

# The Times of Our Lives

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you don't mind, that headset was messing with me. We have been looking above the sun for a few weeks now, haven't we? And I think that is probably the most important thing our eyes can do this entire life, is look above the sun at the one who created the sun and all that is beneath it.

We have been studying Ecclesiastes. American novelist and playwright William Soroyan said, Live, for this is the time of your life.

Brilliant. Does anybody know what that means exactly? Sometimes that real philosophical stuff, you're looking at it and you're like, what exactly is he saying right now?

But there's probably some brilliant truth in there. I just probably wasn't smart enough to figure it out when I first read that. But I think it kind of applies to what the teacher is talking about in Ecclesiastes 3.

What is the time of our life? More specifically, what are the times of our life? And which of those times do you think is best?

[ 1 : 07 ] How many of you think the best time of your life was childhood? When you were a kid, you had no responsibility, not a care in the world, you didn't have to work, you didn't have to pay any bills, you were just worried about what you were going to eat, who you were going to play with, and if your parents were going to let you stay up late that night.

What about the teen years? Anybody think that was the best time of your life? No? Okay, but that was probably like peak athletics and like physical fitness, right?

Like you were achieving the most. Maybe you were the healthiest at that time before your body started failing you. Growing up, figuring things out, there's a lot of angst during teen years, maybe that's not the best time of our lives, I don't know.

What about your 20s? Anybody think that was the best time of your life? I didn't figure we'd get many hands on the 20s, man. That checks out. How about 30s?

30s, yes, let's go. 30s is the best time of your life. I saw you over there, Bella. Look, 30s, you start to get all the bills now, and then real life sets in, and you're like, wow, this is what adulting looks like, and it's no fun.

[ 2 : 19 ] How about 40s? 40s, anybody think 40s is the best time of your life? Yes, I think 40s is the best time of my life because I'm currently in my 40s. 50s, anybody, show of hands?

Yeah, now we're starting to get some votes. All right, how about 60s? There you go. Wade, you're, Wade, what are we going to do with Wade? What are you, like 30?

How about 70s? Anybody 70s? Yes. 80s? We got any 80s fans? Yes, let's go.

They're like, trust us. This is the best time of your life. Anybody 90s? Somebody call Maydell Spann and ask if the hundreds are the best time of our life.

She's the only one I know. You probably know some others. All right, we should stop. Okay, that's our stages of life.

[ 3 : 17 ] What about seasons of life? We're in the middle of winter right now. Anybody like winter? Yeah? In winter, you wear, in winter in Texas, you wear the clothes that everybody else started wearing in the fall.

That's how that works. Now, we did just come off that big freeze, and that was fun for a minute.

And, yeah, so that was, we finally got to dress like everybody else dresses during winter.

But, how about spring? We're coming up on spring. It's not too far away. This is crazy. We're in the middle of February. Everybody likes spring? Favorite season? Okay. How about summer?

All the kids raise their hands. Yes, we're out of school. It's great. Vacations, camps. Vacation Bible school. Throw a little plug for VBS in there. A lot of good things happen during the summer.

How about fall? Yes. I think that is everybody's favorite season. Fall wins the polls. I don't know why. Because the kids go back to school.

[ 4 : 22 ] That's why. And all the parents said amen. Football happens. Football in the fall. There's nothing like it. And pumpkin spice invades every edible or drinkable thing in the universe.

And it gets a little ridiculous at times. All right. Football season's almost over, by the way. Today is officially the end of football season. Do you know why? There we go.

Just making sure I didn't get the weekend wrong. It is happening tonight. Seahawks. Who's pulling for the Seahawks? Who's pulling for the Patriots? Man, we don't have very many Patriots in here. Y'all not a very pro-American church. I'm kidding with you. I'm kidding with you. I'm pulling for the Seahawks too, so it's fine. I don't really care that much, you know. We all know the Cowboys aren't in it, as we have been able to say for the last 30 years.

Okay. I remember. I remember when they were in there, and they were winning, and it was great. We're not going to. All right. I've got to keep my mind focused.

[ 5 : 27 ] About to get in a bad mood. Here we go. We've got stages of life. We've got times of our lives. We've got seasons within our lives. We've got sports seasons. It's great.

