

Eternity in Their Hearts - Part 1

by Steve Mays

Pastor Steve Mays emphasizes the importance of staying committed to God's purpose and understanding His timing in our lives.

Duration: 36:42

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 12:32-33, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Eternity"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays discusses the importance of understanding and accepting the timing, seasons, and purposes of God in our lives. He emphasizes that trials and difficulties are a part of life, but they serve a purpose in shaping and changing us. Pastor Steve highlights three key aspects of God's nature: His providence, His purpose, and His power. He encourages listeners to trust in God's care and guardianship over their lives, reminding them that God sees something in them and wants to work in their lives. The sermon is based on the book of Ecclesiastes and offers practical advice for navigating life's challenges.

Transcript

It's the 2010 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. Under any situation, any difficult moment of your life, you cannot afford to break rank. Today, Pastor Steve Mays shares good advice from wise King Solomon.

You need to stay in the game, you need to stay in the fight and not give in. And the only way you can do that is what Paul said in Hebrews chapter 12, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Light of the world, light of the world Hope that shines in darkness, a voice that will be heard Light of the world, light of the world Hope that shines in darkness, so we'll follow the light of the world If you've ever quit at something, then you know what it's like to let others down.

So, isn't it great to know that God will never quit on his people? The Bible tells us that he is unchangeable in his commitment to us. But we, on the other hand, well, we've got a tendency to stray, or as Pastor Steve puts it, to break rank from God's will for our lives. Today on Light of the Word, Pastor Steve Mays encourages us to stay in the game and keep in step with a wonderful life God has laid out for us.

It's good insight taken from Steve's popular series called, Success Can Be Lethal. Now, here's Pastor Steve to share good advice from King Solomon found in the book of Ecclesiastes. Take a listen.

Tonight we want to take a look at Ecclesiastes chapter 3. And I'd like to read to you verses 1 through 11. And then I'd like to look at one verse tonight. It says, As to everything, there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven, a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant, a time to pluck up that which is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down, a time to build, a time to weep, a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace, a time to refrain from embracing, a time to get, a time to lose, a time to keep, a time to cast away, a time to rend, a time to sew, a time to keep silent, a time to speak, a time to love, a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace.

What profit has he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He has made everything beautiful in his time. Underline that.

Also, he has set the world in the King James, or the new King James is even better, eternity, which is better. He has also set eternity in their hearts so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. So when we mention that there is a void in your heart, that void was placed there by God.

He placed eternity within your heart and so there is a desire to seek to fulfill that moment of your heart. And as we have all done, we have tried to fill that void with homes or cars or relationships or people, but it can only be filled with God. And so God has always wanted you to come to know him.

And that's why there's always this desire to worship. A desire to worship cars or women or guys or gals or things. There's always this desire to worship because God placed that desire within your heart.

And Jesus said, if you drink of this well, you're going to thirst again. But if you drink of my well, you're never going to thirst again. So the key of life is to fill the void.

And the void can only be filled with Jesus Christ. And so you can save a lot of money and you can save a lot of relationships and a lot of pain, a lot of anger, anxiety, if you would come to grips with the reality that God is not wrong. And though you tell him you need these things, what you really need is just Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Now things are fun and God wants you to have the things and God wants you to be blessed, there's no doubt. But when you put those things before the king of kings, then you're like Solomon. Everything under the sun is vanity.

In the sun, everything is cool. But I want you to notice tonight one verse. To everything there is a season.

To everything there is a time. To everything there is a purpose under the heaven. In other words, God has a season, God has a time and God has a purpose.

And when you begin to evaluate the timing of God, the purposes of God and the seasons of God, you're now coming in to some of the most profound moments of your life. Because you don't govern the time. Nor do you know the purposes of God in your life.

Nor do you understand why this thing has taken so long, the season you've been in. But he holds the seasons. He operates in his own timing.

