

An Appointed Time

by David Daniel

God sets the seasons and times of our lives, and we must understand and accept our appointments, including death and judgment.

Duration: 47:58

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1

Topics: "Time", "God's Timing", "Life's Appointments"

Description

David Daniel emphasizes the concept of 'An Appointed Time' based on Ecclesiastes 3, illustrating that every aspect of life has its designated season, from birth to death, planting to harvesting, and joy to sorrow. He challenges the congregation to recognize the inevitability of their appointments, particularly the ultimate appointment with God, and to live purposefully within the seasons God has established. Daniel encourages believers to embrace the beauty of God's timing and to find joy in their labor as a gift from Him, while also acknowledging the reality of life's cycles and the importance of being prepared for the end. He concludes by reminding the audience that their actions during their lifetime will be accounted for, urging them to live for God's glory.

Transcript

Ecclesiastes chapter 3, I'm going to be reading verses 1 through 14. To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to kill, a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to get and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to rend and a time to sew, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

He hath made everything beautiful in his time. Also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice and do good in his life, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all of his labor.

It is the gift of God. I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it.

And God doeth it that men should fear before him. This passage as we begin, of course, is a very familiar one. Many times it is printed or quoted at a time of a funeral and at least a part of it sometimes plugged in there.

What I want to do tonight is just to start off with just a little challenge to each one of us. I titled the message tonight, An Appointment. And my first question is, have you ever forgotten an appointment? We were up in Denver here recently and I got a phone call reminding me of an appointment down in Alamosa.

I didn't have my paperwork and so forth in my hands, but as this person called, I thought, I think I've got another appointment at exactly the same time. So until I got home, I wasn't able to verify that. I got home, checked it out, and sure enough, I had an appointment in Alamosa and an appointment in Montevista at the same time.

Guess what? I can't do that. And so I had to call and cancel and reschedule in the process. But my thought in terms of what is here before us is that we all have appointments.

And those appointments that we have, sometimes we like, sometimes we don't like. Shelly does not like going to the dentist. I can't understand why.

Nor Denver, that's for sure. Some people like to ignore appointments. Some people just choose to say, well, I know I'm supposed to do this, but I refuse to do this.

And there is an appointment that everyone has that they cannot ignore. Hebrews 9.27 says it's appointed unto man once to die and after that, the judgment. And some people would like to ignore the reality that they have that appointment and want to live as if it would never happen.

But the reality is that is an appointment they cannot cheat because Scripture says, and that's God speaking. You have an appointment and that appointment is to stand before God one day. And if you stand there without the blood of Christ, you will be or ever cast into the lake of fire.

As we look at verse one and verse eleven, I'd like to look at those two. And I want to challenge us in this way to think of those two passages of those two verses. Like a couple bookends.

Chapter three, chapter three. And think of verse one and eleven as two bookends that are surrounding, as it were, holding up or propping up or containing what is then written in between. Verse one says to everything, there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven.

It is God who sets the seasons and the time. It's not just about nature that God deals with the season and the time. But God also is sovereign in our lives, and therefore he sets the season and the time of our life as well.

Verse eleven, it says he has made everything beautiful in his time. Also, he has set the world. And that word world, some translations actually substitute the word eternity.

If you look it up in the Hebrew, that is not a disservice to the world. I mean, to the word, it is a very potential right understanding in the world that is without an eternity in their heart. So no man can find out the word that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

So here are two bookends. God has set the season and time of our life. Now, in this portion that we're reading here, there's something that is absent.

It doesn't say under the sun. We can infer that. But it's not used as we've seen it used previously in the sense of futility or vanity.

And that phrase vanity of vanity isn't appearing in this portion here. This is an issue that I think we need to consider that God is recording through Solomon's pen reality. And reality is seasons and times God has established.

Now, what man does is what God has done. And it is not peculiar to one differently from another. It's not that some have the privilege of controlling those seasons and times and others do not.

This is reality. This is humanity. This is lifestyle or life cycle that humanity is faced with.

And part of that, obviously, is that we're Adam's seed and we're on planet Earth and it's fallen and all the issues that go with that. But as we think about it as being a reality, then instead of thinking about, well, look, a bunch of those are negative. Well, they're all reality.

