

What Time Is It?

How often do you check the clock during the day? Western culture is obsessed with time—it is always important to know what time it is. The clocks and bells of the churches of St Andrews remind me that time is under God's rule and that it is more than just a matter of marking off minutes and hours. God knows what time it is and he wants us to know, too.

Two ways of understanding time are prevalent in the world today, and *both* are biblical... well, sort of. The first understands time as a circle, a series of events continually repeating themselves with only minor variations. Just as winter melts into spring which grows into summer which fades into fall which cools to winter again, so too do human lives and civilizations follow a circular course. The second understands time as a line, a railway on which the train of time must ever progress and never return. The next best thing is just ahead and all eyes are on the future, always hoping for the promise of tomorrow. The Bible speaks about time in both ways, indicating that time is both linear *and* cyclical. On the one hand, the Bible shows us that there is more to life than an inescapable circle (think of the movie *Groundhog Day*). God is moving creation towards a goal; there is something new in store for us! On the other hand, creation is not on a beeline of progress, a never-ending and steady improvement. There is a cyclical or seasonal aspect of time. Both views of time, however, fail to recognize that God has an end in mind for time. The story of creation is neither never-ending circle nor never-ending line, in fact, God is drawing his creation toward a definite goal.

So what does this matter to your Christian life? First, don't be discouraged if your story doesn't resemble an escalator, a straight shot from beginning to end. God created time to be "seasonal", so expect your life to have "seasons" as well. Second, God *is* calling you forward, doing new things and moving this world towards the fulfillment of his plan for all creation. Our time on earth has a "destination", let's go!

Luke Talon

Monday: Genesis 1:1-2:4 beautifully illustrates that the time of this world is both cyclical and has a goal. As you read this passage, notice the cycles and the goal. Reflect on your life. What have been the seasons? What is God's goal for your life? Days 1-3 and 7: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.... Thus the heavens and the earth were

finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.”

Prayer: “Lord, your creation is wonderful, and I praise you for the seasons that mark our time and the rest with you toward which we are headed. Please help me to live by your tiime. Give me eyes to see the seasons of my life and the goal to which you are calling me. I offer you my life, the moments and the entirety, may it be “good” in your sight. Amen.”

Tuesday: Although Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 can be a little discouraging, it serves as a needed reminder that, no matter how hard we work or how well we plan, we cannot escape the cycle of life. Life will not be one uninterrupted party or success. Do you avoid the tears in search of the laughter? What season are you in now?

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.”

Prayer: “Father, your ways are often beyond my understanding, please help me to trust in your goodness. Give me the strength to be fully present in the here and now. I pray that I would neither harden my heart to the seasons of tears and grief, nor seek only the laughter and the dancing. Let me seek you and find you in all seasons. Amen.”

Wednesday: At times the seasonal aspect of our time may seem threatening, but God does not abandon us to time, but keeps watch over us, as Psalm 121 shows. Where has your help come from in the past? Is God offering you help now from an unexpected quarter?

“I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.”

Prayer: “God, thank you for watching over me. Please give me confidence in your good rule over time and the humility to accept it. Turn my eyes in the right direction and deliver me from trouble. Amen.”

Thursday: Galatians 4:4-7 speaks of God's plan for time. Although we are not always able to see God's plan for time, it is there. God's times are not accidental, but purposeful. God's plan is for you to be his child and heir, can you see his hand in your past guiding you to this point?

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.”

Prayer: “Abba! Father! Thank you for taking me as your child. Free me from my slavery so that I may be obedient to you out of love. Let me follow the example of my elder brother, Jesus, and share your love with those around me. Amen.”

Friday: I Corinthians 15:20-28 shows us that death is not the goal of our time. It certainly appears to end our time, but the resurrection of Christ point to the true reality: we are made for eternal life in Christ. The goal of creation is to be subjected under God—not under him as slaves, but under him as beloved children are under a loving parent. Is it time for God to be everywhere and always in your life, your all in all?

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.”

Prayer: “Father, you are the mighty God, and I praise you for your conquest of death. Give me trust in your victory and allow me to join Christ at the end of time in eternal life. May my life be a sign of what is to come and proclaim to those around me that you are the God who will be all in all. Amen.”