Ecclesiastes Sermon Series:
Week of May 5, 2024

2023-24 Aim Check-in
- Becoming disciples who make disciples, who make disciples.
- Creating a community of faith that meaningfully engages our community of residence.

1. Since you last met as a H2H group, have you made any movement towards the aims we've set?
2. How might we as a H2H group help support or encourage you towards these aims?

Discussion Questions Set #1

"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." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, NLT)

1. In sermon, Gerry brought forward three specific points from the first eight verse of Ecclesiastes 3. Discuss each one, focussing on how this might be applied within your life today, within your H2H group or within the corporate life of Hillside?

   a. It is important to recognize God's timing and not change it.
   b. It is important to accept God's timing (even if it involves temporary pain and loss).
   c. If we align with God's timing, the outcome will have a positive spiritual impact on our lives.
2. How might one recognize or discern God's timing? What practices have you found to be helpful in this endeavour?
3. What does it mean to align with God's timing? What might this look like practically in your life, in the life of your H2H group or within the life of Hillside?

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Discussion Questions Set #2

"I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God." (Ecclesiastes 3:10-13)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

"… from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do." (1 Chronicles 12:32)

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

"And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." (Romans 13:11)

In our passage today, the Teacher of Ecclesiastes considers the timing of all things and ultimately concludes that humanity cannot know how God is active within any given "time". His advice seems to be that we ought to simply sit back and allow what will come to come, doing good whenever possible and enjoying whatever modicum of satisfaction comes from such activity.

1. How might you balance the Teacher's position with what we read to be true in 1 Chronicles 12:32, Romans 12:2 or Romans 13:11? What might these verses suggest about the Teacher's conclusion that God's will within time is "unknowable"?
2. Does Isaiah 55:8-9 suggest that God's ways are "unknowable"? What does it suggest?
3. Is there truth in the Teacher's advice? Ought we as followers of Jesus do nothing more than allow the flow of time to confront us head on, rolling with whatever it brings, because God's purposes are that far beyond us?
4. How might having an "under the Son" worldview change our application/conclusion?

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