

Everything Has Its Time¹

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven (Ecc 3:1).*

These words are true for all people in all places and all situations, even for us today, wherever we are and regardless of the situation we are in. Everything has its time. Every matter, every event, every activity has its time under heaven. God has determined the seasons and the events of our lives. These seasons and times are sometimes joyful, sometimes painful and sad, but generally they are difficult. During such times and because of them, we are often anxious, we mourn, cry and become angry at ourselves and at others.

We may blame God for everything, and usually do we blame him, do we not? Even so, and regardless of everything, God is the sovereign ruler over all. Does God have everything under his control? He does. It is difficult to believe this during times of crisis. We wonder if God knows what is happening to us. Does he know that I have nothing to live by, no place to live, no one to live with? Does God know...?

There are times of economic crisis, not unlike the current world situation, and times of material well being. There is a time to enter the European Union, and a time of struggle to leave the European Union. Also, there is a time to hope for a better life, and a time to long for the good life from the past. Encouraged by Solomon's impulse, we can make an almost endless list of the various seasons and times of life. Like numerous farmers and workers, we can lament in difficult times, protest and block the roads. We can debate endlessly and fruitlessly like politicians, buying and selling better times via promises. We can examine the good and the bad times in detail and explain them thoroughly. So, what then?

The times are changing, and the changes are good for every person, especially for Christians, because it contributes to their spiritual growth. Without change, there can be no growth and no yield of fruit. For the fruit tree, for example, every annual season is good because it has its purpose. For the impatient owner, the fruit tree is best only in autumn when it bears its delicious fruits.

1 The text was originally written in Croatian language, and translated into English by Ljubinka Jambrek.

God has a purpose in all he does even when it is difficult for us to understand that purpose.

The world around us is constantly changing. People change too: the younger become older, and the older are expected to become wiser. During their life, Christians experience numerous and significant changes. Solomon sums up some of them, and in 14 statements he shows that God is working in the lives of individuals (Ecc 3:1-15). All these events come from God and they are good for particular times. It is crucial for the Christian to love God and to work together with him. The Apostle Paul repeatedly presents this truth to us: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). Do we know this? Do we love God?

Aware of the transience of the human life, the Apostle Paul exhorts Christians: "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" (Eph 5:15-17).

According to this text, in every season and time, Christians can do at least three things: consider the way they live, make the most of every opportunity, and understand what the Lord's will is.

Do we live like the unwise (Gr. ἄσοφοι) or the wise (Gr. σοφοί)? We can translate the Greek word σοφός (sophos) as wise, learned, cultured, able and lucid; in biblical terms, this simply describes a person who fears God. Wise people know how to set practical things according to the truth. They know how to apply God's Word in their practical lives. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mt 24:35). The Word of God is eternal. A wise person has reverence before God and his Word. He/she observes and evaluates everything in life through the Word of God. He/she sets every practical problem under the light of the Word of God and resolves it by the wisdom that comes through the Word. A wise person is a person who has a deep respect for God's holiness because "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov 9:10). Everyone can study the Scriptures, learn countless verses by heart, quote verses, and still be unwise. What is the difference? Unless a person submits to God and his Word, they will not have a particle of wisdom and will not be able to apply the Word of God in practical, daily situations.

Wisdom is the application of the known Word of God to everyday life. By living wisely, we not only discern the will of God, but we also fulfill it. We do not use the truth, then, to make ourselves proud and to assure ourselves that we know it, but we apply it.

Many Christians do not have or apply wisdom for one simple reason: they have not submitted and do not want to submit to Christ as their Lord. They do not love the Word of God or God himself, although they often profess it. To them,

attending church is a routine and a habit, while salvation is merely an avoidance of hell and a ticket to heaven. Knowledge of the Word of God does not guarantee wisdom, but the keeping of the Word demonstrates wisdom.

Everything has its time, its *Kairos* (καῖρός), its right moment and opportunity. Real moments and opportunities come and go; God gives them to us in certain times. We need to recognize and use them. Some of us have made some foolish (unwise) decisions and we have not applied God's Word in practice.

What if, in the next week, God were to give us yet another opportunity to extend outstanding love to our enemy, to our boring neighbor, to our quarrelsome boss, to our mother-in-law who constantly complains, to our parents who require us to do things around the house? And what if we were to waste it because we had concluded that we do not need to love our enemy, that the boring neighbor needs to be "silenced" instead of put up with, that the quarrelsome boss needs to "be told the blunt truth," that the mother-in-law needs to "be put down to earth" along with her complaints, and that the parents who require us to do things around the house need to be convinced that we are not children to work, but to play? What then?

We need to choose daily whether we will act as unwise or wise. How do we use the time God has given us? Do I control my choices and do I consider them? How do we make our daily choices? How many of our actions are to God's glory? How many of them are unworthy? What prompts us?

Our time is short. How will we live it? Do we use it? The Apostle Paul exhorts us not to live unwisely, but to understand what the will of God is (Eph 5:17). Paul emphasizes that the wise person recognizes the will of God, while the unwise does not recognize it. Through the new birth, from unreasonable, we have become reasonable. God has changed our minds and continues to do so. He has given us the ability to understand his Word and power to be able to apply it in our lives. He has given us the Holy Spirit who interprets this Word for us, and the power of the Spirit to be able to make right and wise decisions.

We have an ability to recognize the will of God. Let us use it. Let us not live as if we do not know what we need to do. There are moments in life when we do not know what we need to do. But, even for such moments, God gives us instructions. When we do not know what we need to do, God's Word instructs us to seek his will, to pray, to praise him and to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). When we do not know what to discuss among ourselves, the Bible says, "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:19-20).

A reasonable and wise Christian will consider the way he/she lives, and change and adjust it according to the will of God. And since everything in life

has its time, he/she will use every opportunity to do God's will for that particular time.

We have dedicated this issue of *Kairos* to biblical themes. In the article, *The Impartation of the Gifts of the Spirit in Paul's Theology*, the author considers and shines the light of the Word of God on the contemporary charismatic trend of the impartation of gifts. The article, *Slavery and Freedom in the Epistle to the Galatians* considers the issue of the status of Christians prior to and after their conversion related to the imagery of slavery which is often used in the New Testament. The third article, *More than Just Naboth's Vineyard: Reflections on the Implications of the Community on Exploitation and Corruption in the Context of 1 Kings 21*, is a kind of introduction into the consideration of countless contemporary social themes and it brings a perspective of the society's involvement in the exploitation and corruption in the context of 1 Kings 21. In the article, *Celebrating the Ascension*, the author reminds readers of the church calendar which has been neglected in contemporary Evangelical Christianity, and he encourages the believers to celebrate Christ's ascension.

On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the *King James Bible* (*King James Authorized Version*), we offer two contributions. The Anglican Chaplaincy of Zagreb and the Croatian Bible Society have organized public lectures to be held in November, 2011 at the Faculty of Teacher Education of the University of Zagreb under the title, "The Book that Changed the World." For this occasion, we are publishing Janet Berković's lecture, *The Book that Changed the World – The Influence of the King James Bible on English Language and Literature*, and a summary of all three of the lectures.

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