

John 11: The Resurrection & Life

A Time to Live and a Time to Die

John 11.7-16

Dialogue with the disciples

- ❖ The last time that we heard from the disciples was when they questioned Jesus about the man who had been born blind: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
- ❖ Theological misunderstanding and spiritual misperceptions are common deficiencies among Christ-followers.
- ❖ Jesus: “Let’s go to Judea.”
 - ▶ Disciples: “Are you serious? You want us to go back there? Remember those guys tried to kill you!”
- ❖ Jesus: “I’m going to wake up our friend, Lazarus.”
 - ▶ Disciples: “Well, Lord, if he’s only sleeping, he’ll get better.”
- ❖ Jesus: “The fact is, Lazarus is dead. But it’s all good. Let’s go to him.”
 - ▶ Disciple: “Let’s go too, so we can all die with him.”

A Time for Everything

So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . .

ECCLESIASTES 3.1

- ❖ A dear friend is deathly sick, his friends need him, Jesus is the one who has the ability to intervene and save his life—but Jesus delays for two days, until he knows his dear friend is dead.
- ❖ The timing of Jesus was never regulated by friendship, family relations, or the most urgent of needs, but always by the Father’s will and the Father’s glory. This was also true for the Apostle Paul—

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

ACTS 21.12-14

A time to . . .

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 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.

ECCLESIASTES 3.1-8

- ❖ In Solomon's list of contrasting life decisions, some are incidental but some have immense ramifications. What is the timing? How much risk is involved and is it worth it? What will I gain? What do I stand to lose? Do I have any sense of certainty regarding the outcome? Most important, however, is the necessity to seek the will of God and to know His timing. Joshua thought it was time to make peace, but he hadn't inquired of God. Peter thought it was a time to speak up in defense of Jesus but he was actually speaking the will of Satan. Nothing in the life of a Christ-follower should be determined without seeking to know God's will and the timing for doing His will. The disciples have yet to learn this necessity.

The Inability to See

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”

- ❖ Jesus responded to the disciples with a metaphor similar to his response to their question in chapter 9:

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

JOHN 9.3-5

- ❖ Spiritual perception is impossible apart from spiritual revelation—

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS 2.13-14

- ❖ The disciples did not understand the safety of being in the will of the Father (cf. John 10.29).
- ❖ The disciples did not understand that no one could take Jesus' life from him (John 10.18).
- ❖ The disciples could only see what was hazardous—not the opportunity for revelation (Jesus' power over death as the "I AM the resurrection and the life") and glorification (11.40-42).

What did Jesus understand that eluded the disciples?

- ▶ Timing, whether a circumstance or the whole of our lives, is according to God's plan, not our perceptions; and we have only the time (and the moments) allotted to us by God.

Your eyes saw my unformed body;

all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.

PSALM 139.16

A man's steps are directed by the LORD.

How then can anyone understand his own way?

PROVERBS 20.24

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

EPHESIANS 5.15-17

The Sovereignty of God

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ . . . What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.” ISAIAH 46.10-11

The foundation of God’s purposes in our lives is His sovereignty (controlling influence). The disciples saw their lives at the mercy of other forces and factors; Jesus knew that his life was submitted to and under the control of his Father. There are three aspects of the sovereignty of God, and each is deeply relevant to how we respond to His will and purposes in our lives.

(1) Control: Everything happens according to His plan and purpose.

His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

DANIEL 4.34-35

- ▶ God’s control is effective and universal: it covers all events and aspects of creation and nothing can thwart His purposes or prevent Him from accomplishing His plan.
- ▶ *God is in control therefore I can have confidence to boldly do whatever He calls me to do.*

(2) Authority: All His commands are to be obeyed.

So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

DEUTERONOMY 5.32-33

- ▶ His authority exists over every area of our lives, ordinary and sacred; His lordship over us as His people transcends all other authorities and loyalties; we should never waver in our obedience to Him.
- ▶ *God has all authority and I am under His authority; therefore, I can expect Him to fulfill His word.*

(3) Presence: He is with us in covenant commitment, causing everything to work according to His plan for us.

But now, this is what the LORD says — He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you . . . Yes, and from ancient days I am He. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?”

ISAIAH 43.1-2, 13

- ▶ He is with us, for us, and nothing can be against us. He will bless us, fight for us, and preserve us.
- ▶ His sovereignty is deeply personal: “I am with *you*.”
- ▶ *God is deeply committed to me; in following His will, wherever I am, He will be right there with me. I will experience His presence and see His purposes accomplished in my life.*

Encouragement from the life of Elijah

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

JAMES 5.17-18

- ❖ *God is in control, therefore, I can have confidence to boldly do whatever He calls me to do.*

Elijah was able to confidently stand before King Ahab and make the bold prediction that there would be a prolonged drought in Israel because he knew that God was in control of everything, including the destiny of nations and the weather, and that he was speaking the will of God in that moment of time.

- ❖ *God has all authority and I am under His authority; therefore, I can expect Him to fulfill His word.*

Elijah knew what God had promised to do (see Deuteronomy 28.22-24; 2 Chronicles 6.26; 7.13) and had every confidence, that, as God's representative, God would fulfill His word and Elijah's pronouncement.

- ❖ *God is deeply committed to me; in following His will, wherever I am, He will be right there with me. I will experience His presence and see His purposes accomplished in my life.*

God was with Elijah, protecting him, directing him where to go, and supernaturally providing for him. The prophesy of Elijah and the purposes of God were fully accomplished in Elijah's life and for God's glory.