Things are perfect when he works. And the purpose is always there to make and to break and to do a work. And so it's encouraging to me to know that my days are numbered and my steps are ordered by the Lord.

You know, there are two great verses I want you to kind of mark down or remember. And these are a couple of the verses I have always remembered in my Christian walk. And as I was studying this one verse, they really kind of exploded.

Number one, it's in 1 Chronicles chapter 12, verse 33 of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle expert in war, with all the instruments of war, 50,000, here it is, which could keep rank. They were not of double heart. So all I want you to remember of this one, Zebulun the tribe, they could keep rank and they were not double hearted.

So when I think of the timing of God, and when I think of the purposes of God, and when I understand the seasons of God, Satan is going to seek to keep me out of that harmony that God has for my life. So I need to keep rank. I need to stay in the fight.

I need to keep up with what God's doing in my life. I need to understand that the providence of God is going to dictate the very things in my life. So I don't want to fight.

I don't want to go contrary to what God wants. So when I say you're going to keep rank, it means that under any situation, any circumstance that you find yourself, any difficult moment of your life, you cannot afford to break rank. You need to stay in the game.

You need to stay in the fight. You need to stay in the marriage. You need to stay in the ministry, whatever it might be.

You need to hold your end up and not give in. And the only way that you can keep rank is not having a double heart. And when I get hurt and things don't go my way, then I begin to get an attitude.

And I get a bit hostile. And I begin to lose heart. And my emotions become very cold.

And Satan begins to get a hold of my heart. And when Satan gets a hold of your emotions, your feet begin to follow. And you begin to break rank.

And Jesus said, if you look back, you're not fit for the kingdom of God. So it's by the power of the Holy Spirit to keep your emotions in check. And it's by the power of the Holy Spirit to keep your feet in step.

And the only way you can do that is what Paul said in Hebrews chapter 12. Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. And then you remember it says in verse 1, and the race that is set before me.

So God has given to you and God has given to me a certain race or certain things that I must fulfill. So therefore for the sake of the ministry, for my God, for my family, for the church, I must keep rank and I cannot lose heart. So Zebulun was a great tribe.

The second verse, and that was in 1 Chronicles chapter 12 verse 33. The second one is even more encouraging to me. It's found in 1 Chronicles chapter 12 verse 32.

And the children of Issachar which were men that had understanding of time to know what Israel ought to do. The heads of them were 200 and all their brethren were their commandment. So to the children of

Issachar it says that two things they had.

Number one, they understood the time. Now I believe this is absolutely imperative within your Christian walk. If you get married, you need to understand there are going to be difficult times.

But if you understand the times, then you're going to be able to maintain and wait it through and God's going to do a work. If you are over a church or in a church, there are going to be seasons or times you're going to feel like God isn't moving. And what's going on? There's no love and all of a sudden it begins to grow again.

As long as we are people, we're going to have our ups and downs. And what it's saying here is that instead of gossiping or talking, we're able to keep rank and not be double-hearted and we understand the times. And then he goes on to say and to know what Israel ought to do.

So it's not just good enough to be able to understand the seasons or the time. I know what I need to do. I need to be obedient.

I need to pray this thing through. I need to see what God's doing. And so there are moments when Kevin can really write and there are moments he can't.

There are moments I have great messages and then there are moments I just have normal messages. And so for me to try to keep a certain peak is just never going to happen. If I know that I wake up in a bad mood and God orders my steps and God knows the timing, then I can be victorious in that day because it's not me.

It's God in my life. Those two verses I believe can really set you free in a very powerful way. Number one is I'm able to hold on and keep rank.

And number two, I'm not going to be double-minded. And the second is I'm going to be able to know the seasons and I'm going to know exactly what to do. Two great moments in our life.

Nothing will hinder you. And so they were committed, these guys, to keep rank, to stay together, to die, and they knew the times, they knew the truth, and they knew their calling, and they understood exactly what they had to do. Great, great insight.

