

Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 | “Everything In Its Time, Part 2”  
*Preached on April 19, 2026 by Pastor Matt Brown*

You can turn in your Bibles once again to Ecclesiastes 3, verses 1–15 this morning. *[pauseeee]*

I decided to do this passage in two parts, and this sermon is the second part. *[pause]*

Last week, we saw that life is filled with different seasons...

There is “a time for every matter under heaven,” and so there is an appointed and fitting time for everything. *[pause]*

With these seasons, we also saw that we do not control them, nor can we understand how they all work together.

We are actually moved along by the seasons. *[pauseeee]*

Now today, we will expand upon those points to see what else we find about the seasons of life, and how we ought to respond to them. *[pause]*

Look down at the passage for today, as I READ it for you. *[READ]*

Earth has its seasons: there’s spring, summer, fall, and winter. *[pause]*

Each one has been given to us by God, and brings with it *change*. *[pause]*

Now, you would think that we would be thankful that God has given us changing seasons...

We see the spectacular snow, we witness the growing flowers, the wonder of the summer sunshine, and the lovely falling leaves.

But instead of being thankful, have you noticed that we often complain about them? *[pause]*

In the winter, we say, “It’s too cold and this snow and ice make such a mess!” but when spring comes around, we say, “The allergies are so bad, and it rains too much!” *[pause]*

In the summer, we say, “It’s way too hot, I can’t take it,” and then in the fall, we think, “Here comes the cold, allergies, and shorter days again.” *[pauseeee]*

We complain about the earth’s seasons, and likewise, we complain about the seasons of life. *[pause]*

There are the age-related seasons, as we go through young, middle, and then old age, but we complain about each!

Young people say, “I wish I was older,” middle age people say, “I wish I was young again,” and older people say, “I wish I didn’t waste so much of it.” *[pauseeee]*

Instead of taking each season from the hand of God, we complain about them. *[pauseeee]*

Not only are there age-related seasons, but there are big-moment-related seasons. *[pause]*

Graduations and marriages change our lives in drastic ways—so does having children and grandchildren. *[pause]*

There are job changes, house moves, diseases, loss of loved ones, and so much more. *[pauseee]*

Amidst each of these seasons, have you realized that our complaints end up accompanying them in some way? *[pause]*

Realizing that we do this, how do we break free from being so discontent with the seasons that come and go in our lives? *[pause]*

*A major way, according to this passage, is to know that...*

### **III. The different seasons are under the control of the Lord.**

As you go through a season, you are not in control of it, but you can confidently know who is: the Lord. *[pause]*

In verse 10, it says, “I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.” *[pause]*

This ‘business’ is really all of life’s activities, experiences, and tasks—we plant, pluck up, embrace, keep, or cast away. *[pause]*

So the author is telling us that life, with all of its activity, has been given to us by God. *[pauseeee]*

Life is not a completely blank slate that we have been able to shape to our liking, but God created this world, shaping it exactly how He wanted and declared it “good.”<sup>1</sup> *[pause]*

Now because of our sin: pain, suffering, and hardship entered into the world, and that was given to us as consequence for our sin.

But this doesn’t mean that the fallen world is out of God’s control, but God is still sovereign over it. *[pause]*

So amidst all of this, God has given us the work and activity that we are to be about.

It is grueling and grievous at times, but that doesn’t mean that life is chaotic, but God “has given” it to us. *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to Genesis 1:31.

In our pride as humanity, we get a big head thinking that our inventions will transform the “business” that we have been given.

But with every new invention, hardship tags along, and with every new creation, we still realize that we have to do the basic things that we’ve always done. *[pause]*

There’s still a time to plant and pluck up, even if we get a robot to do it.

We still need to build, seek, or keep, yet also cast away.

And no matter how much we rack our brains trying to relieve suffering, we can’t escape the times of weeping and dying. *[pauseeee]*

This is because life with all of its activities and experiences are not something that we can fundamentally change, but they are something given. *[pauseeee]*

Now this doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t pursue advancements in the world...

But it means that we can’t get some “god-complex” thinking that if only we put more effort in, we can fundamentally change life as it is. *[pause]*

As verse 9 reminds us, “What gain has the worker from his toil?” *[pauseeee]*

This means that we must accept life, knowing that it’s God-given. *[pause]*

You can’t get frustrated with God, and think, “I’ll just go and change it to my liking,” or you will meet frustration at every turn. *[pause]*

Remember: you are not ultimately in control of the seasons of life, and much of our problems come from expecting the wrong things out of life. *[pause]*

We have unrealistic expectations, whereby it’s like we expect that life should always and ever be comfortable and easy...