They're all a part of season and time in the lives of individuals. And in verse 11, it's saying that he has made everything beautiful in his time. Does God have a purpose in what he does? And in Romans 8, 28, 29, we often go there.

I'd work with all things together for what? Good. He's got a good purpose. Ultimately, the conformist to the image of his son.

And so God has put eternity in man's heart. It's interesting how that works. And that is in spite of themselves, people do think about eternity.

Here's the guy that denies God. But at the same time, what does he not want to confront? Mortality. So if I just ignore it, then it doesn't exist, right? Yeah.

And so does that person get closer and closer to an expected time limit there, whether it's 70 or 80, or whether it's through some health circumstance. And now he's moving down to a cutoff point. All of a sudden, he's got a problem.

And so many times what that person who's denying that there is a God, denying that there is an eternity, really works hard to try to convince everybody else that there is no such a thing. And some do that. Some do that.

They're going to rob the grim reaper. So that's one of the arguments of euthanasia. Rather than just being a victim, you can be a master of your own destiny.

No, you can't. OK, what you're doing is in your foolishness. You are inviting further consequence upon your life.

And so as we look at those two passages as being bookshelves or book ends to do, let's let's begin with verse two. And this begins to speak about a cycle of life, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant a time to pluck up that which is planted. This morning we were talking about the sanctity of life, a time to be born.

OK. And as we think of conception, immediately we are also confronted with end of life, time to be born, time to die. And that's just the reality.

And, of course, different people have different opinions as to how much time they think they're allotted or deserve or want to have or whatever along the line. But isn't it interesting? It kind of struck me as I was putting this together. Job and Solomon and Elijah all said, in their times of weariness and distress and depression, I wished I'd never been born or I wished I'd been still born.

OK. In that very process of them thinking that, what are they really saying? Beg pardon. It is kind of on the suicidal, but it is also acknowledging the very thing that this verse is saying, a time to be born, a time to die.

That is reality. OK. And the reality is a person is saying, I wish I hadn't been born is admitting he was born.

Right. And there's an end. Eternity is in their heart.

And when we go through difficult times, I just wish this was the end. Well, you are already admitting there is an end. And the question really is, of course, what does the end hold for you and for us to trust in Christ? We know to be absent from the bodies, to be present with the Lord, Paul says, to carry on here.

He says it may be needful for you, but my preference would be to go on home. But, you know, that that's just the kind of the wrestling match that I'm in. But he says, as long as I'm here.

I'm going to be a witness. I'm going to serve God. I'm going to be faithful.

And we are commanded by Christ to occupy until he comes. And that is our responsibility. Now, as we think in terms of that further, Moses wrote a psalm.

Sometimes we might be a little bit surprised at that, because we think of Solomon and all the psalms that I mean, all David and all the psalms that he wrote and Asaph. And but here is one that Moses wrote, and it's Psalm 90. And in Psalm 90, he discusses there the reality of there's a time to be born and a time to die.

In fact, he even says three score year and ten. And if by strength they be four square or score, though there is with that strength, labor and sorrow. You live longer and you will ultimately wear out, wear down, because that's the consequence of the fall.

But he says something in verse 12. Teach us to number our days that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom. What does that mean? Teach us to number our days.

It means to take every day as a gift from God and use it to the fullest benefit for his glory, because we don't know how many we've got. But it is very genuinely true. There is a time to be born.

And if you've been born saving the rapture, you will die. You have such an appointment, a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which was planted. Is there a proper season to plant? Is there a proper season to harvest? Obviously.

And who's in control of the seasons and the rain and everything that's involved? When I was talking with Mike Neville about the situation over there in Kenya and the drought that was there, I says, now, how long is it going to take for there to be some recovery? Because cattle are dying, drafts are dying, people are dying with the drought circumstance that is going on there. And he says, well, we've gotten some rain.

We've had about four days of rain, and that was a real encouragement after five years of drought.

By the way, their well is still working and praise God for that. It hasn't stopped. It's still working.

So that's God obviously working there. And he says now, now they've got people coming in because there's where that water supply is. They've got their medical facility opened up and they've got people coming for that.

