

Sunday the 31st of January 2021

We read from the Bible: Ecclesiastes 3,1-15 (Djomee)

Theme: Would-be happiness of meaningful life (3): A time for everything

Introduction

As grandson of a jeweller I always have a good watch. In our family watches are important. Time is important. It is important to have the right time.

And when you become older you understand that time is important. Life goes fast. So the question is: what will you do with your time?

The author wants us to think about time. Sometimes you can not understand how things happen. Once I had a funeral and a wedding during one afternoon. Such different things. Sometimes plans change very quick. One moment they built an airfield during several years in Lelystad (NL), but now we wonder if it is necessary because corona makes that we do not use that much aeroplanes. Can you understand life and time?

The author of Ecclesiastes 3 makes a poem of this. Seven lines with four different situations. Seven is in the Bible the number of totality (think of seven days in one week). So he describes our whole life with all those different situations. See verse 1: birth and death: whole life. Weeping and laughing, war and peace, being silent and speaking. What is the meaning of this all? How do we have to deal with our time?? He gives us several advises:

Advise 1: take your time

A lot of people are always in a hurry. Are you one of them? We hardly have time for all the things we have to do. But the author tells us that there is a special time for everything. He uses a plural: times. Every moment has its own character and colour and chances. Time is a present from God to you. He has time and gives time. So take time for every moment. If you have to mourn, take your time. It is important. Do not go to fast to your normal order. You need time to give your grief a place. And if you have something beautiful, take time to enjoy. Everything needs his own time.

Advise 2: Evaluate time

Maybe we think: this is great. Not every day is the same. We like variety. But the author wants us to see that it is not only positive. All those contrasts. We can't understand them. God created time for a positive purpose: to have a good relationship with Him, friendship, eating, working, playing. How great! But now we have stress, pressures, brokenness, death. This is not where time was meant for. Sin made this problem. We were meant to live with God, but the first human beings left God (Adam and Eve). So now time is not only positive. Think about this. Verse 11 tells us that human beings know that life has a meaning. We have to look for that!

Advise 3: Let time loose

Our problem with time is, that we want to control it. If there is no God, we have to use time on our own. We have to make something out of life. But we can not manage time. We have no control. Maybe you are busy and the next moment electricity fails. Or unexpectedly there is an accident. And now we have unexpectedly a coronacrisis. Susanne Piët says: Modern people deleted God and now they have to make themselves happy. Now we have a problem!

Verse 14 tells us: you have to discover that God has everything in his own hands. We need awe. We can not manage this world, but God can and He wants to it. God did an intervention in this world. He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ. Now He tries to repair this world. So we have to pray: forgive us our feelings of independence. We need to trust you!!

There is a good story that makes clear that we need to focus on God. It is about a farmer. He works with horses. One day his horse falls down and is dead. The people say: terrible! He says: we will see. Then the inhabitants of the village collect money for him and he can buy a new horse. But then the horse runs away. The people say: terrible! The farmer says: we will see. Three days later the horse is back with ten wild horses. But the next day the son of the farmer rides on one of these horses. He falls down and breaks his leg. The people say: terrible. The farmer says: we will see. The next day soldiers come to the village. They force all the boys to fight in the army, because there is a war. But the son of the farmer needs not to come ...

This story has a special meaning. With all what happens trust God. There is more than we can see. Trust God. Do not manage your own life. Let time loose and give it to God. It will give you rest.

Advise 4: Expect God's time

God is the One who arranges time. His heart, His love is behind His plans! Galatians 4,4-5. When time was ready according to his plan, He sent His only Son. He arranges time. And Jesus says in Matthew 26,18 that the moment has come that He wants to die and give his life for us. He took our sins away on the cross. He got the punishment we earned. And when will come the Kingdom

of God? Acts 1,7: God knows the right time. What do we have to do? Mark 1,15: for us it is the right time to change our lives and follow Jesus. Do not wait, now is the right moment. Today God asks you to trust Him. You can trust Him! He manages time. He has great plans!

Conclusion

For us our time is a big puzzle. It is like the box of the puzzle. We miss the front. We don't know what it looks like. So is our life. We don't know. God knows!

Don't be afraid. Do not despair. Trust God. He know the front of the puzzle. We don't understand time. But His time comes that everything will be ok. His Kingdom comes. Jesus comes back. Expect Him with great joy!

God bless you!

Pastor/minister Jan Bosch.