And so tonight the Bible talks about something very important, God's timing. And so I don't want to go too fast on this one verse. It says here that God refers nine different times in these 22 verses, He or Him or God.

Nine different times God is mentioned. And it says in our first verse there's a purpose, there's a season, and there's a time. So let me give you three things to jot down that I want to try to explain to you about the goodness of your God.

Number one, God's providence. God's providence. Number two, God's purpose.

God's purpose. And number three, God's power. Three things you're going to see tonight that are going to help you understand and accept the timing of God the seasons of God and just the purposes of God in your life.

Now none of us like trials, amen? None. And none of us believe that they should go on this long. And there's no reason why these things should happen in my life.

But you're dealing with a God that knows you. And a God that loves to change you. And He sees something in you.

So the only way that He can work in your life is He has appointed a time. He has appointed a season. And He has appointed a purpose.

Now when you understand that, you're never going to quit. And you're never going to give up. You're going to stay rank.

You're going to hold it together. You're going to trust God because God is provident. He makes His own decisions.

He is personable. He has a purpose. He's going to work in your life for your good.

And He has the power to do whatever He wants. So let's take a look tonight. Kind of a fun study.

God's providence. It means that God's in absolute control of your life. David said in Psalm 31 verse 15, My times are in thy hand.

Deliver me from the hand of my enemy and from them that persecute me. So David understood that time was in the hand of God. Now you can get uptight at the grocery store when someone cuts in front of you.

Or you can get ballistic when someone takes your parking stall. But if you know that God is with you, maybe that's the parking stall that some heathens going to rip off the car. Have you ever thought about that? Have you ever thought that God might be with you and helping you? Or maybe all of a sudden you're hitting every red light and you are just furious.

But right up the way is an ambulance taking someone away because they died in an accident. Could it be that God loves you so much? He made the red lights just for you? No, we don't think that way. You see, we are so determined that we have become the masters of our own faith, the captain of our own soul.

And we kind of dictate we know what's best. You need to understand that even in the moments of your life, God still guides you. If you say to me, Hey Steve, God only guides me when I'm walking with him, then he wouldn't be God.

He has to guide you. He has to lead you. And when you turn, he's still with you.

And he's going to turn you back because of the power and the providence of God. David went on to say in Psalm 115 verse 3, But our God is in heaven. He does whatsoever he pleases.

So when all of a sudden something happens, you say, Well, why God? Well, here's the question. Why not? I mean, why are we so perfect? We deserve hell. And so we're going to get sick.

And why? Why me? Well, why not you? In other words, because of the sin nature, things are going to happen. And God is going to allow things that happen to change your life, to affect people's lives. So all of a sudden you have a down syndrome children and you get angry with God.

But the wonderful thing is that child loves you for the rest of his life. And it teaches you what you need to know about love. And you begin to experience some of the most incredible moments of your life.

And so you realize when it's all said and done, God, you were in this thing. You had the power to give me a normal child. But you chose at this moment in our life not to.

So I have to believe the providence of God. If you say Satan did it, then that means Satan is stronger than God. And I disagree with that.

And then I realized in Psalm 135 verse 5, for I know that the Lord is great and that the Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleases that he did in heaven, on earth, in the sea and in the deep place. In other words, nothing can stay his hand.

And Daniel went on to say in chapter 4 verse 35, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay his hand or say unto him, what are you doing? So when we talk about the providence of God, we're talking about the timing, the seasons, the power that God has to do in my life.

So yes, God does allow you to be tested. And God knows when you need to be tested. And God knows what you need to be tested.

And God knows how deep that testing has to be. So God knows exactly how to push the button in your life. He said to that rich young man, sell all that you have.

And the man walked away sorrowful. Before he said, I've done all these things and Jesus didn't disagree with him. But Jesus knew what the issue was.

And so Jesus put his finger on the issue of the man's life. He put the finger on David when David sinned. You remember with Uriah and with Bathsheba? It says between Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, a whole year went by that David didn't talk to God.

