

God Makes Everything Beautiful In His Time

Ecclesiastes 3:11

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When you are going through severe trials you will likely be tempted to question God's love, wisdom, power, or justice in what you suffer.

"How could God allow this tragedy to happen if He is love, if He is almighty, and if He is fair? How can God be all-wise and think that this is good for me? Where was God when this happened to my loved one?"

At such times, a very important and life-changing truth has been obscured: hope. We are only looking at our present pain and heartache. We are only considering our present loss. And it hurts. Wow does it hurt! However, what if God took that pain you have endured and made it a comfort and blessing to you and many others? What if that which appeared ugly was made by God into something beautiful beyond imagination? What makes the pain and sorrow of this life so unbearable is a sense of hopelessness. However, add to the equation that God will make everything beautiful in His own time, we have hope to press on. We can receive comfort and peace in knowing that God will take that which is ugly and make it beautiful. How it will all come together, we may not know. But the Lord WILL perfect that which concerns me (Psalm 138:8).

Solomon leads us to that hope in Christ. The main points from our text this Lord's Day are: (1) Searching for Joy in the Changeable Experiences of Life Brings Hopelessness (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8); (2) Searching for Joy in the Unchangeable Purpose of God Brings Hope (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

I. Searching for Joy in the Changeable Experiences of Life Brings Hopelessness (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

A. Solomon had tried everything the world has to offer to find an enduring joy and contentment (and he had the means to do so). In verses 1-8 he gives us a very good summary of the varied experiences of life—the good, the bad, and the ugly—regardless of one's wealth or power.

1. Why? In order to make clear to us this all important truth: Life is not stationary—it is in continual change. How can we ever depend upon anyone or anything in this life to secure for us a lasting joy and peace that will transcend all these daily changes? Just as quickly as earthly happiness comes to us—it will just as quickly be snatched from us if it is only rooted in the changing experiences of life.

2. The only One in whom a true joy can blossom and bear fruit now and for all eternity is the unchangeable Jesus: "Jesus Christ THE SAME yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). And it is this unchanging God who has ordained everything in your life and mine for His own most holy and wise purpose Solomon declares: Ecclesiastes 3:1.

B. Nothing in this world is so reliable as to ensure a lasting joy. The people, possessions, and pleasures of this life will end or disappoint us. We will fail to meet the expectations of others and others will fail to meet our expectations. And the closer we look at one another, the more we will see their sins, weaknesses, and imperfections. We may look great from a distance. But take a real close look for a period of time, and you will surely find many things in my life that will disappoint you. If anyone believes that is not the case, let me say in love, you are simply deceived.

1. I have found this truth to be one that sets me free from an unrealistic expectation in resting my joy and peace upon people (even those closest to me). People cannot make me truly happy. I should not expect them to do so. For they are finite, changeable sinners just like me. Though I should not condone their sin against God or against others, I should not be shocked when others fail God or disappoint me by their sin. If I am on that roller coaster where my joy depends upon how others treat me, then I will

never ever know the joy of the Lord in this life.

2. We are to enjoy the people and the things of this life as helps to our joy from the Lord, but not as the source of that joy. Only Jesus who never changes can be the source of our joy. So that even if every person, possession, and benefit in this life should be taken from us, we might still know and experience God's joy, contentment, and peace. And when we know and practice that truth, we will be able to enjoy rightly everything He has given to us in this life—not clinging to it as if it is our life. This truth is really an incentive to growing in our knowledge and love of Christ, for our life is Christ (Philippians 1:21). To the degree that we know Him, grow in Him, and enjoy Him to that degree we will grow in joy, contentment, and peace in all our trials.

3. Our frustration over the way that our plans do not work out (even if those plans are good plans) is God's way of showing us the futility of our own work in bringing a lasting joy. It is God's way of turning us to Him who is never frustrated, to Him who is never caught by surprise, and to Him who knows all things and ordains all things for His own glory and for the good of them who love Him. Are we learning from our frustration what God is teaching us? Just as pain should tell us something is wrong that needs to be fixed in our body, so our frustration should tell us something is wrong that needs to be fixed in our soul. The remedy to our frustration is Jesus Christ, for He alone is the Resurrection and the Life. He alone can take what looks to be dead and make it alive.

II. Searching for Joy In the Unchangeable Purpose of God Brings Hope (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

A. Whereas Solomon declares the search for joy in in the constantly changing experiences and people in this life will lead to frustration, anger, and hopelessness, he explains the search for joy in the purpose of God will bring hope; for "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time."

