



"TIME"

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS

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BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY: ECCLESIASTES 3

In this week's message on Ecclesiastes 3, we see "the Teacher" reflect about time. The writer contemplates two categories, time and eternity, examining their impact on human life. Within the realm of time, change is a constant. If things are good, something bad, or unpleasant, will eventually come our way. If our circumstances are bad, we can take heart because they will eventually turn around and offer us something good.

For the most part, eternity exists outside of time. It is God's realm, but he created us with a desire for it and him. That's what it means to have "eternity on our hearts." And while we humans generally live in the realm of time, eternity invades time with the coming of Jesus.

Though we can't save time in a bottle, we can experience eternity when we receive Jesus and his gift of eternal life – a life of abundance. Take a moment and explore what the scripture says about time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Change. Do you love it or hate it, and why?
2. What is your favorite Pop song from your school years?
3. What is your favorite season? What makes it special to you?
4. What is your favorite place on earth? What makes it so?
5. Describe the happiest time in your life...in the past two weeks. What brought you such joy?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Read Ecc. 3:1-8. What do you notice about the symmetry of the couplets in this poetic passage? Why do you suppose the author wrote it this way?
2. How does the Ecc. 3:12-13 speak to the question in verses 9-10? How can your work ("toil") bring you happiness?
3. How does Ecc. 3:11 speak to both eternity and infinity? In your own words, what's the difference?
4. In John 4:7-15, a scripture that records Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well, what does Jesus offer her? How does he offer the same us?
5. What does Jesus say in John 10:9-10 about the life he gives?

CONTINUED:

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What couplets might you add to Ecc. 3:1-8 that reflect the world and times we live in?
2. What contemporary examples can you give of Ecc. 3:11, where the author says that God makes everything beautiful in its time?
3. In the message, we saw eternity reflected in God's awesome handiwork, namely Yosemite National Park. What examples of eternity have you seen in your home state? In your city? In your neighborhood?
4. If Jesus first came today instead of in the 1st Century, what context do you see him delivering the message given to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:7-15?
5. How does our current culture view "abundant life?"

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How do you view "abundant life" in the sphere of your world today? How do you know when you have struck abundance?
2. What does it look like for you to have "abundant life" now? Do you think of eternal life as something you can experience today, or something in the future? Why?
3. Recall a moment in your life when time stood still. How did you experience God's eternity in that moment?
4. How has God made things beautiful in their time in your life?
5. How have you experienced the realm of time? How about God's eternity? What different ways does God show you eternity today?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Take a moment to pause in the coming week to intentionally look around. Look inside and listen to what God is sharing with you about the "eternity" that he has placed in your heart. Rest there. Receive. Recharge. Respond.
2. Jesus gives forgiveness for the past and hope for the future so we can live in the now. Think about the abundance He offers, which addresses our regrets over yesterday's mistakes and our fear about tomorrow. Have you received his offer today? Have you ever received his life? Would you like to? If so, invite him to "...come right in and sit down at supper with you." (Rev. 3:20)