Yet that’s not the “business” we have been given. *[pauseeee]*

We expect to never have to cast away something, but things break. *[pause]*

We wonder, “Why do I have to work so much,” neglecting to remember that work and activity are ingrained into life. *[pause]*

We long to be forever young, and then become bitter when old age hits us. *[pause]*

We expect to never weep, yet the Bible just told us that there’s “a time to weep, and a time to laugh.” *[pause]*

The seasons of life *are* the life that’s been given to us, and we must accept it.

It does no good bucking up against reality. *[pauseeee]*

Here's the thing, though—yes, this is how life is, it's the business God has given us, but that doesn't mean it's a pointless burden. *[pauseeee]*

Sometimes we experience the building up and tearing down, the weeping and laughing, the births and deaths, the silence and speaking, and we think...

“It's all just a meaningless burden that we have to go through.” *[pause]*

But the Lord wants to redirect our hearts and minds back to something so important...

Since the glorious, powerful, and good God is in control of the seasons of life, then that means that they are NOT pointless. *[pauseeee]*

Listen to verse 11: “He has made everything beautiful in its time.” *[pause]*

This life is not chaotic and meaningless, but ordered, purposeful, and in the end, God is working something *beautiful*. *[pauseeee]*

The seasons of life come and go, but we can't make sense of them.

We wonder, “Why this? Why now?” Or, “What's God doing here?”

And we tend to think that there's no rhyme or reason behind these things, but what this passage is teaching us is that there is something bigger going on than we realize. *[pause]*

God is doing something beautiful, He's making a masterpiece that's all fitted together perfectly. *[pauseeee]*

Think of those patchwork quilts, where a bunch of different patches are sewn together into something beautiful. *[pause]*

That's what it's like—we only see a few patches, and think, “This doesn't look very beautiful,” but we aren't seeing the end result, the whole glorious thing. *[pauseeee]*

The word translated as ‘beautiful’ here is a word that means good, proper, and fitting.

So God is working so that everything is good and fitting in its time. *[pauseeee]*

When you were born, it was the proper time—you were not a mistake! *[pause]*

But here's the thing: when you die, God deems it your proper time to die.

And we don't understand it, but we can know that God is doing something, working all things together for good.<sup>2</sup> *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>2</sup> A reference to Romans 8:28.

Imagine if you approached every season of life with this deep conviction. *[pause]*

You saw the birth of your child or grandchild as fittingly beautiful, just at the time that God wants. *[pause]*

You saw your current job as the season that's proper for *right now*. *[pause]*

He may bring me into a different season, but right here, right now, this is the season that God has given to me, I will rejoice and be glad in it.<sup>3</sup> *[pause]*

And when you are about to die, oh what peace we can have knowing that, yes, it's hard and sad, but it's the proper time that God has appointed for me. *[pause]*

Like the psalmist, we can say, "My times are in your hand."<sup>4</sup> *[pauseeee]*

We would do well if we remembered that there are seasons of life that God has ordained and fits beautifully into the tapestry of life.

And if we were in control of our seasons, we would probably end up ruining everything, but God's ways are always best and beautiful. *[pauseeee]*

Now as we see in verse 11, "He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end." *[pause]*

We can't grasp nor understand what exactly God is doing, even though we long to know it, but that is purposefully designed.

The reason is because the Lord wants us to trust and revere Him. *[pause]*

If we were in control or knew the whole picture, we could walk around with pride, and we wouldn't be led to our knees in faith.

But since God did it this way, it leads us to call out to Him. *[pause]*

We are led to say, "Lord, I don't understand how this season is purposeful and fitting, but I know that you are in control—you have a reason." *[pauseeee]*

There's an illustration of how "In the frigid waters around Greenland are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic." *[pause]*

If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice moves in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. *[pause]*

The explanation is simple: surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents. *[pauseee]*

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<sup>3</sup> Utilizing the language of Psalm 118:24.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 31:15.

When we face trials and tragedies, it's helpful to see our lives as being subject to two forces—surface winds and ocean currents. *[pause]*

The winds represent everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing.

But operating simultaneously with these gusts and gales is another force that's even more powerful...