Great football, basketball. Basketball's getting close to being over. We're about to start baseball. A lot of fun things happening. Volleyball, don't want to leave that out. Track, all that good stuff. We all have our favorites. And then we have some seasons or times of our lives that we'd rather skip or at least not think back to.

Maybe there were some difficulties, some things that we struggled with. Bo has just recently reported to me. I'm sorry, buddy. Bo has just recently reported to me that he would be very interested in any sport that does not involve running.

So he's figured out, you know, what season he's into. And he said, golf, right? How about golf? I said, yeah. Truth is, you don't even have to walk in golf.

[ 6 : 30 ] You can ride in a little cart around from hole to hole. It's great. The only exercise that was involved in golf they've now taken away. So that's great. We have our preferences.

We have our seasons and our times of lives that we prefer. And then we have some that we struggle with. Are you in Ecclesiastes 3? If you're not, let's go to Ecclesiastes chapter 3.

While you're turning there, we've been studying this series from the teacher. It's how he identifies himself as the author of Ecclesiastes. We believe it was Solomon, the great, wealthiest, and wisest king in all recorded history over Israel or over anybody, really.

And so Solomon writes this wisdom at the end of his life for us. He writes his conclusions that he has arrived at after his wildly successful life and reign.

In this book we call Ecclesiastes, Wisdom from the Teacher. And we called it Catching Smoke. How to Live Life Under the Sun. And you saw the little preview video.

[ 7 : 36 ] We had some trouble with it last Sunday, but we got to do it this Sunday. We got to see and hear some of the teaching from Solomon. And why we called this Catching Smoke. Because he realized that life itself, you can't hold it in your hand.

It's not a thing you can grasp. You can never seem to quite get a handle on life. Even when you're successful. Even when things are going exactly as you want them to.

So we're going to pick this up in chapter 3 and verse 1. For everything, there's a season. Even golf. Even football.

Even Super Bowl. Everything, there's a season. A time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born. A time to die. A time to plant.

A time to harvest. Y'all know that. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to cry and a time to laugh.

[ 8 : 33 ] A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones. A time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching.

A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet, which would be right now, kids. And a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate.

A time for war and a time for peace. What do people really get for all their hard work? I've seen the burden God has placed on us all.

Now, don't miss verse 11. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own what? Time. He's made everything beautiful for its own time.

He's planted eternity in the human heart. But even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. So, the teacher writes, I concluded that there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can.

[ 9 : 48 ] And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor. For these are gifts from God. We talked about that a little bit last week. And I know that whatever God does is final.

That's true. No second guessing. No, God, man, can you take that back? I didn't like that. Nope. It's vital. Because he's always right and he's always righteous.

Nothing can be added to it. Nothing can be taken from it. God's purpose is that people should fear him. Now, verse 15, and we'll be finished with our reading this morning.

What is happening now has happened before. What will happen in the future has happened before. Because God makes the same things happen over and over again, even through different seasons, even through different times.

And every one of them, we read, is beautiful in its own time. Would you bow your heads with me? God, give us understanding of this fascinating book.

[ 10 : 49 ] It feels different than any other book that we have compiled into our Holy Bible. 66 books. We're grateful for each one of them. They reveal a little piece of you to us in their own way.

And this one causes us to lift our eyes from what's going on around us, below this sun shining down on all of us, and lift our eyes up above the sun to the one who created it, to the son of God himself. Help us to find you in every season. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Ecclesiastes 3 begins with words that many of us recognize.

For everything there is a season. There's a time for every activity under heaven. It's not just poetry. It's not just meant to be beautiful or make us sentimental, remembering back to different seasons. There is wisdom here. It's meant to make us honest that life has rhythms. We don't always enjoy every rhythm as much as others, but all are useful.

[ 11 : 54 ] All are there for a purpose. And God takes us through each cycle for his grand design and his grand purpose. Beginnings and endings. Joy and grief.

Holding on and then letting go. And he goes down this whole list that we just read a moment ago, saying all of this is vital. All of this is essential. And there's a time for all of it.

He's not telling us how to avoid the seasons we don't like. He's saying that you have to accept that there is a season for what you're going through right now.

And he's teaching us how to live faithfully with our eyes above the sun in every one of those seasons. So this takes us to our first truth. Every season is temporary.

But every season can transform. Every season, thank God, is only temporary. I don't know about you, but I don't want to live my 20s for the rest of my life.

