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There is a Purpose

Eccl 3:1

To everything there is a season,

A time for every purpose under heaven:

Can any statement be more disturbing? This suggestion that there is purpose in all the seasons of our lives?

Yes, we can believe that there is a purpose in birth, in love, in laughter, but how can there be purpose in death? In loss? In grief? In sadness?

But yet the basic fabric of our lives has to be built on the reality of purpose. The writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to say in Eccl 3: 11 that *He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

At times, I find myself wanting to have a word with God on this matter! “No, God, surely this season is not beautiful and you cannot be working in this. I can’t see it.” I feel with the writer of Ecclesiastes that I can’t figure out this work that God is doing.

As believers, we grope and wrestle for meaning in the midst of our struggles because of the very eternity that God has put in our hearts. Encounters with God, whether we would categorize them as springtime, summer, fall, or winter, have eternal importance and all leave the taste of purpose in our mouths.

The pages of the Word are filled with purpose encounters. Abraham offering Issac and leaving the mountain with a new piece of understanding of God’s heart and provision. Jacob wrestling with God and exiting the experience with a limp of wholeness that he had never had before. David weeping over his son’s death and giving way in his heart to accept God’s answer and rise again, preparing himself to walk more fully in his destiny.

The woman at the well finding the challenge of relationship over religion connecting with her deepest longing to be loved. Peter preaching at Pentecost, knowing that his failure had given ground to the birthing of an unquenchable longing to walk with this God who had filled him with purpose. John, on the isle of Patmos, with nothing except a pure love for Christ filling him with purpose.

With David we can cry out, “Oh, God, do not abandon the works of your hands in my life! Fulfill your purpose for me because of your enduring love.” (Psalm 138:8)

With a sense of inner abiding peace, we hold onto the hope that one day it will be said of us, as it was of David, that we fulfilled our purpose in our generation (Acts 13:36).

Part of the challenge of embracing the difficult seasons of our lives is the ability to see purpose in those seasons. Whether we are able to do that with a strength in our faith or just a wavering hope, we must grasp for this truth. There is a purpose, and in it and through it, God will bring beauty. The beauty will have eternal significance.

One day when the art of our lives is a finished work, the canvas of our life will speak of purpose. It will be beautiful. Every season will belong. As the mystery of God’s seasonal work unfolds in our hearts, we must hold on to the hope of that purpose. Whatever understanding we have of it in our lives, we must keep before our eyes and in our hearts. The rest must lie before Him in our open hands in surrender and trust.

In John 12:27, Jesus declared that he had come to a season in his life that was painful for him emotionally, spiritually, and mentally, but he said “I came for this purpose.” We are told that he endured

the cross for the joy that was set before him. I believe that that joy was deeply entwined with purpose. He would redeem us. He would restore relationship with us.

In much the same way, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to embrace what God was doing in their lives with the viewpoint of eternity and purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

I pray the revelation of His purposes in your life would be strengthened. And may you learn along with me, perhaps stumbling along through the process, that there is a purpose for every season. May you be filled with God's grace to embrace those purposes, both seen and unseen, and know that He is able to create in you a work of eternal beauty. May His handprints and His fingerprints be tangible to you along the way.

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