And the Bible declares, and God placed his finger upon David. And it says, Thy hand was heavy upon me. And my moisture turned into the drought of summer.

And my bones which thou hast broken, Lord, help them to rejoice. In other words, David, though he held back and got angry, his life was miserable. And then he confessed and God restored him.

So the seasons, those moments, those difficult times, you have to see the power of the providence of God, that God leads and God guides and God knows. And all the crying and all the whining is not going to change the mind nor the heart of God. God has a purpose.

And when I see the purpose, it's for me to grow. It's like the eagle up there with the little eaglets. And you've heard me tell you before in Deuteronomy, it says that the eagle comes out and hovers over them.

And the little eaglets are happy and, Mom, you're great. Mom, I love you. And how you doing? And Mom has a big old smile and she's hovering.

Oh, Mom, look at those mighty wings. And little eaglets are just kind of, I don't think they purr, but we'll say they purr like a cat. Mom, you're the best.

You know, you're the greatest. You fed us. And the Bible says she comes into the nest and flings them out.

One, knocks them out. Knocks George right out of the ring. But before she does that, she comes underneath and she tears the whole nest apart.

And now, can you imagine if you're a little eaglet and the nest is like 20 feet deep and Mom's destroying this nest all the way up? What's Mom doing? She's gone crazy. Where are we going to sleep tonight? And you begin to panic. But all of a sudden, Mom hovers and comes to George and knocks him out.

And George is doing a spiral. One wing's out, other wing's in, going upside down. And she picks him up and brings him back up.

And George... And she looks over to Jill. Hi, Jill. Come here, let me hold you.

Oh, see, Mom loves me and boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. Bye-bye, Jill. Bam! And Jill goes out.

And all of a sudden, Jill has enough sense to put both wings out and she begins to fly. Comes back up to George and, no, Mom, no, no, no. Bye-bye, George.

Bam! You say, well, how could they do that? Why would that eagle do that? Because if the eagle doesn't do that, then you're going to have a 500-pound baby Huey on the side of the cliff saying, I can't fly, I can't fly. So God wants you to fly. God wants those muscles exercised.

God wants you stretched. And God's not going to listen to the whining. He's not concerned about your comfort, your character, yes.

So God is going to stretch your faith. God is going to challenge your life. And the reason is one day you're going to look to God and know that this is providence.

That no matter what happens, I'm going to fly. And I'm going to land on my two feet and I know exactly what God's going to do. That's the strength that God gives you.

So that providence is the most powerful thing that you can grab a hold on. Nothing can touch me unless it goes through God's hands. And God has the ability to do whatever he wants.

To create. So secondly, not only providence but God has purpose. God has a purpose.

And the purpose is that reason why he's doing this thing in your life. Why this season? Why so long? Why doesn't God just heal the cancer? Why do I have to go through this season of pain? Why at this time I'm so young? Or why am I going through this difficult time? Why did I go through this marriage? Why did I marry this character? There's a purpose. And all of a sudden we realize that like us, like Jacob, he said in Genesis 42 verse 36, and Jacob said, all these things are against me.

You see, Jacob did not see the purposes of God in his life. Very few ever do. Jacob saw that Benjamin was taken and Jacob saw that Joseph was taken.

So he concluded, all these things are against me. When Joseph was taken, thrown into the pit, then he went into the prison. He had no idea that God was preparing him for the palace.

Now if you would have told Joseph, listen, you're going to go into the pit, you're going to go into prison for 13 years, and you're going to be second in command, would have been no problem. But there'd be no faith. So God has to rally your faith.

God has to put you in a position that you have to trust. And it's beyond your own capacity. So in the pit, he was crying out.

But in prison, it was a bigger situation. And the reason why is because God was preparing him for the palace. So God has to do something bigger.