And they are currently, in January and February, they'll be feeding not only the 350 students that are in the school one meal a day, but now they've got about 750 adults coming and they're being fed once a day. And he says what our project is right now is we have bought a supply of corn to have on hand so that as soon as we can see a break in the drought, they can put that corn in the ground and then there'll be fruit. The season, God is in control of the season.

But Mike said, you know, the amazing thing about that country, he told us this when he had shared his report here. He says that ground is so fertile. If you can get moisture, they just cut off a tree limb, stick it in the ground and it'll grow.

And so it's like, whoa, that's amazing. That's amazing. But coming back to this verse, there's a time to plant.

So you have 10,000 pounds of corn and you plant it in the middle of a drought, what are you going to get? It's not going to germinate. There's not going to be any fruit out of it. So there is a right time to plant and there's a right time to harvest.

Now, when we study the book of Proverbs, what's the problem with the slugger? He's too lazy to plant whenever there is planting time or working the ground time. That's too cold outside or I don't like the weather, this or that or whatever. And so he won't plant when he should and so he'll beg in the harvest.

God has established the seasons and if you go back, you'll find that that was established clear back there at creation, wasn't it? So as we look at what is being listed off here, again, some could say, well, there's a positive there, but then there's a negative, there's a positive, but then there's a negative. No, this is the life cycle. This is what is necessary in order for creation to function.

In verse three, it says there's a time to kill and a time to heal. And as we look at a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down, a time to build up, we recognize this also is a part of a life cycle. There is a proper time to kill.

For example, when we talk about planting and harvesting, what does harvest do to a plant? When you fed livestock and there's a time to eat them, what do you have to do? You have to kill them before you can eat them. There is a time to kill and as we think in terms of that, in agriculture, we think of something else and that is agriculture requires killing a lot of things if you're going to have food to feed people because God pronounced that there would be weeds come as a result of sin and the curse. So weeds and thorns and thistles, God says you're going to have them to the very end.

So what happens if we decide not to deal with killing or dealing with the weeds? There will be no crop. What about fungus and what about blight and what about all this other stuff? If you don't deal with that and whatever method you use, then you'll have no crop. There's another aspect of this and it's very interesting as well.

I was reading an article last night and it was talking about that in some of our areas and we are a part of that area whether we like it or not. This was not the area that was talking about. It was talking about over by Grand Mesa but we look at something going on here because of some foolishness by our government failing to harvest trees and properly care for them has created what situation? A fire hazard.

Yeah. And for much of the issue and it's not just here in the mountains but also in other parts of the country, they found that one of the most important things to provide better food and forage for wildlife is they have to burn off some ground and result is better crops come forward and there's more sufficient food and foliage for the animals to eat, a time to kill and a time to heal. And so the killing actually promotes the healing.

Okay? It brings about results. If somebody has cancer, what do they want to do? Kill the cancer so the body can heal. Okay? Or cut it off.

Whatever the situation might be, we're going to have to excise that in order for you to live and so as again we look at that, it's not just black and white or good and bad. These are part of the cycles of life that are very, very necessary to go along. The second law of thermodynamics functions throughout our planet and has ever since the fall.

Things wear out, a time to break down and a time to build up. There's a time when things have to be replaced. That's just reality and to not do that may mean that it's going to fall down around your head.

If you own property, what is Murphy's Law going to tell you? It's going to break and you're going to have to repair it. That's how it works and so some of those things that are involved, you're wise to break it down and repair it before it falls down and it's going to be easier and cheaper perhaps to build it up and move forward. A time to weep and a time to laugh.

A time to mourn and a time to dance. Let me ask you, to the unbeliever, I need to say this kind of graciously, but to the unthinking, what do they think life should be? Happy, happy, happy, happy all the time. It ought to be that way all the time.

No pain, no difficulties of any kind. It ought to be that way all the time. You're just party, party and laughing and you just have the time to dance and you just do it all the time.

What's wrong with that mentality? Besides, it's not reality. Okay? Now, had there been no fall, we could have experienced such a thing. And what is heaven going to be like? There's no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more crying for the former things are passed away.