[ 12 : 57 ] I had some fun in my 20s. Did anybody else have some fun in your 20s? How many of you are glad that you're no longer in your 20s?

Yeah, there's hands all over the room. How many of you are in your teen years wishing that you were in your 20s? And you're looking forward to it. Just be careful on that fun that people talk about in your 20s.

There is fun that is good to have. And there is fun that is not quite as fun as you think it's going to be. All right. So we find ourselves, despite the fact that we have gone through seasons of life, we've closed the book on many of them.

If you're a teenager, you're no longer a little kid, right? You've closed the book on that. You can't go back to being 8. You can't go back to being 11. You're a young adult.

You've closed the book on being a teenager. So forth and so on. Each stage, we close the book on those seasons of life. And even though we would love to move on and never revisit those again, we do have to look back and see there was value in that.

[ 14 : 04 ] I needed that stage of life. It was formative. Maybe I didn't handle it the best. Maybe I wasn't as prepared for it as I could have or should have been.

Maybe others didn't prepare me as well as I could have. Maybe I didn't pursue God like I could have during that season of life. But there is beauty in each one.

And that's what Solomon is telling us here. But we still find ourselves saying things like this. We either say, man, I'm having the time of my life.

I'll tell you what. But I titled this, and I think it's in your bulletin if you have one. I titled this sermon, Having the Times of Our Lives. Because I thought that was a fun little play on words.

I said, I'm going to have a time of my life up here preaching this sermon today. So I hope y'all are having the time of your life too. But we'll use expressions like that. But then we'll flip to the other side of the coin.

[15:03] And we'll say this. If I can just get through this season. Anybody ever say that? Anybody ever think that? Have you ever said this?

If I can just fast forward to the good part. If I can just skip ahead to when it gets better. I've found myself saying things like that.

And I suspect I'm not alone in that. Ecclesiastes reminds us of this. Yes, seasons will pass. This too shall pass.

You've heard this. But passing does not mean pointless. Just because it's over now doesn't mean that it wasn't valuable and necessary.

Every season can transform us. Even though it is temporary. Not because every season is pleasant. But because God is present in every season.

[16:05] Let's say that again. Not because every season of your life is pleasant. But because God is present in each one. And do you know what God does when he's present? He sits there like a bump on a log and does nothing.

Not the God I know. Not the God you know. If God is present, he is working. He is actively using what you're going through for your good and for his glory.

Now it's hard when we're in the middle of it to step away and remove ourselves from the problem or from the season and say, How exactly is God going to use this for my good and for his glory?

Because all I see is loss. All I see is devastation. All I see is confusion. All I see is fear. All I see is uncertainty. Or maybe you're on the other side and you say, Man, all I see is the fruit of my hard work.

All I see is the comforts and pleasures that I've surrounded myself with and life's pretty good. Guess what? Solomon went through all that. He achieved it all.

[17:12] And he looked back and said, None of those things mattered that much. What mattered is what God meant, what God intended for every season.

That's what made it beautiful. All those other things, he said, that's all vanity. He said, that's all useless. It doesn't matter that much.

What mattered is what God was doing in every season. Let's look at what the prophet Isaiah told us about this. He said, I have refined you.

God is speaking to his people through his prophet Isaiah. And he said, I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.

Hold on to that idea of refinement, okay? Hold on to that idea of refining silver, refining precious metals, refining gold in the furnace. Keep that in the back of your mind.

[18:10] We're going to look at Psalms. Psalm 66. Hold on a second. We skipped ahead. Here we go. Psalm 66, verse 10. For you, God, tested us. You have refined us like silver.

We went through fire and flood, but you brought us to a place of great abundance. David is writing here when he's running for his life. He's being surrounded and pursued by people who want to kill him.

And he says, God, you've tested us. You've refined us. We went through all this, but it was part of this refining process. And now you are bringing us to a place of great abundance.

What is he talking about in Psalms and in Isaiah about this refiner's fire? Well, here's a process. It's going to be hard to see, but you don't really need to break all this down.

Do we have any experts in refining metals in the room? Always got to check. Yeah? Your mom is? Christopher? Christopher? He pointed to you. Yeah.

[19:07] Get that boy under control, please. I'm just kidding. Here's the part that's relevant for what we're talking about today. The first three here teaches us, and I'm by no means an expert on this.

