

## There is Nothing Better than for them to be happy

### Ecclesiastes 3: 1-15

I think the weirdest thing about this quarantine is that it makes us forget that life is continuing on in the world outside of the places in which we have taken shelter. Just looking out our windows, we can see that the season of Spring is upon us. The season of renewal is happening. Nature is coming back to life regardless of our routines being disrupted, regardless of us trying to find a new normal in this time of uncertainty. All around us life is continuing on. Birth of new babies, deaths of loved ones, illnesses other than Covid-19 are being diagnosed. All of it is happening while we are in quarantine.

A colleague shared that while being in quarantine, she and her congregation are gathering each Wednesday night via Zoom to hold lectio divina and that this Ecclesiastes text has been the one to which they have turned week after week. Her congregation, like so many of us, are finding that these familiar words capture our current reality so well. We are in this here but not yet existence, this what is has already been reality, this what is to be already is experience. The words of this Ecclesiastes text capture this understanding of time which is filling our daily lives right now, that understanding being that "God has put a sense of past and future into our minds, yet we cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

And because of this weird sense of reality we are all experiencing right now, I want to do something a little different. Today, instead of a normal sermon, I would like to invite us take a few moments and center ourselves in the words of this text, to let their rhythm bring us comfort and peace, to let their understanding of how life flows and changes, to allow it to surround us with God's Spirit. Because even though we seem to have all this free time, we are busier than ever. And on top of that busyness, we are all about zoomed out. We are all about quarantined out. We are all about worn out. We are tired, body, mind and soul.

So this morning, I am switching things up a bit. I want us all to close our eyes and breathe....breathe in Christ's light and breathe out our fears. Breathe in God's love and breathe out our worries. Breathe in Christ's presence and breathe out our tiredness. I invite us all to hear these words again.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

<sup>2</sup>a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

<sup>3</sup>a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup>a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup>a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup>a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

<sup>7</sup>a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup>a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup>What gain have the workers from their toil? <sup>10</sup>I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. <sup>11</sup>He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. <sup>12</sup>I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; <sup>13</sup>moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. <sup>14</sup>I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. <sup>15</sup>That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.<sup>[a]</sup>

(Pause)

For me, for all of us as people of faith, it is in these moments of uncertainty which we need to experience God's presence the most. It can all be too much. But I try to find glimmers of hope each day. These glimmers of hope are what I find in this text... glimmers of hope which invite me to breathe deeply, to center myself, to drop my shoulders from my tense pose, to open my heart to God's presence in my midst...because "I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it."

This verse, verse 14 of our text, has become my prayer during this time. It helps to remind me that even though I don't have all the answers, nothing can and

nothing will ever separate me from the love of God. It reminds me that whatever God does has been, is now and forever will be. May it do the same for you as well.

Amen.