1. Here is the cure to our frustration over people that disappoint us and over plans that are delayed or never materialize. God by His inscrutable wisdom has made all of the events that occur in our life (even those that are most ugly to us) beautiful in His time.

a. God took the raw materials of the universe that He spoke into existence out of nothing and which were "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2) and began every day of creation week to bring forth the beauty/order of this universe and world so that by the end of that week, our Creator declared: Genesis 1:31. God could have spoken immediately into existence everything in its beauty and order, but He took time to shape and to mold it into that which was beautiful. So likewise, Solomon declares with regard to God's providence, He will take everything in your life and mine that seems as though it is "without form and void" (ugly and chaotic) and make it all beautiful in His time.

b. "In his time"—not in our time, not according to our calendar, but according to His calendar (whether we live in this world or have passed into His heavenly glory). We want the ugly turned into beauty immediately, but He teaches us the grace of patience to wait upon Him and upon this truth in faith (even when we do not see anything happening). We walk by faith not by sight or feelings (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is "the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

c. The Hebrew verb for "hath made" is in the perfect tense which carries the sense that it is already accomplished (that is, He has already made everything beautiful in His time). It is as good as done; for in eternity, God perfectly decreed His plan for your life and mine in such a way that every detail of it would bring Him glory and would ultimately bring order out of chaos and beauty out of ugliness. Nothing in our lives will be wasted or unnecessary. Nothing in our lives will end up ugly. No trial, no heartache, no affliction, no delay, or no loss in our lives ACCIDENTALLY appears in your life or mine. There is an ordained purpose for it all. And there will be a good end for it all in glorifying God and in beautifying us, His people. He has promised it, and He cannot lie.

2. It is impossible to find true joy, contentment, and peace in this life apart from resting in

this truth. For how can you find joy in this life if there is no rhyme or reason for all the ugly events that occur? Here, my friends, is a certain remedy to hopelessness and despair. Our hope and confidence are in a most wise and loving God who has ordained beauty out of ugliness, glory out of shame, hope out of despair, rejoicing out of tears, and praise out of pain and misery.

3. We may not live to see all wrongs righted and all ugliness made beautiful. But in God's time (whether in this life or in heaven), He will make all things beautiful. That's our unchangeable hope. When we reach that heavenly shore, we will have heaven's perspective on all the miseries of this life. Then we will see the beauty of God's wisdom in ordaining what He did for our lives. Then it will make sense to us. Then the veil will be lifted from our eyes. Let us cling to the truth that God has already made all the ugliness we have brought upon ourselves or others have brought upon us beautiful in His time. This is our comfort and peace in the midst of all the miseries of this life.

4. We have many examples in Scripture in which we see the trials and miseries of life transformed into something beautiful.

a. Joseph was hated by his brothers and sold into captivity, but was made the governor of Egypt to save the very brothers who hated him. That which was ugly was made beautiful.

b. Naaman, the Syrian general, contracted leprosy, but was humbled and made whole by God so as to take the salvation of God back to his people in Syria. That which was ugly was made beautiful.

c. Job was severely afflicted and tried, but was upheld by the Lord, healed, and restored two-fold of all that he previously possessed. That which was ugly was made beautiful.

d. The cruel torments of the Lord in suffering the wrath of God and of man became to us our salvation from sin, death, and hell. That which was ugly was made beautiful.

5. Solomon is not saying that we should not see the ugliness and the misery of sin within us and all around us and that we should not mourn the effects of sin, repent and seek His forgiveness. But what he is saying is that we must look in faith beyond what we can see and what we feel to God who has made and shall make all things beautiful in His time.

B. There are two reasons why we do not see and understand God's purpose in the ugliness in us and all around us.

1. **First reason:** We do not fully understand what God has purposed due to our own sin. Sin blinds us to God's purposes so that all we see are our own plans, our own feelings, our own losses, our own pain, and our own trials. Sin mires us so much in ourselves that we cannot see and do not even want to see God's purposes. That is the nature of sin—it is consumed with self alone in our trials and our sufferings—not with what God is seeking to accomplish in bringing something beautiful out of that which is ugly and painful. Are our pride, self-pity, and preoccupation with self keeping us from seeing the eternal purpose of God in our suffering (John 9:1-4; John 11:4-6; 2 Corinthians 12:8-10)? That's what Jesus says, not me!

2. **Second reason:** We do not fully understand what God has purposed due to our own finiteness (our own human limitations). There will always be a cloud to some degree in fully comprehending the eternal purposes of God in what He has ordained in this world by way of miseries due to the sin of Adam. Even in heaven, though we will certainly understand more than we do now, we will never have God's infinite knowledge to fully understand all that He has purposed in this world. But we will be at peace, because we will know then (without sin to hinder us) that God has made all things beautiful in His time. What we will then know without sin to hinder us, let us grow now in learning day by day—God hath made all things beautiful in His time.

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