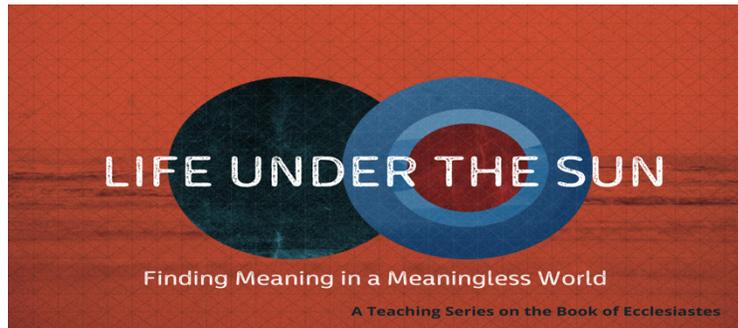


What is the Meaning of Life?



Ecclesiastes 3:1–15

BIG IDEA: God sovereignly controls the times and seasons, and we can't do anything to change them.

3 great truths about God's sovereignty over the times and seasons:

I. GOD'S POWER IS UNDENIABLE (vv. 1–9).

- A. God Controls Time.
 - 1. Time (28x).
 - 2. "Under heaven."
 - 3. 14 pairs of contrasts (7^2 = number of completion).
 - 4. Merism—contrasting points on the spectrum include everything in between.
- B. We Can't Do Anything to Change It.
 - 1. This is not fatalism or determinism.
 - 2. The goal is put man in his rightful place.

II. GOD'S WAYS ARE INSCRUTABLE (vv. 10–13).

- A. The Problem of Frustration (v. 10).
 - 1. If I'm powerless to change anything, what's the point?
 - 2. I don't like the way God rules the world!
- B. The Problem of Perspective (v. 11).
 - 1. The events in our life are not random. They are beautiful—proper.
 - 2. We have been created with a longing for transcendence.
 - 3. We want to know everything, yet we cannot figure out anything (1 Cor. 13:12).
 - 4. "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor" (Rom. 11:33).

C. Learning to Live in the Tension (vv. 12–13).

1. Trust God (Deut. 29:29).
2. Find joy in the times and seasons in which God has placed you.
3. Consider Paul's example.

III. GOD'S PURPOSES ARE UNSHAKEABLE (vv. 14–15).

A. Renew Your Hope and Confidence (v. 14a).

1. Whatever God wants to do He is going to do, and nothing can thwart His purposes (Job 42:2; Pss. 2:1–4; 115:3; Dan. 4:35; Lam. 3:37; Isa. 45:7).
2. Therefore, even in times of perplexity and despair, we can remain confident God is working out His purposes (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 4:8).

B. Renew Your Dependence Upon the Lord (v. 14b).

1. God has done it so that people may fear Him.
2. We are experiencing a loss of awe.