I just did a little study this week about it in preparation for today. Precious metals go through three different furnaces in this refining process.

So if we're refining gold or silver, it says it goes through the flash smelting furnace. Anybody know what that is? The flash smelting furnace.

Okay. Number two, it goes through the converter furnace. And then finally, it goes through the anode furnace. It goes through three different refiners fires before it can continue on in the process and finally be made into something useful, valuable, and productive.

Do you see the parallel between what Isaiah was writing about, what the Lord put on his heart to tell us, going through this life with God, you often go through the refiner's fire.

[ 20 : 26 ] Sometimes you might go through three of them. You might go through more. God has a purpose in the fire that he takes you through.

Your season of life might be unpleasant, but he's teaching you in the scriptures that this season is like a refiner's fire.

What does the refiner's fire do to the precious metals? Does anybody know? What's that? It gets out. Gets out the sludge. It gets rid of the impurities.

It gets rid of the stuff that can't stay. It's going to make it less valuable, less useful, less beautiful.

What God is doing in your life in the refiner's fire is getting rid of the impurities.

They're going to keep you from him. They're going to keep you off the path that he wants you to walk. They're going to keep you from following closely as you follow your rabbi, your Messiah, your master, your Lord, Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 40 ] He's saying, I'm going to take you through the fire. Sometimes through the fire. Sometimes through the flood. But always to a place of great abundance.

That doesn't always mean an abundant bank account. That doesn't always mean abundance of material things on this earth. It means a place of a full heart.

It means of a place of full satisfaction. Full joy. Full peace. It's what we're pursuing anyway. It's what we're trying to get to anyway.

So the refiner's fire is a crucial part of our walk with Jesus. What do we draw from the refiner's fire?

What purpose is he trying to accomplish in our lives as he takes us through the fire?

First off is sanctification. He wants to make us holy. He wants to set us apart. And that's what he's talking about. It says first it reshapes how we think and how we respond.

[ 22 : 40 ] That's what sanctification is. It's changing you from what you are now into who God designed you to be. And who he's making you to be. That's going to look different in your life and it's going to look different in mine.

Sometimes we're going to see that very obvious as Stoney gets up and he's baptized. Sometimes we're going to see it as you responding not in anger and not in self-justified wrath when someone wrongs you.

But instead responding in kindness, compassion, forgiveness. That's God changing you. Changing the way you think.

Changing the way you're wired. Say man, that's just who I am. Right. It is who you are. But God wants to change that person. God wants to make you different. And he can. He can do it.

Say that's just the way God made me. No, no, no. God's remaking you. It's a new birth. It's a new creation that God's doing in you.

[ 23 : 44 ] And if he's not doing that, then we have to step back and say, am I a new creation? Or do I need to set myself aside and say, God, I surrender to you.

I surrender all this time. I'm not going to hold back. I'm putting all my faith in you. I do believe. I do have faith. And I'm going to trust you that I know I'm a sinner.

That I know Jesus died and paid the sacrifice for my sins. And then he came back to life. God raised him from the dead. And that's somebody I can put all my faith in. So for the first time maybe ever, God might need to make you a new creation.

Then he can sanctify you. Then he can change the way you think. Then he can change you. And then the other purpose here, the second purpose, is it creates a hunger for the ultimate tool that God has given us, which is his word.

That's what the refiner's fire can do for you. It can change you. It can sanctify you. And it can develop a hunger for God's word. Why? Because God's word is a magical book that's the fourth member of the Trinity and we hold it equal to God?

[ 24 : 50 ] No. Because the Bible is the ultimate tool that God gave to us to reveal Jesus to us. That's what the Bible does for us. That's why God gave it to us. It contains his very words.

It contains words that his people wrote down that were inspired by him. And it leads us directly to him. And if you're reading the Bible and it's leading you to somewhere besides Jesus, you're reading it wrong.

The Bible must always lead you back to Jesus. It's what it's there for. So when you go through the refiner's fire, it should drive you back to that book.

And in doing so, it drives you back to Jesus. And number three, that's exactly what it does. It reveals Jesus to us. It leads us straight to our only real hiding place.

Jesus Christ. Because the refiner's fire will burn up all the other hiding places. It'll reveal how insignificant they are. It'll reveal how unsatisfying they are.

