

“How Do We Consider Time?”

Series: *Book of Ecclesiastes*

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, Matthew 6:24-35

Rev. Mary Bowman

September 21, 2025



First Presbyterian
Church of Charlotte

This morning, we are consider time . . . and I think it is safe to say that as a culture, Americans are overly preoccupied¹ with time.

In our culture, we never seem to get away from the influence of time.

It is said that time flies, and yet for most of us, time seems to perch rather heavily on our wrists and on our lives.

Time affects us in many ways . . . physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

We feel stressed by time, crunched by time, pushed by time, stretched by time, and hurried by time.

We are asked to manage and control time even though we have no actual ownership of time.

In our culture, time has become a taskmaster.

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Now it might surprise you to know that the Bible is also overly preoccupied with time.²

But perhaps it won't surprise you that the Bible's preoccupation with time is different than our own culture's preoccupation with time.

We get our first hint of the Bible's preoccupation with time in the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible when are told that God put the sun in the sky. Just like that — days were created.

And just as suddenly — time, too, had been created.

The Bible makes it very clear that the creation of time is a gift of our Triune God.

And not only that, but time is never separate from God.

Because time can never be separate from God, all of time is sacred time.

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And this is where our culture's understanding of time parts ways with the Bible's understanding.

We might say that our culture operates on “chronos time.” Chronos is the Greek word that defines time as chronological, sequential, and quantitative.³

¹ “Time,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 870.

² Ibid..

³ Google search “AI Overview” for “meaning of Greek word chronos”

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In “chronos time,” clocks and calendars are the standard for measuring the passing of our lives.

The Bible also references “chronos time” but there is another world that is more suited to time in the Bible and that is “kairos time.”

The Greek word kairos gives time a different meaning. “Kairos time” is time that leans into the divine. Kairos time is an opportune or appointed time—a moment of God's perfect timing and action.

Time flows differently in these kinds of moments. The standard for kairos time is our deeper connection with God, with others, with ourselves, and with life.

Time becomes sacred when we notice God in it and when we draw close to God.

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The author of Ecclesiastes is highlighting “kairos time.” The seasons he lists are not chronological seasons, these are specific seasons, an occasion that is right for something. Each of these seasons are a unique opportunity to experience God at work.

I do not know what season of time you are in.

Some of us are in more than one.

And certainly many of us are in a season of grief as we continue to process the news of our senior minister's infidelity.

Allen Lang notes that there are some times when we are more aware of kairos time, more aware of God being with us. Lang suggests that it is times of change, times of suffering, times of death and times of trying to make meaning of things that we are most aware of God in the midst of time.⁴

The author of Ecclesiastes highlights these acute types of seasons . . . a time to die, a time to weep, or a time for war. But the author also highlights seasons that do not appear to be especially poignant . . . a time to sew or a time to dance. We do tend to notice God most in time and seasons when life is at its highs or at its lows.

We tend to notice “kairos time”, when we are aware of the graces of God or when we are desperate for the graces of God.

⁴ Andrew Lang, <https://www.andrewlang.com/past/kairos-chronos>.

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But every season is an occasion to notice the sacredness of time because God is in it. Whether we are dancing or mourning, laughing or crying, it is an occasion to notice God in it. The One who created time for us so we could commune with God in it.

I have a habit of jotting down phrases that I hear or that I come across when I am reading. Phrases that I want to remember or think more about. As I was preparing this sermon, I came back across this phrase about grief.

“Grief is more about transformation than consolation.”⁵

I don’t think the author is saying that we won’t be consoled in our grief. It is in the nature of God to console.

Rather, I think the author is suggesting that there can be even more than consolation, there can be transformation. There can be healing and growth in seasons that are hard. Growth in our relationship with God. Transformation in ourselves. Growth in our relationship with one another.

Each season is an invitation to partner with God in what each season might hold . . . because . . . God is already in all of it.

And we remind ourselves of this especially when we are in seasons that are not of our choosing.

In our New Testament passage, Jesus also speaks to life’s challenges.

I love the way that Jesus keeps it real by acknowledges that every day has its trouble.

Jesus suggests that the secret is to remember that God is in every moment and to try to remain in the present with God . . . leaning into God and to the season . . . and to not be overwhelmed.

Trusting that there can be healing and transformation if we will walking through that season with God.

When a season appears that we do not want to have any part of . . . Jesus says: “let’s take it one day at a time.” “Stick with me for I am with you.”

Every day . . . every hour . . . every minute, we are invited into the sacred, into sacred time, into time where God is with us.

⁵ I wish I had noted where this quote came from.

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In this season of grieving — or whatever season you are in . . . can we open ourselves to God’s consolation and transformation?

Can we hold this season of grieving as sacred?

Can we wonder what transformation God wants to bring — even while God consoles?

Can we recognize that with every new moment, with every new season, with every new minute, God is creating something new?