

Making Peace with the Past and our Inquiring Minds

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Ecc 3:1-15

We are incurably curious creatures.

The desire to know "why" is compounded when we say, "I know things happen for a reason."

I. God is Sovereign over Time and Events (3:1)

A. Not instructive or prescriptive

B. Not fatalism or despair

C. The sovereignty of God over all things

II. The Events of Life (3:2-8)

The structure of the poem

a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to kill, and a time to heal;

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

a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

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

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

a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

a time to tear, and a time to sew;

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

a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

III. Our Inquiring Minds or The Burden to Understand (3:9-11)

A. The thematic question:

B. The burden

1:13

C. The beauty of providence

D. The consciousness of eternity

E. The burden

IV. Counsel for the Curious (3:12-15)

A. Rejoice and do good

B. Embrace life as God's gift

C. What we do know

Conclusion/Application

1. Gently affirm God's sovereignty without denying human responsibility

2. Affirm the "naturalness" of wanting to know

"It's not wrong to want to know something. But when that desire mutates into a demand or a "need," it takes on a life of its own, sucking up time and attention, undermining the worship and love that a Christ-follower should have in his daily life." Matthew C Mitchell (JBC 28:1 (2014) 66-75

3. Warn of the danger of "demanding" to know

"So, this "need to know" has been ruling me—more than I'd like to admit. When I'm in its grip, it serves as a god-replacement for me—the most important thing in my life at that moment. It's also a way that I try to play god. I'm trying to pretend that I'm omniscient—or at least growing into it. That's ridiculous. Only God is God. He goes to great lengths to reassure me and calm my anxious heart (more on that below), but he won't let anything else take his place—including a juicy piece of information." Matthew C Mitchell

4. Point to the God whom we can trust, without having to know "why"

"I will not demand that God explain himself to me at any time, for this is characteristic of the unregenerate man. I must be willing to let God be unreasonable, in my view, if necessary, because he is not concerned with my understanding, but with my faith. The unregenerate man sees contradiction in the world and demands that God justify himself before him; the believing man makes no such demand, but believes God supremely" W. Glyn Evans (Quoted in Jim Andrews, Polishing God's Monuments, 50-51).

"My greatest need is not to know information; it is to know a person - Jesus." Matthew C Mitchell

Psa 131