[ 25 : 56 ] It'll reveal how ineffective they are. Wherever you've tried to run in your heart to hide from your problems. Wherever you've tried to run, maybe physically, to hide.

To find relief. The refiner's fire of life that God takes you through will finally reveal the real hiding place that actually works.

And that's running back to the one who truly cares. The one who died for you. The one who rose for you. The one who lives for you.

The one who gave his spirit to you and said, I'm always with you. Anytime, anyplace, anywhere. It doesn't matter. I'm there. And the refiner's fire reveals that to you.

So, let's move ahead. No season is wasted when God is at work. I believe that's in your bulletins if you want to fill it in. No season is wasted when God is at work.

[ 26 : 58 ] The refiner's fire is always there for a purpose. The season will only be temporary. The season will not last forever. Sometimes it feels like it will. Sometimes we need a light at the end of the tunnel and it feels like there's no end in sight.

It's like, man, when is this season going to be over? On the flip side, you might be living the good life. You might think, man, I could stay like this forever. Everything's all right.

I finally arrived. Listen, this season too is going to be over at some point. Something's going to come down the road that you weren't expecting. But look, that season won't last forever. But neither of them will be wasted.

God has a purpose for both. And he's taking you through the refiner's fire in every season. So, God is at work and it's not a waste. Number two, joy comes from resting in God's timeline.

Now, I can promise you, my timeline looks very different than God's. It always has. He has never adjusted his timeline to mine. And as frustrating, as annoying as that has been, I'm really grateful that he hasn't adjusted his timeline to mine.

[ 28 : 05 ] Because in hindsight, I can often see, wow, what I wanted then would never have been good for me. That would have been a train wreck. Thank God he held off until it was the right time.

So, joy comes from resting in that. Look, you can try to force your timeline. It's going to steal your joy. It's going to mess it all up.

Then you've got to go back to God and say, get me back on your timeline, please. Mine's not working out well. The audio was a little garbled from the, we have computer issues up there.

By the way, y'all don't get mad at the guys on the deck when something wrong happens up there.

They are working with a system that is deeply flawed. And we are working to get to the place where we can redo some things up there financially and all that.

Y'all pray for that. If you'd like to contribute to some of our audio visual needs in here, then please consider doing that. But it's not their fault, man. They are doing the absolute best they can working with somewhat flawed equipment and software.

[ 29 : 10 ] But what I wanted to say was during the baptism testimony video, we said, we saw a minute ago, I don't know if you understood everything that Gunnar Ellenberg was saying at the very beginning, but he said, one of the things he said was, surprise, surprise, I'm not very good at living life my way or I'm not very good at living according to my understanding.

I was like, yeah, that's so true. You're not, man. You're a train wreck. You're a mess. But every one of us could have said the same thing with him. We're not very good at living life by our own design. So, you can force that and say, well, I'm just going to get better at it. Or you can say, forget this, I'm switching over to God's timeline.

That's where I'll find rest. That means my future plans might need to be adjusted. That means my right now plans might need to be adjusted. But when we can finally rest, we're joyful.

Have you ever stayed up for a long time? Like more than 24 hours? Anybody ever stay? I see some heads nodding. Anybody ever stayed up like 48 hours? 72 hours?

[ 30 : 23 ] Yeah. Jamie, with your background, I don't know what you were doing there in that time, man, but you probably can't tell us. Look, when you stay up a long time, you're a joy to be around, aren't you?

Tired people are always really, really happy, enjoyable, pleasant people, right? Maybe you've gotten to the point where you can handle that, but hunger, fatigue, these things can affect our spirits.

They can make us a little less pleasant. Joy will not go away if you're resting.

Joy will stay if you're resting. I'm not just talking about sleeping, not just talking about getting your eight hours at night or whatever you need. Not talking about taking a nap.

You might need to do that. Sunday afternoon, it's the 11th commandment in the Bible. You're supposed to take a nap after church. It's part of it. But we're almost done.

[ 31 : 33 ] And before I close, I want to get this principle across. Resting in God's timeline. That's what gives you joy. It's what gives me joy.

I can promise you. I've had a hard time with God's timeline in my life. Recently. Recently, I've had a hard time with God's timeline.

Thinking, God, what are you doing? We get to celebrate all the baptisms that God's given our church. We get to celebrate the people going through discipleship. We get to celebrate the small groups that Brian was talking about.

