeking to work out.

I don't know yet. Getting some pretty good hints at this point. But I don't know yet fully the plan and the purpose of God for my life.

Probably take all eternity for us to know it all. For through the ages to come God shall be revealing unto us the exceeding richness of his kindness and his mercy towards us in Christ Jesus. So, he said, I've seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men, the labor, the effort, that they might be developed by it.

God has a purpose in these trials, in these temptations. The purpose is the developing of character. He has a purpose for the sufferings that we experience.

There's that development that God is working in me and in you. I have found that character isn't really developed much in the good times, in the times of prosperity, in the times of ease, in the times of partying. Doesn't develop much character at all.

But character is really developed in the times of suffering, the times of pressure. And a person who has endured a lot of pain, a lot of suffering is a person usually of great depth of character. It has a way of developing character like nothing else.

I've seen, Solomon said, the travail of man. And that God has given that he might be exercised in it or developed by it. And he's made everything beautiful in his time and he set eternity in their hearts.

So, you really don't know what God's full plan is from the beginning to the end. And so, I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life. Now, we are told by Jesus to rejoice in tribulation.

We're told to count it all joy by Peter when we are going through trials. Knowing that God uses these to develop character and to develop his purpose and his plan in our lives. And so, it's good to rejoice and to do good.

And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all of his labor for it is the gift of God. It was a sad day in the church when they thought that being spiritual was being sour. You would not dare to smile because that was a sign of carnality.

So, to appear very spiritual. The ministers used to go around and their hands folded and they had sort of a doleful kind of voice and they said, good morning brother. And that showed deep spirituality.

The man must have just come from an encounter with God, you know. He's so serious. He's so sober and you dare not to smile or laugh because surely you'll be accused of unspiritualness in so doing.

That was a tragic day in the church. I'm glad that we passed from that. And that we realize that it is the purpose of God that you experience the fullness of joy and Jesus spoke of the fullness of joy over and over again.

And he related that fullness of joy with your prayer life and with fellowship with God and with abiding in Him. So, Solomon came to that conclusion. Man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all of his labor.

It's a gift of God. The enjoyment of the fruit of your labor. Now, the fruit of our labor all depends on what I have been laboring for.

If I've been laboring just for myself, the fruit of that labor can be very empty. But if I'm laboring for God and the kingdom of God, I know that my labor for the Lord is never in vain, never empty. And to enjoy the fruit of our labor for God.

The glorious thing. Now, he said, I know that whatsoever God does it shall be forever. The work of God is eternal.

The work that you do for God is eternal. Jesus said, lay up for yourself treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt and thieves cannot break through and steal. And that work that I do for the Lord is eternal in its benefits.

And it is complete. Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it. That completeness of God's work.

When God is working, He does a complete work. And I'm thankful for that. He who has begun a good work in you shall continue to perform.

We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Ecclesiastes in our next lesson, as Pastor Chuck Smith continues with A Time for Everything. And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message simply order Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verse 1 when visiting thewordfortoday.org And while you're there, we encourage you to visit the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck.

You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription. Once again, all of this can be found at thewordfortoday.org And if you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD And our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Again, that's 1-800-272-9673 For those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628 And now, on behalf of the Word for Today we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support.

And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible. That's right here, on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing prayer.

Father, we thank you for the words of wisdom, instruction in righteousness and in truth and in equity. May we walk, Lord, in that righteousness and in that truth. May we incline our hearts to understanding, to knowledge and to wisdom and that we might, Lord, receive the rewards of the righteous.

In Jesus' name, amen. The Word for Today You know, for thousands of years, Israel has been the heartbeat of our world's history. From the shout of victory that brought the wall of Jericho tumbling down to the tortured cry of Jesus on the cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? No other nation has ever had a history so vibrant as Israel.

The Word for Today presents a series entitled Israel, a biblical study of the history, covenants and the people of the nation of Israel. This collection of messages contains ten biblical studies by Pastor Chuck Smith and guest speakers Brian Broderson, Dave Hunt, Chuck Missler and David Hawking. To order your copy, call the Word for Today at 800-272-9673 or write us at P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California 92628.

Again, that number to call, 800-272-WORD. This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25633.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/a-time-for-everything-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net