

Gods plan for life part 1

Introduction

Sometimes you may wonder when that unexpected calamity happens is God in control.

Or you may walk away with the **why** question as your heart struggles to deal with the reality of the trial.

Life has its ups and downs.

One wonders does God have a plan in all this madness.

Our passage this morning reveals that indeed, God has a plan.

Its a plan that shows that He is in control of time, of every event, that he intends to impact your heart in so many areas.

Its a plan in which justice will ultimately happen.

Its a plan that will ultimately culminate in great joy and God's glory.

Historical Background

Ecclesiastics is called the OT book of Philipians, a book of celebrating joy found in God.

A journey to find the answer to the question

Ecclesiastes 1:3 ESV

³ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

What advantage , or profit is there to be found in all that is done under the sun(in this world)

Is there lasting Joy, is there something worthwhile to be found in this transient, brief, vapor like life in this world.

Having discovered that man cannot find any gain in this life apart from God, Solomon turns to look at what is **God's plan** for life.

Our passage is actually the whole of Chapter 3, but this morning we will only look at vs 1-14 as part of a two part sermon on Gods plan for life.

Passage

Ecclesiastes 3:1–14 *ESV*

¹ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

² a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³ a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

⁹ What gain has the worker from his toil?

¹⁰ I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, 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.

¹² I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;

¹³ also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil —this is God’s gift to man.

¹⁴ I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him.

Proposition

6 parts of Gods plan so that man would find joy in the basics despite life’s wicked events

Part 1

1. God’s plan has a time for every event vs 1-11
2. God’s plan gives joy vs 12-13
3. God’s plan produces fear vs 14

Part 2

4. God’s plan has accountability vs 15-17
5. God’s plan includes death to all vs 18-21
6. God’s plan is joy despite ignorance of the future vs 22

1. God’s plan has a time for every event vs 1-11

Ecclesiastes 3:1 ESV

¹ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

Many people know about this section in Scripture

Few understand it.

Here we find a statement from Gods perspective.

Vs 1-8 in fact is a poem, that emphasizes :

- The brevity of human life
- Positive and negative events of human life

Its not an complete list, but a list that who give you examples of the variety of events that happens in a persons life.

It reveals how God governs the specificity(when it happens) and the scope(how long it happens) of these events.

vs1

¹ For everything there is a season,

Everything refers to every event that happen and includes:

- both the good and bad , the positive and the negative events.

Season= appointed time, a particular time, a specified time

God has a specified time for every event.

God

- Created time
- Controls the timing of every event

History = God governing when things happen

He determines the timing and the period of time for every event in your life, and all events since creation to eternity.

We see an example of this in Acts

Acts 17:26–27 ESV

²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,

He is sovereign over the when and the what (event) of your life.

Life is not a series of accidents or chance events .

The theologians refer to Gods control of events in appointed time as **providence**

Essential Christian Doctrine: A Handbook on Biblical Truth Divine Providence

Divine providence is God's preserving his creation, operating in every event in the world, and directing the things in the universe to his appointed end for them

Gods plan has a specific time when stuff happens.

An accident catch you off guard, but are part of Gods perfect timed plan for your life.

God is Sovereign and operates with His perfect providential plan.

and a time for every matter under heaven:

Under the heavens refers to Gods involvement.

This phrase under heaven:

Ecc 1:13 Solomon used **God given wisdom** to examine the tasks God gave man **under the heavens**

Ecc 2:3 God used his **God given wisdom** to see the folly of finding joy in substance abuse **under the heavens**

Under the sun referred to **human activities** here on earth

Under the heavens refers to heavenly (**Gods**) involvement.

Solomon was connecting time with the event being under Gods authority.

God governs each event and its timing.

The Hebrew idea of time was not inflexible, unchanging or abstract (theoretical)

Time was normally associated with specific events.

In ancient Paganism, man through various rituals tried to control time and nature, trying to make nature more fruitful, wipe out previous sins, reverse time, and generate themselves nature and history (Kaizer)

The text is not about you doing good time management.

Its about God's perfect time management of what happens in your life.

God steers history on a Millie second by second basis

The psalmist wrote

| Psalm 31:15 (ESV)

| ¹⁵ My times are in your hand; ...

Yes we should use our time wisely, but understand God is in control of each event that you face and when it happens.

Ephesians 5:15–16 ESV

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Solomon provided 14 contrasting pairs of events.

Time is mentioned 28 times,

pressing home the fact that God has an appointed time, a predetermined time set for every event that happens in this world.

That's the main point of vs 1-8

He has a set order for all that happens in life.

Lets view some of these events God sets the timer for.

² a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

God controls **when** you were born and **when** you will die.

Your funeral date has already been set.

That family member who suddenly died this was Gods appointed time for that.

Psalm 139:16 ESV

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

God has an appointed time for planting and harvesting.

Their called seasons.