By the way, thank you for that, man. That's a wonderful testimony of the community and the joy that can be found in each other and this fellowship and study that happens in those small groups. By the way, the Kennedy's is tomorrow night, I believe, right?

Kennedy's is tomorrow night, I think, at their house. So, be there for that. No, wait, wait. I'm thinking today's Monday. Tuesday. Tuesday night. Men's group is Monday night. Kennedy's is Tuesday night. All right. We get to see all this fruit of what God does through our church.

[ 32 : 39 ] Sometimes, what we don't always see is the struggles that happen behind the scenes. It's the people that get upset. It's the people that don't like change that happens. It's the people that resist sometimes the working of God's spirit in our hearts.

It's the struggle that happens as God is moving in a church. Sometimes, it's mistakes that leadership make. I would never do that, by the way, and never make any kind of mistake.

So, don't press because you'll find a lot if you start digging. I've made plenty of mistakes and sometimes we'll suffer for a season because of that. You've made mistakes too.

Committee leaders will make mistakes. Committee members will make mistakes. Jared makes more mistakes than I can count every day. He's never not making a mistake. I try to tell him every day he is a mistake.

We are brutal to each other if you ever just want to see that nonsense happening come up here during the week. We have a lot of fun. But look, the truth is you have flawed leadership and they are serving flawed people.

[ 33 : 47 ] But what we're not doing is serving a flawed God. And somehow, he uses us flawed people to do great things anyway.

But there is struggle during those seasons. How do we get through them? How do we not have our joy stolen? I can promise you from personal testimony, the joy is under attack.

For the last couple years, joy has been under attack. In my life, probably some of yours. And God's been teaching me just in the last few weeks even.

He's ramped it up. He's been teaching me to rest in his timeline. Say, just let go, man. Just let go. Quit trying to figure it all out yourself.

Quit trying to come up with all the solutions yourself. Just let go and rest in my timeline. We read it a minute ago, but I want to draw your attention back to verse 11 in Ecclesiastes 3.

[ 34 : 45 ] God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He's planted eternity in the human heart. We're aware that God is in control of it all.

That God is an eternal God. That our souls are eternal. This body will die. But he has planted this concept of eternity in our own heart. And every part of it is beautiful for its time.

Psalms 31 verse 13 says, I hear many whispering terror on every side. You ever heard that? You ever heard somebody whispering, man, everything's bad. There's terror all around us.

Turn on the news. There's nothing good happening anywhere. But I trust in you, Lord. My times are in your hands. My childhood, my teen years, my 20s, my 30s, my 40s, my 50s, my 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and even hundreds.

Those times are all in your hands. The seasons of life are in your hands, God. And then Lamentations chapter 3. The faithful love of the Lord never ends.

[ 35 : 47 ] His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness. And no matter what season of life you're in, his mercies begin afresh every morning.

This is what Solomon is teaching us in Ecclesiastes 3. So what's our takeaway from that? There's peace in being present in his presence.

There's peace in just being present in the presence of God. You ever heard somebody say, just be more present.

Be all in where you are. Sometimes that's hard. Because where you are is no fun. Because it's a struggle.

I don't want to be present right here. What you can be is present in God's presence. Because he's there with you. When people come up against you, he's still present.

[ 36 : 49 ] You can be present in his presence. When people say things about you, he's still present.

You can be present in his presence. When there's joy, happiness, and victory, he's present there.

And you can stay present in his presence and not get seduced and distracted by the good happening around you. I'm talking about never getting too high and never getting too low.

I'm not a perfect example of that. And probably you aren't either. But God is teaching us through a wise man who lived it all, experienced it all, and got to the end of his life and said there's peace in being present in God's presence.

So church, how do we live under the sun? One more time, how do we live under the sun? That's what we do.

Would you bow your heads with me? God, let us be present in your presence right now. Let us lift our eyes from everything else going around in our hearts, in our minds, the attacks that Satan gives on our minds, the attacks through others, through family, through friends, through people we care about, through enemies, even through victories, even through wealth, even through blessings, even through answers to prayer.

[ 38 : 20 ] Sometimes even that can distract us from keeping our eyes above the sun and just letting your presence be enough. Ground us, make us present in your presence.

We'll give you the glory for it.