So if we believe Scripture, what can we anticipate now? Time to weep. Okay? Time to mourn. Okay? And if there were not hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ, that would be really all there would be other than the mentality that Solomon does address at one point, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.

So, you know, get high, get drunk, get out of your mind so you can ignore reality. But the problem is, you sober up and now you got a headache on top of the problems that you've got along the way. As I was thinking about that, I was reminded of a verse in John chapter 16 and verse 21.

A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour is come. We call it labor. But as soon as she is delivered of the child, now she remembereth no more the anguish for the joy that a man is born into the world.

So in the labor room, the mother says what? Never ever again. But shortly after the baby is home, now the tune is different. And that is very, very interesting how God has put even that as an example in our heart.

There's another reality and that is if you do not love someone deeply, then you will not experience the sorrow of the loss of relationship. But what is a person that has no relationships? He's lonely or she? Empty, you know, depressed, despairing because what's the use? And of course, we must always continue to connect our dots here. And that is what is God's desire for me? It's not his will that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting life.

God wants a relationship with us. He so loved us that he sent his son to make possible the restoration of a relationship with us. The relationship was broken in the garden, but it was restored at the cross and the resurrection.

And therefore, we can join hands, as it were, in celebrating that. Romans 12, 15 says rejoice that those do rejoice and weep with those that weep. There's a time for rejoicing.

There's a time for weeping. And to deny that and to say that you will not have compassion and and be willing to weep with somebody that's going through a hard time. What kind of a person are you? Jesus.

Left. At what occasion? At Lazarus. He also celebrated at a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

And we have to recognize that Christ was in and out of relationships with people all the time during his ministry. And he was displaying that very process of joy as well as sorrow. There were points in time when he was so discouraged with his disciples or with the Pharisees and so forth.

He experienced that whole gamut of the up and down in verse five, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together. And start with that part of it first. And here's something that I remember well when we were in Israel.

Our guide said. Says this is just a story, but he says the story goes like this. When God sent out his angels to scatter rocks on the earth.

One of them had a hole in his bag right over Israel. And Israel has plenty, plenty of rocks. So as you think about this passage, the time to cast away stones.

OK. I would you be casting away stones if you live in the Rocky Mountains or if you look and live in rocky Israel. You got to clear the field.

Now you got them cast away. Now what are you going to do with them? OK, so now you begin to use them and in Israel they use them for building towers. They use them for building fences.

They use them in constructive ways and even building houses and so forth. So there is a time to cast away stone and there's a time to gather together to put them to good use. And you talked about the road base and out here in north of Del Norte out there in that country with all the piles and piles and piles and piles of rock out of the potato fields.

And they basically did exactly what this is talking about. They do. When we first moved up here in 1979, we were trying to do a garden down there where we were living previously.

And there was a plot that already had been broken into as far as raising crops. And so I thought, okay, here's what I want to do. And we had a family rototiller that my brother and dad and I owned together, and I brought it up.

And man, as I was trying to rototill, it was hitting those rocks. And I thought, there's only one thing to do. That is park the rototiller, get out there with a spade, and begin digging and getting those rocks out of there.

Okay, two and three years later, after those rocks had been cleared, use the same rototiller in the same place. How many of you know that rock grow up out of the ground? That's exactly what they do. And so now it's to do again.

So this is not all that unpractical. The second part of it says a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. And as we think in terms of that, there's some interesting information.

Turn real quickly to the Deuteronomy chapter 20, Deuteronomy chapter 20. And this deals with the subject of the law of warfare. That's the caption that my Bible has at the beginning of chapter 20.

And I'm going to begin in verse five. It says in the officers, she'll speak into the people saying, what man is there that has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicated. Verse six.

And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. Verse seven. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another take his place.

In fact, the instruction went on to say he had one year after his wedding before he would go into battle. And so when we think in terms of of what is is spoken of here in speaking about a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing in the first Corinthians chapter seven and verse five. It speaks there for a husband and wife relationship that they are to have intimacy, but there is a time to refrain if they've agreed together for a time of prayer and fasting.