*It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes.*<sup>5</sup> *[pauseeee]*

*Knowing all of this should lead us to respond a certain way, and that is...*

#### **IV. You should trust the Lord and enjoy what He gives you.**

Do you trust Him? Because you have very good reasons to!

Look at verse 14, "I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it." *[pauseeee]*

When we do something, we can be met with failure. *[pause]*

There have been numerous times where I've tried fixing something, and I made it worse. *[pause]*

Or have you ever tried to do something that you've never done before, and it didn't go so well?

*Our efforts can sometimes be met with failure, but our efforts can sometimes also be short-lived.* *[pause]*

I built this little, wooden mailbox for my kids to play with.

And it looked good, I thought it would last, but a couple days later it ended up broken. *[pauseeee]*

Our work can fail, be short-lived, but can also be changed by someone else. *[pause]*

Have you ever done a project that took tons of time, only to find out that someone changed it later?

It can be frustrating. *[pauseee]*

*All of those things regularly happen to us, but when the Lord does something, it always endures.* *[pause]*

Notice what is written here: "whatever God does." *[pause]*

It's not just *some* things that God does, which endure, but anything and everything that He does endures. *[pauseee]*

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<sup>5</sup> Original source unknown. Found at: [https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/god\\_sovereignty.htm](https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/god_sovereignty.htm).

Notice also that His work doesn't endure for a while and then cease, but it endures "forever."

It goes on and on, whereby not one person can add or take away from it. *[pause]*

Put simply: God's work cannot be touched. *[pauseeee]*

**What a comforting thought...**

We have been given seasons by God, and He makes everything beautiful in its time, and all of this working can't be changed. *[pause]*

**If He makes something beautiful, it will be forever beautiful.** *[pause]*

There are no loose strings, there are no left over parts, no aborted missions when God is at work. *[pauseeeee]*

Since God's work is perfect and eternal, then we can confidently trust His work in our lives. *[pause]*

The seasons of life that He takes us through are not a mistake—they are doing something eternally good.

**And this should lead us to trust Him, even though we don't know what He will do through a certain situation.** *[pauseeee]*

Though we are "workers" who plant, build, gather, and sew—God is the ultimate worker, who purposefully gives, makes, puts, and does. *[pause]*

**This causes us to rejoice with faith, for this world is not chaotic, but it's governed by the ultimate, perfect worker, God.** *[pauseeeee]*

Now why do I say, "You should trust the Lord," when talking about God's work?

Well notice what the end of verse 14 says, "God has done it, so that people fear before him." *[pauseee]*

God's purpose in showing off His enduring, unchanging work is so that we would revere Him. *[pause]*

**We are not supposed to look inward to our work, but to look outward to God's perfect work and stand in awe...**

You were meant to marvel at God! *[pauseeeeeee]*

**In every season, we can trust that He is at work, making it beautiful in its time, and saying in our hearts, "Lord, you are amazing!"** *[pause]*

Nothing is outside of God's sovereignty...

Verse 15 says, “That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.” *[pause]*

The Lord knows everything: past, present, future, and they are under His control. *[pause]*

He is over the cycles of history, and knows the future already.

Nothing gets past His ever-watchful eye, but He actively oversees and controls the world. *[pause]*

Nothing is lost or forgotten, nothing gets by Him, and so we can rest assured in His justice.

He truly does work all things according to His purpose! *[pauseeee]*

Christian, life is under the sovereign control of the Lord—everything is in His hands...

“For *everything* there is a season, and a time for *every* matter under heaven.” *[pause]*

“He has made *everything* beautiful in its time.” *[pause]*

“*Whatever* God does endures forever.”

Everything, every, all—God’s control is comprehensive! *[pauseeee]*

Since God is in control, and we are not, then we ought to reverently trust Him with the seasons of life. *[pauseeee]*

What season are you going through right now?

Lay it at His feet, knowing that He’s in control of it. *[pause]*

Remember His sovereignty over all, and that whatever He does endures forever.

So do not try to act like you know better because you are limited and He is not. *[pause]*

Do not try to act like His ways are not good, for He makes everything beautiful in its time. *[pauseeee]*

If you notice, the point that we are on is not only that “you should trust the Lord,” but also, that you should “enjoy what He gives you.” *[pause]*

Now where do I get that?