God even controls the life and death of vegetables.

But what about things we say people do.

Like someone killing another.

³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;

Even a murderer killing, or

A government executing him is a part of Gods plan.

He has set timings for these events.

Time to heal: God is in control of when you go to hospital and whether you get healed or not.

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

God governs the times for you constructing and demolishing of things.

⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

God is even in control of the seasons for your affections.

When your heart would be sad or glad.

Grieving and pleasure, God governs these periods of time in your life.

⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

Casting away stones referred to preparing a field for cultivation.

Gathering stones referred ruining a field in times of war or impending invasion by an enemy.

2 Kings 3:19 ESV

¹⁹ and you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree and stop up all springs of water and ruin every good piece of land with stones.”

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

The Jewish understanding of this related to times for sexual intercourse or sexual restraint.

Even these events are part of God’s plan, control.

⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

There are times you seek things, maybe wanting new things, and times you lose them.

I recall cleaning my wedding ring many years ago and losing the diamond

The Older you get, I think you lose more things like your glasses.

God has appointed times for these events.

⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew;

In ancient times when bad, or sad news came, people would rip their clothes, and when the problem has been resolved or grief changed to comfort, clothing would be mended.

God has intervals in your life for these events

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

In life as you see great evil or great calamities, there are times to speak and then there are times to refrain from speaking.

God controls the timing of these statements.

⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;

Sometimes God places you in places which stirs you to hate and other times to love.

God stirred the Egyptians hearts to hate Israel

Psalm 105:25 ESV

²⁵ He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants.

Later God stirred their heart towards favor for Israel.

Exodus 11:3 ESV

³ And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

a time for war, and a time for peace.

Solomon concludes his poems stating that God has times of war and times of peace.

God providentially has a specific period of time for every event that happens in your life.

God is Sovereign

Solomon recognizes that God controls life

he controls the timing and the event

God's History

Solomon once again asked the question asked in Ecc 1:3

Ecclesiastes 1:3 ESV

³ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

⁹ What gain has the worker from his toil?

What gain, what profit is there in the fact that God providentially controls the appointed time for every event in life.

Genesis 1:1 ESV

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The Bible kicks off with God creating time, then space and then matter.

Every event that follows creation is controlled by God's plan for life.

Solomon ponders and reflects on what he had seen.

¹⁰ I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Beautiful can be translated as fair, right, suitable, appropriate.

The same term is used

| Ecclesiastes 5:18 (ESV)

| ¹⁸ Behold, what I have seen to be good and **fitting** is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot.

God's plan includes suitable events.

life, death,

weeping and laughing

Trials and crisis' are all the perfect parts of His plan.

These are all pieces of His grand collage, his tapestry of life

God not only controlled time and its events, he also placed an inward reality in man.

Also, he has put eternity into man's heart,

Some translations translate eternity as **ignorance**.

But the context argues for eternity.

The poem is about God's governance of the timing of events, and vs 14 uses the same term with the meaning forever or eternity.

Humans are bound by time but they are wired for eternity.

God placed a deep inward desire, a inward inquisitiveness to contemplate beyond this life.

Blaze Paschal, a french Mathematician stated

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made know through Jesus Christ.”

Man seeks to put the pieces of the puzzle of Gods plan together, yet apart from God he cannot do so.

yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

The Net translation states it well.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NET)

...so that people cannot discover what God has ordained, from the beginning to the end of their lives.

Even with eternity within mans heart, man is finite, limited in his comprehension that he is not able to find the answers.

Apart from God he is not able to put the pieces together of God's masterful providential plan of life

The fact that you and I cannot put the pieces together, highlights simply He is sovereign and we are not, Hes in control and we are not.

Gods grand tapestry of events He providentially controls to ultimately bring Himself glory.

The reason we ask why why in great trials often is:

- We may think God made a mistake
- He is not in control
- but ultimately is because we cannot put all the pieces together.

So the believer is left only with the option to believe, to trust, and to remind yourself of Gods unchanging character.

We don't have the answers.

God does, he planned it this way.

Application

You and I should know that every trial, every good or bad event you face is no accident.

It is a part of Gods plan.

Next time your faced with the great question **why**, trust in the fact that this was a part of Gods providential plan.

He is orchestrating it in this way.

The sins that hurt you

Or the sins you have done,

Even these events fall within God's providential plan.

It does not provide reason to sin, it simply means you failed to obey God, but God's plan has not failed. This was a part of His plan.

Saying your lucky, only expressed God's appointed time for blessing.

So the loss of :

- a loved one
- property due to theft
- comfort due to pain
- health

These all are controlled by God Or groaning at that horrific event in your life, God has allowed this season, this period of your life to experience this.

Being robbed, facing the loss of a loved one these are all part of Gods timing and God ordained events for His glory and your good.

This brings us to the 2nd point.

