

MAGNOLIA MINDS: What time is it?

By Rex Yancey
Correspondent

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which 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 get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, 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 of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 KJV)



Yancey

One of my friends woke up one morning and told his wife that the new time change was killing him. She said, "Honey, it doesn't change for two more weeks!" The older I get the more I can identify with his pain.

Solomon, king of Israel in the ninth century B.C. and the writer of Ecclesiastes, said, "There is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven." He stresses the importance of time and its relationship to every aspect of human life.

Solomon was trying to make some sense of life. I expect all of us have been closet philosophers at some point in our lives. I thought about majoring in history until I realized there was no future in it. One man thought he would be a butcher until he realized he couldn't hack it!

These first eight verses of Ecclesiastes chapter three are some of the most popular verses in the Bible. These verses have been the subject of poems, songs, and quotes. The verses hit us where we live.

– Solomon talks about birth and death. These are the two bookends of life. Man had better be careful when it comes to tinkering with either one of them. I do not think the writer had in mind legalized abortion and euthanasia when he wrote this.

– Solomon talks about planting and harvesting. There is a time to sow seed and a time to gather the harvest into the barn. I love it when someone comes up to me and reminds me that God used me to touch their lives. Many times, I do not remember them or when they encountered God.

– There is a time for dying and a time for healing. Why do some get well and others do not? This is one of the great mysteries of life. I have witnessed the deaths of some good people. I have witnessed the healing of some notorious characters.

– There is a time for tearing down and a time for building up. I visited Megiddo in the modern state of Israel many years ago. I was informed that fifteen cities had been built in that one spot over the centuries.

– Solomon talks about weeping and laughing. Life is a roller coaster ride. Some of you are laughing today because you are celebrating something good. However, some of you are sad for one reason or another.

– There is a time for mourning and a time for dancing. King David, Solomon's father and predecessor on the throne of Israel, mourned after his illicit affair with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother.

However, he danced in the streets after his soldiers won a great victory. Our problem is we mourn what we ought to rejoice and rejoice over what we should mourn.

– Solomon talks about throwing stones and gathering stones. In war, people would throw stones in the fields of their enemies to hinder the cultivation of crops. The people of that day would also gather stones to build facilities. There is a time to be on the defensive and a time to be on the offensive.

– There is a time to embrace and a time not to embrace. There is a time to hug your children and a time not to hug your children, like when you drop them off for school.

– There is a time to gain and a time to lose. Those of you who have invested in the stock market will understand this. If you are on a weight program, you also will appreciate this verse of Scripture.

– Solomon talks about a time to keep and a time to throw away. Is this a biblical mandate for garage sales?

– He talks about tearing apart and mending. When our children go off to college, we are torn. When they come back home, we are torn.

– There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak. There are some folks who will never learn this. When I fly overseas, I want to make sure that my seating companion knows when to talk and when to be quiet.

– There is a time to love and a time to hate. There are some things we should hate and some things we should love.

– Solomon talks about a time for war and a time for peace. If

Satan is the god of this world and sin persists, there will be wars.

With those thoughts and the upcoming Daylight Savings Time change on our minds, I want to try to answer the question, "What time is it?"

The first thing I will mention is that it's later than you think. One of our problems is that we take tomorrow for granted. As a result, we put off important decisions, especially spiritual decisions.

Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (KJV).

The Roman Governor Felix told the Apostle Paul he would call for him at a more convenient time. However, we have no record he ever got a more convenient time.

Secondly, it is never time to quit. This is the biggest danger that confronts God's people – the temptation to quit. If you are a faithful Christian, God bless you. I know from experience that you have been tempted to quit.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (KJV). Jesus said, "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4 KJV).

There are three actions we need to do to keep from quitting. First, we must confront discouragement. It is bound to happen. We are vulnerable when we are discouraged.

Secondly, we are to resist defeat. We are to stay the course and never give up. Thirdly, we must exercise our faith. The Apostle Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10 KJV).

British conservative politician Richard Needham said the seven ages of man are spills, drills, thrills, bills, ill, pills,

and wills. Where are you on that list?

Yancey is a retired Mississippi Baptist pastor living in Brandon. He is the author of two books, Jerked Up and Called: Memoirs of a Mississippi Baptist Minister, and Hot Off the Press: Post Katrina Thoughts. He may be contacted at rexyancey@dixie-net.com.

Opinions expressed on this website are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, The Baptist Record, nor the publication's Advisory Committee.