A TIME TO CAST AWAY STONES

Ecclesiastes 3:1-5 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

I. Contrasts in Ecclesiastes

A. Time to be born and a Time to Die

1. The contrast of life
   a) *Life is a series of beginnings and endings*
   b) *One life begins and another one ends*
   c) *One opportunity ends, and another one begins*

B. Time to plant and time to harvest

1. The contrast of the field
   a) *There are certain times in our lives that are for planting*
      (1) There are certain seasons for planting... All around the world
      (2) We might make decisions but we don’t act on them
      (3) We put plans in place and prepare
      (4) We plant the seed through witness and outreach
   b) *There are times of harvest*
      (1) There are certain seasons for harvesting... Again all around the world
(2) You reap the benefits of your deeper walk with God

(3) You act on the decisions that you made earlier

(4) You put into action the plans and preparation that has been done.

(a) Your Bible Study student gets baptized

C. A time to kill and a time to heal

1. Contrast of interaction

   a) There are times of battle

      (1) You go to war on your knees

      (2) You’re not backing up or giving up until the enemy is defeated

   b) There are times of healing

      (1) You spend time encouraging a brother or a sister

      (2) You work to lift up someone that has fallen

      (3) Sometimes we are killing our own and strengthening our enemy

D. Time to break down and a time to build up

1. The contrast of construction

   a) There are certain times of building

      (1) The project is in place and the ground is cleared

      (2) The foundation is poured and the building begins to go up

      (3) We deepen our walk with God and build up our spiritual house

   b) There are certain times of tearing down
(1) The building has outlived its usefulness
(2) The space is needed for something else
(3) Perhaps a newer better building is going up
(4) There are certain things that we decide need to be removed from our spiritual building

E. Time to weep and a time to laugh

1. The contrast of emotion
   (1) There are going to be bad days
   (2) There are going to be hard times
   (3) God created us with tear ducts so He understands that sometimes we just need to release our emotions in weeping.

   b) There are times in our lives when it is appropriate to laugh
      (1) There are going to be good days
      (2) There are going to be great times
      (3) God designed us and so he created that sense of humor in you
      (4) We need to have balanced emotions

F. Time to mourn and a time to dance

1. Contrast of occasion
   a) There are certain times when the occasion calls for mourning
      (1) The death of a loved one
      (2) After some natural disaster
      (3) The loss of some saint to backsliding
b) There are certain times when the occasion calls for dancing

(1) The birth of a child
(2) Some heroic effort or deed
(3) The return of a prodigal son
(4) Again the key is balance

G. These are all easy to understand

1. Birth and Death
2. Planting and Harvesting
3. Killing and Healing
4. Breaking down and Building up
5. Weeping and Laughing
6. Mourning and Dancing

a) Then we come to a time to gather stones and time to cast away stones

b) What does this mean?

II. Understanding scripture

A. Difficult scriptures

1. Difficult scriptures in the Bible can be interpreted by less difficult ones

   a) Sometimes the context can provide insight

   b) Sometimes parallel scriptures or other references in other books

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

III. What is a heap of stones?

A. A memorial

1. Jacob

Genesis 31:44-48 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. 45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. 46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. 47 And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

   a) It was a symbol of the covenant between Jacob and his Father–in-Law Laban.

2. Joshua

Joshua 4:5-7 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: 6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? 7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

   a) The pillar of stones was a reminder to the children of Israel of how God had kept them in the desert and brought them into Canaan

IV. Modern Memorials

A. Trophies
1. Softball
2. Academic
3. Awards and achievements
   a) Remind us of what we’ve done and also what we are capable of

B. Failures
1. Mistakes
2. Sins
3. Past life
   a) Remind us of what we’ve done and also what we are capable of

V. Time to cast away stones
   A. Breaking bad memories

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

1. Condemnation over your past is not from God
2. It is an attack of the enemy
   a) Someone that can’t move on from their past has no future
   b) God does not desire us to remain prisoners to our past

Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. What is missing from this list?
   a) The past
VI. Overcoming the past

A. You’re not the same

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1. Such were some of you
2. But you are washed – baptized
3. You are sanctified – received the Holy Ghost
4. Therefore you are justified – Forgiven and saved

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

5. If you are in Christ
   a) Then you are a new creation

6. Old things are passed away
   a) Behold, look, observe, be aware, take note
   b) All things are become new

B. Cast away those stones

1. Forget about your past
2. Let it stay buried under the blood of Jesus Christ
3. The woman caught in adultery
a) They gathered stones to destroy her

b) Jesus caused them to cast away their stones

Psalm 103:11-12 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

4. His great mercy has removed your sins

5. His blood covers our transgressions

6. Break out of the prison of your past

a) You can sing, you can dance, you can rejoice

b) Because you are FORGIVEN!!!