2. God's plan gives joy vs 12-13

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 ESV

¹² I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and

to do good as long as they live;

¹³ also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man.

So If God governs the timing and the events themselves.

How should you and I respond.

Solomon stated

¹² I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;
¹³

To perceive is a Heb term that means to know, to observe, to recognize or to notice something.

He concluded

What is there to gain in this life in which God governs both timing and its events.

The best thing is to find joy in this life.

joy= being merry , feeling happiness

2ndly to do good

You can only truly do good if your heart has changed

He adds to that

also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man.

You are to find joy in your toil (labor, work that may cause distress or great difficulty)

How can I find joy in toil and do good when life is hard?

God must be in the picture.

Gods is the grand joy distributor. for his people.

| Ecclesiastes 2:26 (ESV)

| ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and

| knowledge and joy, ...

Ecclesiastes 5:20 (ESV)

| ... God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

Gods plan of life includes giving the emotion of joy .

Application

Brothers and sisters, If you want true joy, this joy comes from God's plan.

He is the source of joy.

His word produces joy Ps1

His spirit produces Joy Gal 5:22

His presence produces joy Ps 16:11

Fellowship with His people produces Joy 1 John 1:4)

So if you want joy in your life be in His presence, with His people listening to His word.

To belong to Him, you need to be in right relationship with Him.

This leave the only option for you is to repent and trust in Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins and to experience His joy.

To experience His joy contentiously walk by His Spirit,; the habit of walking minute by minute in yieldedness to the HS and God's word and you will bear the fruit of joy.

Meditate upon His word.

Go to church and church events to have fellowship and growth in God's word.

This brings us to the final point this morning

3. God's plan produces fear vs 14

Ecclesiastes 3:14 ESV

¹⁴ I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him.

¹⁴ I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it,

Perceived= (know, recognized learn), its based on intuitive or prior knowledge of God.

Here we find a contrast between the plan of God and that of man.

Mans plans often fail,are limited, brief.

What man does needs improvement , maintenance or change.

But God's plans in contrast have a different nature.

They are eternal, everlasting, endless, indestructible, permanent.

God plans include providentially preserving His works.

No one can add to God's plans and actions or take away from it.

In other words Gods plans, Gods thoughts , God's actions are perfect, true and solid.

The most crucial question is why did God do it in this way.

The answer:

God's plan and Gods actions are intended to produce a specific heart attitude in people

so that people fear before him.

Part of God's perfect plan includes perfectly sustaining what he created.

He controls whether you have the next breath or not

Psalm 104:29 ESV

²⁹ When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

Having dived in the ocean, I know how important each breath is that you take.

Knowing the full scope of what God does, produces a fear in mans hearts.

What does it mean to fear God

When we study the **term**

Ex 20:18 in response to God speaking in thunder and lightning on Mt Sinai, Gods people shook and staggered in real fear, but is this fearing God when Moses stated.

Exodus 20:20 ESV

²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

The fear of God is more than a reall natural fear of danger.

Its something that effects your behavior not to sin.

Dt 4:10 Produced by hearing the words of God.

Dt 6:1 -2 Hearing Gods word produced the fear of God that resulted in obedience.

Dt 10:20 fearing God relates to serving God and clinging to God

Dt 10:19 its something that is learned.

Proverbs teaches about the fear of the Lord

Pr 1:7 its described as the **beginning of wisdom**

Pr 2:5 produced by **receiving, studying, and seeking Gods** word

Pr 3:7 it relates to turning **away from evil**

Pr 8:13 is defined as **hating evil**

Pr 9:10 described as the beginning of **wisdom an knowledge of God**

Pr 14:2 causes you to turn away from what causes death

Pr 19:23 it **leads to life**

Ecc 3:14 God causes it by the very nature of what God does.

Based on this we define the fear of the Lord as

To **fear** God is an attitude of receptivity towards God that is learned by

Gods word and actions, and which results people believing, obeying, serving, loving and clinging to God.

What God does and how he does it and when is intended that:

- people fear Him that results
- in them believing
- serving
- obeying
- clinging to him and loving Him.

Application

As believers, you finding that your becoming more:

- disobedient
- lacking the desire to serve Him
- finding your not loving Him
- finding yourself impacted more by the world than God,

The problem may be the heart problem of not fearing Him

How do you solve that.

1. Repent
2. Ask the Lords enable ment through His HS, because apart from Him you cannot do anything.
3. Spend time studying Gods word about who He is and what He controls and does.
4. Study systematic theology

Next week we will look at the other 3 parts of Gods plan.

Conclusion

6 Parts of God's plan so that man would find joy in the basics despite life's wicked events

1. God's plan has a time for every event vs 1-11
2. God's plan gives joy vs 12-13
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4. God's plan has accountability vs 15-17
5. God's plan includes death to all vs 18-21
6. God's plan is joy despite ignorance of the future vs 22