

## TIME FOR EVERYTHING

⇒ When any of us find ourselves in great **sorrow**, or we have been bereaved, there is usually an initial period of **numbness** and **shock**. When that begins to wear off, we try to make sense of what has happened, and often part of that process is to ask **questions**. Questions like.

- Why?
- Why didn't the **treatment** work for her or him?
- How could God let this happen?
- Why wasn't I there a few **minutes** earlier?
- What have I done to **deserve** this?
- Why now?

.....Perhaps the last question is often the one of the **hardest** to answer. Although we may not like to think about it or face up to it we all know that we must die at some point, but it never seems to be the **right** time, we are rarely truly **prepared** for it.

⇒ This passage from the book of **Ecclesiastes** begins by exhorting us to accept that there is *"a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven"*.

..... We know that we live in a world of **changes**. In the world of **nature** we understand that **night** follows **day**, that **summer** follows **spring** and that each of these period, although very different, serves its own particular purpose. In our heart of hearts, we know too that **life** will almost always deal each of us our share of **joy** and **sorrow**. This passage is broken up into short phrases each reminding us that there is a time for **joyful** experiences, but there is also a time for **painful** opposites. Life is a rich **tapestry** of both and it could be said that we only know the **fullness** of the **good** and **positive** experiences when we have experienced the bad.

..... Some of these things are under our **control**, other changes are purely the act of God, and surely there can be no better **example** of that than *"the time to die"*. It is not often that we ourselves would want to hasten its coming but come it must to us all.

⇒ It is the **Christian belief** that no matter what the world can throw at us, God will always be there **sharing** in it at the very deepest level. He **rejoices** when we rejoice, he suffers when we **suffer**, he laughs when we **laugh**, he weeps when we **weep**.

..... So, as our passage reminds us there is a time for **living** and a time for **dying**, a time to **weep** and a time to **laugh**, a time to **mourn** and a time to **dance**, so I believe it is important that we actually take time to do just that. It is natural perhaps for us to pass quickly through it to the **laughing** and the **dancing** again, but even in then **pain**, there is a **purpose**, for there we can know **strengthening**, **learning** and **growing**.

⇒ We are not privileged to see the whole **mosaic** of our lives, we simply have to try to understand and accept that the **dark** coloured part which we are experiencing now is needed in order to achieve the whole perfect **picture**.

..... During our **difficult** times, we often find that help comes to us from **unexpected** sources, as well as from those close to us, but as the Psalm reminded us, our help also comes from **God** who made us and who watches over us. He will not prevent us from going through the hard experiences of life, but he will **sustain** us and give us the **strength** we need to carry us through. In this life, he will stay with us through all the changes we encounter until we are born anew into **eternity** where nothing changes.

⇒ Finally I read to you some words of a **poem** which remind us that we may never know the **answers** to all our **deepest questions** but there is a **loving** and **merciful** God in whom we trust

*“Behind my life the weaver stands and works his wondrous will,  
I leave it in his all-wise hands and trust his perfect skill  
Should mystery enshroud his plans and my short sight be dim,  
I will not try the whole to scan, but leave each thread to him.  
Not till the loom is silent, and the shuttles cease to fly  
Shall God unfold the pattern and explain the reason why –  
The dark threads were as needful (in the Master’s skilful hand)  
As the threads of gold and silver in the pattern which he planned”*