So he starts with David with the lion, and then he goes with David with the bear, and then he goes with David with Goliath. God is a progressive God that works in your life, right? So he gives you this, you get victory. He gives you this, you get victory.

He gives you this, you get victory. And then he gives you this, and you get victory. Ultimately, you're going to learn.

And so it says of Joseph in Genesis 50 verse 19, And Joseph said unto them, Fear not, for I am in this place of God. Now check it out. He was in the pit.

I'm in this place of God. I'm in prison for 13 years. I'm in this place of God.

Now I'm in the palace. I'm in this place of God. But as for you, you thought evil against me.

But God meant it unto good. Why? Because God wanted me to save the Jews. You see, the purpose of God in the pit was to save the nation of Israel.

The purpose of taking Joseph away from Jacob was to save the nation. But we can't see that. We see our kids being taken.

We see the hassles in our marriage. We see the brokenness in the church. And we don't see what God's going to do down the road.

So we don't live by faith. We live by sight. We don't believe that when the kids are gone and when things are happening that God's doing something in our life.

It's always somebody else. But God's working in your life to trust him to the nth degree. And then I read in Esther in chapter 4 verse 14, If thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to this kingdom for such a time as this? She didn't believe, Esther. But Mordecai did.

Her uncle. And Mordecai said to Esther, how do you know that you have not been born for this moment in your life? Walk through that door. In other words, you're never going to know the purposes of God unless you step out in faith.

So Jacob didn't know. Joseph didn't know. Esther didn't know.

Paul didn't know. It says here in Acts 16 verse 6, And when they had gone through Phagia and the regions of Galatia, they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. Why? And how were they forbidden?

Were they beat up? Did they become sick? Were they lost? I mean, they couldn't get to Asia.

After they were in Bethania, the Spirit suffered them not. And then it says, A man came to Macedonia and said, Come. And this is fascinating.

We go here? No. We go there? No. What do we say? God, you don't care about us.

Time out. How do you know God didn't want you to do that? I'm dating this gal and she broke up with me. I'm just bummed.

I'm gonna go backslide and have a beer. How do you know that gal ain't gonna be a witch? How do you know that she's not gonna backslide and hurt your family? How do you know? Why couldn't we just say, God, it wasn't meant to be? Because if it is meant to be, it's gonna happen. If it's not meant to be, it's not gonna happen.

And sometimes God shatters your life. And you go, Why? Because there's a season. How long's the season? How long do you want it to be? For Israel, they had to walk 13 times around Jericho.

Why? Because they're stubborn. They had to walk around until they finally understood it was impossible to overtake. 40 years in the wilderness.

How long? How long do you need to come to trust God? What's the purpose of this? To teach you to trust Him? To change your attitude? To not be so nasty? To praise God? To be at peace with yourself? To chill out a little bit? That's pretty good purposes. To make you ready for heaven? To make you nice and kind and loving and gentle? Not weird and over-the-place to grow you up? Those are great purposes. But how do you do that, God? Put them through this trial.

Oh no, God, not that. You see, God sent them into the boat to try Him. In Galilee, the winds came and God sends the winds, the Jonah.

It said that God sent the winds and God sent the storm. Why? He was out of God's will. So God wanted to shake things up.

And when he got thrown over, everything stopped. When I surrender, the season's over. The purpose of that moment is over.

I praise God. I'm going to go on my life. Well, for a little longer.

But now it's time to grow again. Oh no, not again. Take another step.

How many steps? Oh, there's a lot of steps to get to heaven. Well, I'm single. Get married.

Another step. I got kids. Another step.

Kids are gone. Another step. Have no money.

Another step. Don't like church. Another step.

Don't like myself. Another step. God has a lot of steps.

He'll just keep... Why? Purpose, the season, His timing. And then we see lastly, the power. The providence of God is so important.

The purpose is of God. But the power of God, He can do anything. Remember Abraham, he found out in Genesis 18-13.

