

## A Time for Everything

### Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

- <sup>2</sup> a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- <sup>3</sup> a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- <sup>4</sup> a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- <sup>5</sup> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- <sup>6</sup> a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- <sup>7</sup> a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- <sup>8</sup> a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

TIME. What is time? How do we measure it? Can we waste it? Who controls it? Is it good or evil? Lots of questions. So, here's one definition of time. The indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole. People, for centuries, have measured the passage of time using the sun. Sundials have been replaced by clocks, watches, and phones that tell us what hour of the day it is. Then there's the time zones and travel can allow your body to be in two different days in a matter of minutes and time even goes backwards as you go west. It can get a little confusing and something that seems so constant and reliable is no longer just that.

Chronos is a Greek word that mean the measure of quantitative time or an exact time That word appears 53 times in the New Testament. This is chronological time measured with clocks. That's the most common way we think about time. The New Testament also uses the Greek word kairos when referring to the right time or an opportune time. This occurs 86 times in the New Testament.

If a system is unchanging, it is timeless. Time can be considered to be the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of reality, used to describe events in three-dimensional space. Don't get discouraged or turned off. This is NOT going to be a quest to understand this concept. Rather, it's an opportunity to reflect on what are practical applications to this complex term.

In the book of **Genesis chapter 1**, the account of creation records God (Elohim) who created the heavens and the earth. He said, *"Let there be light," and He separated the light from the darkness calling the light "day," and the darkness "night."* It is interesting to note that there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. Evening came first. It wasn't until the fourth day that He created lights in the expanse of the sky. Therefore, our sun and the other stars weren't created until the fourth day. They were created to mark seasons, days and years.

**Verse 17** says *God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from darkness.*

Because Creator God (the God-head Father, Son and Holy Spirit), YAHWAH, is outside of time. He created time but is not bound by time. In **2 Timothy 1:9** we are told that *grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.* And in the book of **Titus 1:2-3** *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,<sup>3</sup> but has in due time manifested His word...*

This concept of God knowing all things and being outside of time, has help me grasp Biblical truths. I remember asking someone, "Why did God wait so long before Jesus came to earth to live among the people He created and provide the way to eternal life?" **Galatians 4:4** *But when the **fullness of the time** came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.* We have to rest in the fact the He knows the beginning from the end and says of Himself in **Revelation 21:6** that *He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.*

For some, the use of the word TIME is "doing time". This is how the women in the jail refer to their days serving out their sentences. Twenty-five to thirty women in bunk beds with sleeping going on 24/7 without a watch or phone, frequently no windows, the main source of knowing day from night and days of the week are marked by routine. Meals delivered to the pod are slid through a slot marking the passage of hours. Commissary deliveries are on a particular day of the week. Visitation, court dates, church services, Bible studies, Alcoholic Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery meetings occur on a particular day at a set time. Frances delivers Christian books on Wednesdays. Paperback only as hardback ones could become a weapon. Decks of cards are sometimes available and single sheets of paper can be purchased as well as a five-inch flexible pen that is very difficult to write with. Not much to occupy your mind and body. Zoning out, watching TV and sleeping are most commonly used to pass the days and sometimes years.

County jails are, for the most part, like this. A prison for longer sentences or more serious crimes, typically has outdoor spaces and jobs for all inmates. Cleaning, kitchen duties, laundry, and other jobs are required and help pass the time easier. Another big difference in prison is there is a common area with a shower and toilet and there are two women to a small cell with multiple of these off the main common area. This provides more privacy and a quieter environment. Since this is typically a longer stay, people don't come and go as frequently. One would think that this boring lifestyle with virtually no freedom, no control, little access to people on the outside, and virtually no amenities, would be enough of a deterrent, but it is not. Sadly, it can be a place of reunion with family and friends and just a way of life.

Coming straight off the street high, takes several days for the drugs to work their way out of the system. This can be a miserable time, but for some, it can be a relief. Countless numbers of women have reported they prayed to God to stop the madness and help them out of their pit. Frequently, within 24-48 hours, they are arrested. They will say, "It was the best thing for me.

It saved my life.” A connection or reconnection with God can be the result. (See Heidi’s journey previously posted).