Well consider the passage as a whole, it’s teaching us that we are not in control of the seasons, but God is. *[pause]*

Whatever He does endures forever, He makes everything beautiful in its time, and He has given us the business that we do. *[pause]*

All of this should lead us to gratefully accept whatever He gives, and that's why verses 12–13 say this...

“I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.” *[pausee]*

Here's the author's conclusion based on the truth that He just tackled. *[pause]*

Knowing that I'm not in control, but God is over my season, then what's the best thing to do?

Be joyful, do good, and take pleasure in your toil. *[pauseeee]*

When you remember that life is not to be controlled, but accepted—that's when you can actually start enjoying life! *[pause]*

You no longer burn yourself out trying to control life, but you can rest in God's control and enjoy life *as it is*. *[pause]*

You no longer frantically run around, but can take joy even in the simple things, seeing them as gifts of God. *[pauseeeee]*

Imagine a person trying their hardest to be young again—they are going to be constantly putting in effort and end up frustrated.

Yet the person who accepts their season of old age (as it is) can now enjoy the gifts of God in their season. *[pauseeee]*

Imagine a parent with young children constantly grumbling and saying, “I hate changing diapers all the time, I wish they were older!” *[pause]*

They will often overlook the blessing and gift of having a young child and all the joy they bring. *[pauseeee]*

A robust view of the sovereignty of God over your season can lead to abundant joy. *[pauseeee]*

There is joy to be had, Christian!

This life is NOT all misery, hardship, and loss, but there's joy available!

We can “eat and drink and take pleasure in all [of our] toil.” *[pauseee]*

The Lord is no mean, stingy God, who relishes in our discomfort.

Yet so many people act like God is a cosmic kill-joy, just wanting everyone to be miserable and not enjoy things in life.

But that's not true at all, in fact, any true and lasting joy that we have is because God has given it to us. *[pause]*

He gives us everything good! *[pause]*

Here we see the basic fact of joy, even in the small things, is "God's gift to man."

And this means that since God has given us so many joys, then we should gratefully enjoy them as gifts. *[pauseeee]*

How often do you thank God and enjoy the gifts of eating and drinking? *[pause]*

How often do you thank God for the ability to do a job well-done? *[pause]*

Are you a joyful person?

If not, could it be that you are not resting God's control and rejoicing in God's gifts? *[pauseeee]*

*The passage this morning teaches us that we ought to...*

**Receive life and its seasons as a gift, trusting God, who is in control.**

This life is not meant to be controlled nor manipulated, but received and enjoyed as a gift. *[pause]*

As I said last week, we ought to say, "This is the season appointed for me by God, and He has a purpose in it..."

I don't quite know or understand what that is, but I'll trust the Lord through it." *[pause]*

When we view life this way, we can then look around and take joy in even the simple gifts of God. *[pauseeee]*

You are in a season of life right now, but what has been your attitude towards it? *[pause]*

Are you angry and resentful for it? *[pause]*

Do you keep trying to maneuver yourself out of it, finding yourself frustrated? *[pause]*

Are you grumbling and longing for something else? *[pause]*

You will not find joy nor contentment, if you do this, so understand that God has placed you in this season *right now*. *[pause]*

He's in control of it, and so has a purpose for it.

He will work something beautiful through it, though you can't see what that is. *[pause]*

So know that He will give you what you need for your season, and so find joy in the blessings of life around you now. *[pauseeee]*

God making things beautiful in its time and giving us a gift is exactly what He did through Jesus. *[pause]*

We sinned against Him, and deserved eternal condemnation.

And it was bad, as we were hopeless, and only storing up God's wrath for ourselves,<sup>6</sup> but "at the right time" God sent Jesus Christ to save us.<sup>7</sup> *[pause]*

Now through faith in Jesus, who died and rose for us, we who have trusted in Christ alone, have been reconciled to God, forgiven, made new, and given a sure and lasting hope. *[pauseeee]*

There was a *time* of our lostness, but now there's the *time* of our salvation, a time which *endures forever!* *[pause]*

Truly, God has made everything beautiful when it comes to our salvation, and now our business is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.<sup>8</sup> *[pause]*

How could we not find joy in the precious, saving, redeeming, loving gifts of God that we have received through Jesus Christ?

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<sup>6</sup> A reference to Romans 2:5.

<sup>7</sup> Romans 5:6.

<sup>8</sup> A reference to the Answer of Question 1 found in the "Westminster Shorter Catechism."