Seasons of Life

**Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens**

Intro – Seasons & times frame our lives – we all know what it means to experience different seasons. Many of us will have times that we love to remember and times that we wish we could forget! Life is full of such times, seasons of plenty, seasons of lack, seasons marked by adversity, seasons of rejoicing! This is life! There is a time and a season for everything! Many Christians are surprised when their lives enter a season other than summer! But the Scripture teaches us that we need seasons to help us become fruitful and fulfilled in our lives. The scriptures talk of many different kinds of seasons that we need to understand. There are seasons of:

- Fruitfulness and harvest
- Preparation
- Joy and happiness
- Sorrow and trial
- Opposition and battle
- Salvation and healing
- Prayer and repentance
- Action or waiting – many more

We need to recognise what God wants to do in us and through us in these different seasons. In **Jeremiah 8:7 "Even the stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the LORD."** God looks for his people to understand the times that we are living in and what is happening in our society. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day because they did not know the days they were living in, **Matthew 16:2 "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."** So too we as the people of God must learn to understand the times we are living in so we can live to please God rather than ourselves. Understanding the season that we find ourselves in as an individual, a church, a nation helps us to respond in the most appropriate way for a disciple of Jesus. Rather than getting overwhelmed by the change in our circumstances
we are able to face the new time or season and respond in a way that helps us to live as disciples of Christ. All of you are living in a particular season of your life right now! For some it fills you with excitement and expectancy, for others trepidation! But I want you to understand today it is only a season in your life! I want us to think about the seasons of life for the next few weeks and how we can enjoy them and endure them!

Seasons are beyond our control! Genesis 8:22 “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” The first thing to recognize about seasons is that we do not control them! We can only respond to them! Seasons are a reminder to us that there is a greater force at work in our lives. That God has established his pattern for life and we need to acknowledge our place and His! MT 5:45 “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” This means when we find ourselves in a season of life that we perhaps would rather not be experiencing, the key to moving forward is to learn what God is doing in the midst of it, or simply to trust him in the midst of it! The temptation when things are beyond our control is to panic or get angry, or to get mad at God. Seasons remind us that God’s purpose stand above our own!

Seasons are for a purpose! Psalm 1:3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. This verse tells us that seasons have a purpose in life! Yields its fruit in season! We understand this naturally well enough! This tells us that there are seasons of fruitfulness and then also by implication seasons where we are prepared for fruitfulness! Jesus spoke about the vine being pruned so it could be fruitful! A season of preparation! Remember Noah building an ark, years of preparation to protect him against the flood! A season of work, to protect against a season of flood!

Here is the deal, we don’t always understand the season we are in! We don’t always know what the reason for the season is! John 13:7 Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing but later you will understand.” Hindsight reveals what we didn’t
understand! God had a purpose! It wasn’t obvious to us at the time, but we began to understand as life moved on! Titus 1:3 which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior

Seasons bring variety to life! Song of Solomon 2:11–13 See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. We all know what it is like to look out the window, and see the shoots of life springing up, and the sun shining through – the rain has gone! God gave us seasons so we can enjoy the variety of his creation!

Just as the seasons of nature bring variety and different feelings into our lives, so to the seasons of life, give life a rich tapestry! If you only have summer, you end up with a desert! We need the seasons to bring a richness of experience! Ray Bevan – quilt! If you look at just the season you are in, life is monochrome, but when you begin to see the seasons that God has led you through you begin to see the many ways that God has blessed you! It is this variety that makes life so rich! That gives us joy and teaches us perseverance!

Seasons help us develop new skills! Ecclesiastes 3:5–8 “a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.” It is the different seasons in life that help us adapt and develop new skills and abilities. This is how we grow and develop. Often a change in season means we have to overcome our limitations or lack of experience and try something new! We see that in natural development, 1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. It is the new season of manhood that makes us develop new skills and abilities!

This is why we need different seasons in our lives. Because they push us to develop new skills and abilities, new solutions to
problems! This is not always what we want! Sometimes the way we are wired and the season we are in makes us want to settle down and be still! But a new season comes and moves us forward!

Seasons determine our choices! 1 Chronicles 12:32 from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do I love this verse! When you know the season you are in you understand what you should do! The season means making different choices! We understand this naturally, we put on warmer clothes in winter and in summer! Making different choices because of the season! Proverbs 30:25 Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer They make a different choice to survive the winter! This is why it is important to be able to understand the season of your life, because your choices are connected to the season! If your business is doing well, you can invest! If its not you must control your spending! The season affects the choices! If we make the wrong choice for the season then we will suffer the consequences! Proverbs 20:4 Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing. Jesus told the parable of the foolish virgins, who knew they were in a time of waiting for the groom, didn't choose to be prepared and missed his coming! The choices we make are often connected to the season we are in! We need to pray for wisdom to know what to do in the situation we are in!

Seasons Change! Jeremiah 8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved." Finally we need to know that seasons change! One of the most wonderful thing about April is the evenings get lighter, new season! Everything starts to look better, alive, vibrant, flowers start to creep up!

Seasons change, none of us will live in a perpetual summer or a perpetual winter! We will experience seasons of fruitfulness and seasons of preparation! Of adversity and of blessing! Of hope and of despair! Of feasting and fasting! Of plenty and of little!

Daniel 2:20–21 “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. 21 He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

This changing of the seasons inspires us and sometimes fills us
with apprehension! But it is a part of our experience!

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Seasons:

- Are beyond our control – but we can decide how we respond to them!
- Have a purpose – although we don’t always understand it at the time, God is working in us and through us for His purpose
- Bring variety to life – they help us enjoy the riches of God’s gift and life and His creation
- Help us develop new skills – as we respond to new challenges and new opportunities
- Seasons determine our choices – we learn that we have to make different choices to make the most of the season that we are in!
- Seasons change – they move on – they are not permanent! They shall pass

You might be in a difficult season today
- Trust God in spite of it
- Remember that he has a purpose for you in it
- Know that the season will change and God’s plan will be revealed

You might be in a season of opportunity
- determine to choose well and make the most of it
- enjoy the riches of the day & rejoice in the goodness of God