In **Luke 12:54-56** regarding interpreting the times, Jesus said to the crowd, *“When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you didn’t know how to interpret this present time?”*

Jesus knew why He was sent to earth and in **John 2:4** He said, to his mother at the wedding in Cana, *“Why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.”* Later in **John 17:1** He says, *“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”* In the book of **Genesis** there is an Old Testament account of Abraham and Sarah. The LORD said, *“I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.”* Another example of someone being in a kairos time, an opportune time, is in the biblical story of Esther. She becomes queen of Persia and Mordecai, her cousin and previous guardian, says to her in **Esther 4:14** *“...” And who knows but the you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”* While on a Walk to Emmaus in 1996, I sat at the table of Esther. I was delighted to be seated at that table, and personally identified with this scripture believing I had purpose and that God had a plan for my life. There have been times in my life where I felt I was born for a particular task and had an “Esther moment”.

Many paper Bibles have a concordance in the back which allows for a quick reference for particular words. Bible apps can also search for a specific word. Time is an important word and doing a word search produces many scriptures allowing us to ponder, study and learn from them. How we use our time daily is an important aspect of stewardship. We frequently hear people say, “Don’t waste time.” Once an hour has passed, you can’t go backwards and have that minute again to do things in a different way. Although this is true, especially for those who have spent years in addiction, in jail, flunked out of college, or any other seemingly waste of time, energy, or money, redemption is possible. God is able to use anything and turn it around for good. **Roman 8:28** is frequently quoted *“And we know that in ALL things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* I have told countless women that God can take all the years that seem to be wasted and use the experiences, life lessons, failures, victories, everything and make something beautiful from the ashes that seem so dirty and represent destruction.

Trauma has scarred most of the women who find themselves in jail. Abuse of every kind is often the catalyst to seeking alcohol and drugs to numb the pain. A majority of individuals have an event in TIME that is a marker in their history. Before/after children, an accident, job loss, death of someone, or any other myriad of events. Our timeline from birth to death has many points in time that we reference and often that changed the course of our lives. Because God is outside of time, He can actually heal us from emotional, physical, or even spiritual traumas of the past. It is an amazing thing to witness when someone can forgive a person of a past hurt, injustice, or other trauma and be freed from the pain, sorrow, and bondage. To experience a

release and freedom allowing a person to carry on FREE and as if the event never happened. This doesn't mean someone forgets, but the mind and body can be healed and the effects no longer keep them bound. It is often said that time heals. That can be a true statement in some instances, but things like unforgiveness require more than the passage of time. It may seem like a hurt or offense is no longer a problem. But carefully listening to a person or observing behaviors will often reveal that it is not really the truth. Tones of bitterness, resentfulness and even physical manifestations or health issues can be indicative that full freedom and released has not occurred even after decades of time have passed.

A good exercise is to draw a personal time line and mark the various events of your life. What stands out as important and lifechanging both positively and negatively affecting what happened to you. You may be able to do this yourself, but seeking someone to help pray with you helping you deal with unforgiveness or areas that repentance for poor choices or behaviors that were/are sinful can be liberating and release you into your full destiny. God can do in a nanosecond what needs to be done to bring liberation and healing. Even if it seems like your life is half over because 20 years of addiction have "stolen" time, God can redeem, restore and use your life as a blessing to Him and to others. Many who spent years in the madness of addiction, are the precise ones that can be used to help others find the way out and lead productive lives. God is in the restoring families "business". Countless women have reunited with their children. Even ones that had been adopted by others have reestablished a relationship with their mothers. What a joy to hear those stories. There are days when you wonder where God is, or if He is real? One remedy is to hear a person tell of a miraculous rescue from death; obtaining legal custody of a child that someone said would NEVER happen; or being able to forgive an abuser and be healed of the trauma trapped deep in their memory bank. Stories of freedom give me assurance that God is alive and well and working all the time in the lives of people who are made in His image.

The concept of time is often age and situational in nature. Kids in the car say, "Are we there yet??" Waiting for the time to pass to be able to go somewhere or do something seems like an eternity. As we age, time has different meanings. It seems to fly by as we mark graduations, birth of grandchildren, retirement and the like. Thinking of eternity. How long is that?? It is a concept that is hard to grasp especially since we are so time oriented. Forever and ever and ever and ever... Since our time on earth is limited and of an unknown quantity of minutes, we need to relish every day and thank God for whatever opportunities we are given.

Time is precious so use it wisely!