

November 26, 2013 - Thanksgiving Service

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season,
a time for every activity under heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant and a time to harvest.
A time to kill and a time to heal.
A time to tear down and a time to build up.
A time to cry and a time to laugh.
A time to grieve and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.
A time to embrace and a time to turn away.
A time to search and a time to quit searching.
A time to keep and a time to throw away.
A time to tear and a time to mend.
A time to be quiet and a time to speak.
A time to love and a time to hate.
A time for war and a time for peace.

You know what I don't see in this scripture? "time give thanks." I also realized that most of the things on the list are opposite, [time cry/laugh; grieve/dance; keep/throw away – I keep my wife throws away]. The reason there is no mention of thanksgiving or a time to do the opposite of giving thanks is because it's always a time give thanks, and never a time not to give thanks.

Ephesians 5:20

And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 5:18b, 20 "Be filled with the Holy Spirit ... and give thanks for everything..."

When the Holy Spirit controls us we give thanks to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Notice Paul not say give thanks "for" all circumstances, but "in" all circumstances. Evil things can come to believers but evil does not come from God so we don't thank Him for those things. But even when evil things happen we can be thankful for God's presence to be with us and help us in those circumstances and the good He will accomplish through the distress. Learning to give thanks in everything is learning to trust God and trust that these situations will be used to build our faith.

So we pray, "Lord, I am sad with what is happening, I don't want it, but I know you have a plan, I trust you. I know you are in charge, and that what is happening is part of a bigger picture that I cannot see."

God is in charge.

Eccl. 3:1 says, "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven."

Think about the seasons. We don't control the seasons, they happen to us. Winter in about 3 weeks and as much as I'd like to prevent that, I can't. Winter is going to come whether I want it to or not. I can't control it, it's going to happen.

Thanksgiving is going to happen on Thursday, you can try to avoid it, you may not want anything to do with it, but it's going to happen. Same with Christmas. Season, and their holidays will happen whether we like it or not.

Same thing with the seasons of our lives.

A time to be born and a time to die.

A time to tear down and a time to build up.

A time to cry and a time to laugh.

A time to grieve and a time to dance.

A time to embrace and a time to turn away.

A time to tear and a time to mend.

A time to be quiet and a time to speak.

A time for war and a time for peace.

The seasons, winter, spring, summer, fall teach us about the seasons of our spiritual life. Just as the season will come so our struggles and joys will come, darkness & light will come we don't deny it we embrace it all, all that comes our way and find in it an opportunity to grow.

The philosophy of the world that we can make life whatever we want it to be, whenever we want it is just not completely true. We are not in charge, God is. How do you feel about that? How comfortable are you that you are not in charge?

Perhaps we should pray for wisdom to discern what God is doing in and thru our lives. Perhaps we should lay down our agenda and surrender to His will especially in those times or seasons that we don't prefer, and give thanks in them not for them but in them; Because we know God is in charge, God is with us, God has a plan, God is good.

The ruth is we have much to be thankful for

Times of

Birth

Harvest

Healing

Building up.

Laughter
Dancing
Gathering
Embracing
To quit searching.
Keeping
Mending
to be quiet and a time to speak
love
peace

And in Christ we can also be thankful in the opposite times b/c
He's in charge
He's almighty
He is w/us.
He loves us
He is good
He has a plan

Psalms 92:1-2,4-5

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to the Most High.
It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning,
your faithfulness in the evening,
You thrill me, LORD, with all you have done for me!
I sing for joy because of what you have done.
O LORD, what great works you do!
And how deep are your thoughts.

"If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, 'thank you' that would suffice."-
Meister Eckhart