And they're to stay separate until that time is finished. And then they return in a relationship so that the devil would not take advantage of a lust on either part of their lives and interrupt going forward. I verse six, a time to get and a time to lose the time to keep and a time to cast away.

And I guess the one thing that I need to say that sums all that up is thrift stores and storage sheds, storage rentals, time to get. You have to have all these things because you've got kids. Then what? They grow up and now what do I need that for? So there is a time to get and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to get rid of it.

And where would we be without garage sales to enhance the scripture? What a perfect opportunity to get rid of that that you don't need anymore. And this is just reality that I think he's addressing here. And we go through life.

And here's the sad, sad, sad thing. And I'm afraid many Americans are guilty and sometimes I'm convinced that I'm a little bit guilty in this and that is not being able to admit when you've got enough. I need a little more.

I need a little more. I don't have a place to put it but I need a little bit more. And you know, one of the realities is how many people could be blessed and benefited by that which is in storage sheds across this land.

And some of the summer homes, wow, for sure, okay. You know, I'm reminded we brought nothing in the world and what, we're taking nothing out. And so having food and Raymond, let us be there with content.

Okay. Reading on a time to rend and a time to so time to keep silence and a time to speak the first half. We speak very quickly about that because it tells us in Joel chapter two and verse thirteen says and ran your heart and not your garments and turn into the Lord your God where he is gracious and merciful.

Slow to anger and a great kindness and repented him of the evil. One of the problems with Israel is many times they would go through what developed appears to be a phony repentance. They would tear their garments and that's supposed to be a message that see how contrite I am.

And yet what was not changed their heart was not changed and therefore rending the heart that is big spoken of here by Joel is a genuine broken spirit and a contrite heart. And so there is obviously a time to ran not only our garments in a time of sorrow but also our heart in a time of hardness and callousness. There's also a time to so or to repair and get back into motion and God expects that as well.

Those times of of calling the people out to repentance were followed by a time to get their clothes and their work back on and get busy with it. There's a time it says to keep silence and a time to speak proverbs twenty nine eleven says a fool uttered all his mind. In other words he lets it all rip.

But a wise man keep it in till afterwards James one nineteen says we're for my beloved brother let every man be swift to hear slow to speak slow to read. Good counsel Robert fourteen thirty three wisdom rested in the heart of him that had understanding. But that which is in the midst of a fool is made known.

How is it made known. His big mouth dumps it out there. And so there is a time to speak.

There's a time to be silent. Why is it that so often we get a backwards at the very time we're supposed to speak. We're mum.

The time we're supposed to shut up but we're glad it's all out there and so we need the wisdom of God and the grace of God to know the difference and listening to to Ray comfort is challenging us as a time to speak and learning how to speak and to the needs that are present there verse eight a time to love and a time to hate a time of war and a time of peace and again as we as we look at this verse. We want to bring into our conversation something that is very very very important because I'll say the purist who says it ought to be love and peace. Has a potential problem that they're ignoring and that problem that they're ignoring is the righteousness of God.

The holiness of God. Listen to what the Scripture says in Psalm one thirty nine verse twenty one twenty two this is David a man after God's own heart and he says do not I hate them Oh Lord that hate the and am not I agreed with those that rise up against the I hate them with perfect hatred I count them mine enemies. Think about that.

If we don't hate the things that God hates. What are we doing we're approving. The things that God hates.

And in a certain sense of the word we are promoting or supporting it or enabling it to go on. And one of the challenges that we have in the subject of abortion abortion and euthanasia is that. You know.

Where is America. You know here here's that for those who can be so exasperated and and so militant about other things. But cannot be moved about the death of an innocent baby.

There's something terribly wrong. There's a spiritual blindness that is obviously there the devil has got him deceived. Planned Parenthood is convinced him that is a woman's choice and you think about the marchers that were marching and you know.

Oh that they could get worked up about the right things about immorality about indecency about rebellion etc. Scripture also says in Luke Chapter 14 verse twenty six and twenty seven if any man come to me. Jesus is talking and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters.

Yea in his own life also. He cannot be my disciple. That's pretty heavy stuff.

Now Christ is not saying literally I hate my wife. I despise my wife. But what he is saying.

In comparison. With my love and obedience to him. My wife takes second place.

