**Ecclesiastes 3**

**“No Time to Lose”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 31:15a *“My times are in Your hands.”*

**Lesson Focus:** We will take a “time out” and discuss Solomon’s reflections on time. There is a time for everything. There was even a time for Jesus to come and die for our sins. We will challenge the kids to consider the time they have been given as a gift from God and to put their time into His hands.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of “Times in Your Hands”. Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: No Time to Lose Clock

**Introduction:**

Ecclesiastes is a book that challenges us to THINK.

To get kids brains in “think” mode, we will introduce each lesson of Ecclesiastes with some sort of riddle or brain teaser. For this week:

Q: Which word is written incorrectly in the dictionary?

A: The word ‘incorrectly’!

**Starter Activity:** Introduce the idea of time by asking the kids what some of their favorite “times” are. When they were babies they may have had very important activities like tummy time, nap time, bath time, play time, etc. Share with them what “times” you get excited over (maybe even “Bible time” or “prayer time”).

**Bible Study:**

**Eccl 3:1**: “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose **under** **heaven**”

Notice that Solomon introduces this section using the phrase “under heaven”. Most of his focus the last two weeks has been on all things “under the sun” and how pointless life is without God. This slightly different phrase seems to include God in the picture as we will see God mentioned much more in our lesson today.

**Eccl 3:2-8:** A time for this, a time for that. These words are a poem and well known even in the world as they were put to a song that became famous years ago.

**Teachers**: Go ahead and read all of these verses through and plan to discuss a few of them in more detail.

Q: Did anyone notice the common pattern of each line of the poem?
A: Each are opposites!

As an example, v. 2 says there is “a time to be born”. What is the opposite of being born? Dying! And that is exactly what the rest of the verse says (“there is a time to die”).

These verses seem to sweep across everything that we experience in life (i.e. birth to death, weeping to laughter, winning to losing, and everything in between). Just as there is a “time” for some of our favorite times that we discussed at the beginning, there is a time for all of these other things.

v. 2: Again, it says there is a time to be born.

Q: Who has a birthday in the month of August? God appointed you to be born on that day!

This verse also says that there is a time to die. We don’t like to think about that, but it is the truth (Romans 5:12). Just as God appointed the day for you to be born, He has appointed the day for you to die.

v. 4: This verse talks about a time to mourn and weep and a time to laugh and dance.

Q: What are some experiences that cause us to mourn and weep?

Q: What are some experiences in life that cause us to laugh and dance?

Q: Has God appointed these times too? Yes!

v. 7: This verse talks about a time to be quiet and a time to speak.

Q: Right now, whose time is it to be quiet? Your time! (You should be listening!)

Q: Right now, whose time is it to speak? Mine as the teacher!

v. 8: This verse talks about hate vs. love and war vs. peace.

Q: When is it time to hate and be at war?

A: We are to hate sin and be at war with sin and Satan. Yes, we should hate Satan and everything he represents (i.e. lying, stealing, destroying)

Q: When is it time to love others and be at peace?

A: Almost always! As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers and to love others as Jesus Christ has loved us.

**Eccl 3:9-11**: Here Solomon truly looks “above the sun” to God and gives Him credit for being the God over all time. While we only have a “point of view”, God has a “complete view”.

v. 11a and 11c: God makes everything **beautiful** in **His** time and no one can fully understand God’s work.

This is where simple childlike faith and trust in God is essential. Romans 8:28 says that God works all things together for good to those who love Him.

Q: When God’s timing doesn’t make sense to us, will we trust in His goodness or will we insist on doing things according to our own time?

A: Our memory verse reminds us to “put our times in His hands”.

v. 11b: God has put eternity in our hearts!

Remember last week we talked about the hole in our hearts that only God can fill. We followed Solomon on his “Self-seeking Satisfaction-searching Treasure Hunt”.

Q: Did he find what he was looking for? No!

This verse tells us why.

Q: Who knows who Tom Brady is? On “60 Minutes” he was interviewed after winning the Super Bowl and said this,

*“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there’s something greater out there for me? Some people say I’ve reached my goal, but me, I think it’s got to be more than this…this can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be.”*

Here we have perhaps the greatest quarterback in the history of the game at the height of his fame, popularity, and status and he admits he still hasn’t found what he is looking for either.

God has put eternity in our hearts so that we will find our way to Him.

**Key Point:** If there is a time for everything, there is also a time for us to make a decision to follow Jesus.

Q: Have you done this?

* Just as God appointed a time for us to be born, He appointed a time for Jesus Christ to be born (Galatians 4:4) and come into this world to “seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)
* Just as God appoints a time for us to die, He appointed a time for Jesus Christ to die on the cross and also to be raised the third day so that we might be saved (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
* Finally, God has appointed a time when all will stand before His throne to be either eternally with Him in heaven or eternally “doing time” in hell. (Revelation 20:12)

You have “no time to lose”! If Jesus Christ is not your Lord and Savior, if Jesus Christ is not the treasure of your heart, then now is the time to be saved!

**Read 2 Corinthians 6:2b**: “*Behold, now is the accepted* ***time****; behold, now is the day of salvation.”*

ABCs of salvation:

* Admit that you are a sinner and have broken God’s law (1 John 1:8)
* Believe that Jesus Christ took your sins upon Himself when he died on the cross and that He has taken your punishment upon Himself (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)
* Confess your sin and that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10)

**Teachers:** If any of your kids respond to this gospel call, please be sure to pray with them and talk about it with their parents afterwards.

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

**Lesson Theme**: “No Time to Lose”

**Memory Verse:** Psalm 31:15a “*My times are in Your hands.”*

**Teachers/Parents:** In our lesson we talked about this time and that time (i.e. lunchtime, play time, etc.). It is very important that we frequently take a “time out” to be with the Lord in prayer time or Bible time. Share with your kiddos how/when you make time for this and why it is so important.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Ecclesiastes 3:3 says there are times to kill and tear down and times to heal and build up. What are some things in our lives that we need to put to death and some things that we need to nurture and build up?
2. Ecclesiastes 3:2-8 shows God as sovereign over the full spectrum of human experience (i.e. birth to death, war to peace, etc.). Sometimes we want to see God as working behind only the “pleasant” halves of these experiences (i.e. His love, but not His hate, His building up, but not His tearing down). Why is it important that we have a biblically balanced view of God’s character?
3. Read **Isaiah 46:8-10 and Ephesians 1:11.** What do these verses suggest about God’s timing? Does this make you comfortable or uncomfortable and why?
4. Read **Ephesians 5:15-16**. What are some ways in which we can “redeem the time” that we have been given? (see Ephesians 2:10 also)
5. In v. 11 we see that God has put eternity into our hearts and discussed how God did this so that we would find our way to Him. C.S Lewis said that, “*If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world*.” Read **John 17:24.** What does Jesus says His desire is for?
6. With God being sovereign over time He can sometimes seem unsearchable and far away. Yet, God sent His Son Jesus Christ who came into time just like us. He experienced all we experience in time (birth, death, mourning, laughing, etc.). Read **Hebrews 4:14-16**. How does Jesus Christ coming into time and living among us and like us, help us draw nearer to God?