And the Lord said unto Abram, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child when I am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord at the time appointed? Genesis 18-14. This is a cool verse. Is anything hard for the Lord? Check it out.

At the time appointed. 17 years from the promise to when the child came. 17 years.

Why? He had to grow up. Now he's a hundred. What did he say? I ain't gonna do it.

And God, if you're gonna do it, you're gonna have to do. Oh, God loves that. It's not gonna happen through this body.

It's gonna happen through your strength. Job surely found out in Job 42 verse 2. I know that thou can do anything, and that no thought can be withheld from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? In other words, God, you can do anything.

And the favorite one is Isaiah 40. And we'll end here tonight. Surely, has thou not known, has thou not heard the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth? And Isaiah 40 verse 28.

That he faints not, neither is weary. Oh, man, I'm so tired. I'm so weary.

Oh, God's is ready. He's all excited. Let's do it.

Another trial. Oh, Lord, how much longer? Surely, God, you're getting tired of my... Oh, Stephen, I love your life. I'm ready to wrestle with it.

Come on. Let's go. Oh, God, give me a break.

Oh, no. Lord, give me a season. Nope.

God, I can't handle it. You can? You're kidding. I thought you could.

Lord, I need your help. Oh, really? Yeah. Good.

Are you sure? Yes. Okay. Let's try.

You see, God knows the intent of my heart. He came to Martha and Martha said, I know that you're the resurrection. Yeah.

Okay. Jesus went along with her. But then when he came to the tomb, why did he say to Martha, throw away the stone? Because the words came right out of her mouth.

He stunk. Well, no way. You said over here that you believed in the power of the resurrection.

Now, you don't want to move the stone. You see, what you thought and what you believe are two different things. And God comes into your life to make the thinking and the application alive.

So, Christians are backsliding because of providence. They don't see it. Families are shattered and children are devastated because they don't see purpose.

And our lives are just so defeated and so discouraged because we have no idea about God's timing, about God's seasons, and about God's purposes in our life. God is committed to you. Jeremiah said, O Lord, behold, thou has made the heavens and the earth.

And by thy great power and thy outstretched arms, there is nothing too hard for you to do. So, can God give a new heart? Sure. Can God get you married? Absolutely.

Can God put the marriage back together? Sure, He can. Can God give me money? Sure. He can do anything.

Can He work in my heart to trust Him? Solomon said, back in verse 1, to everything there's a season. Whatever season you're in tonight, do you see God's hand? Do you see His purposes? And do you see the timing of why this thing's happening? A time to every purpose under the heavens. In other words, God will never leave you nor forsake you.

You have a wonderful God. And when you're discouraged, like the two men on the Mayer's Road, He'll drop in. He's not afraid of getting dusty.

And when you are riveted with fear and paralyzed, He'll walk through the door and hang out with you and say, touch me. And when you have mocked Him and cursed Him, He'll come after you and say, where's Peter? This God is the most awesome friend you will ever have. Providence.

Nothing can touch you. Purpose. I want to make you.

Power. I can do it. Just me and you.

Pastor Steve Nays, with a good look at the care and guardianship of the Lord over our lives. Good encouragement from the book of Ecclesiastes today, On Light of the Word. Now today's message originally came from Pastor Steve's Ecclesiastes series, and because of the tremendous response we received from these studies, we're glad to announce that we've put this entire set into three volumes.

We're calling it, Success Can Be Lethal, Volumes 1, 2, and 3. Each volume is filled with timeless truths and age-proof wisdom given to us from King Solomon himself. In Volume 1, Steve addresses our tendency to strive for the wrong things in life. Volume 2 of the series teaches us the importance of building up our character over our possessions.

Finally, in Volume 3, we discover that the real meaning in life is to know God and obey Him. And we'll be glad to tell you how you can get one or all three volumes of Steve's series entitled, Success Can Be Lethal. Just contact us at 1-800-339-WISE, and we'll give you all the details.

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