And Jesus goes on to say any man man would come after me. If he looks back. And that is a challenge for each and every one of us to look into our own life and say, well, let me just commit at it this way.

In 1 John chapter 2, verse 15, it says, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that's in the world is love. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life is of the world.

And the world is what? Passing away. It's passing away. So in essence, the challenge, why would you love the world that is passing away? Why would you love a world system that denies and rejects God over having a love for the one who died for you and made possible your salvation? The perfect peace will not come until the Millennial Kingdom when Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules and reigns.

Right now, whether you're talking about the United Nations or anyone else that wants to come up with, you know, let's have peace, let's have peace, let's have peace, we know from Scripture that we will not have peace this side of the kingdom. But the Antichrist will get a following out of people who say what? Peace, peace. And when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction.

And we see the more restlessness in the world, the more it's setting the stage to condition people for someone who will come promising peace. And they might come to say, well, there's this is right here, time of love and a time of peace. We're ready for that.

And we suck right into the devil's trap. Verse nine, what profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. This is not this is not a bad statement that he's making.

This is a legitimate observation that he is making and is asking a legitimate question. What profit is there? And the answer is there is great profit if we're doing it to the glory of God. If we're doing it as a means of being honorable in terms of what we were created for and to have compassion and minister to others and meet the needs that are present.

There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it is a very good thing. Verse 12, I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life.

All this other stuff that man is going to try to say, I'm going to ignore this and grab a hold of this. There's no good in all of that except for a man to rejoice and in fact, do good by God's definition in his life. Verse 13, also that every man should eat and drink, not in terms of dissipation and drunkenness, but it says and enjoy the good of all of his labor.

It is the gift of God. It is a gift of God to be able to work, amen. When you have someone who is handicapped, debilitated and can't work, who earlier in his life could work, what's their heart? Oh, they want in the greatest way to be able to go out and be productive and they will often feel that they have been robbed of the gift of using their talents and gifts.

It is a gift of God. You know what? That's why it's such a shame for people to willingly waste that gift by not serving God as they can serve others as well. To say, I'm not going to do anything.

I'm just going to lavish it all on me and enjoy myself. The gift of God is that you enjoy your work and you do good in your labor and that good is going to involve impacting other people's lives. I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for what? Forever.

How long is that? Yeah. Now, come back with me. We've got the two book ends.

There's a season and a time for everything, right? And what we do is for ever. And it's a gift from God to be received and to be cherished and be used for his honor and for his glory. And it goes on to say nothing can be put to it.

We can't add something to what God has already made possible. We just need to do what God has put within our heart, equipped us, gifted us, enabled us to do. We need to do it for his glory.

And he says not anything taken from it. And God doeth it to one end that men would do what? Fear God. Go back to the first sermon in the series when I started on Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, the last two verses.

This is the whole duty of man. Fear God and keep his commandments. OK, because we'll all give an accounting for what? What have we done? I thought about it and I didn't look it up, so I apologize to that.

But I'm going to paraphrase it and then we'll close here. The story goes something like this. A man visited and was walking through a cemetery.

And as he's walking through the cemetery, he was seeing names and dates, names and dates. And as he saw those names and dates, you didn't have to be an excellent mathematician to be able to conclude that this one died very early. This one died very young.

This one died very old. But this person, as he kind of meditated on this, he realized, you know what? Here are these two dates. Each of them have one thing in common.

That's the dash between the dates. And the real question about those people's lives is what did they do with the dash? What did they do with that time between birth and death? And that's what we're accountable to God for. What have we done with what he's given us? And what we have the wonderful joy of knowing is that the mess ups that we've done when we confess him and forsake him, he forgives us.

Praise God. And what we do for his name and for his glory, the scripture says, one day our life will end, but our works will follow us. And we're told that the Lord does take an accounting of what we've done and how we've ministered unto him.

And he will reward it one day. So there's plenty of reason to be faithful now because of the reward that will be later. But it's also good to do it now because that's where the greatest joy is going to be.

Because if all we're doing is grumbling under the sun, we will say vanity of vanity. It's all vanity. Let's pray.

So Father, each one of us are in the dark.

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