

1. The Rhythms of Life (2Q 2019—Family Seasons)

Biblical material: Genesis 1; Gen. 8:22; Ps. 90:10; Job 1:13–19; Acts 9:1–22; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:1; Eccl. 3:1.

Quotes

- Through all the changing scenes of life,/ In trouble and in joy,/ The praises of my God shall still/ My heart and tongue employ. *Hymn*
- In the midst of life we are in death. *Book of Common Prayer*
- Wisdom tells me I am nothing. Love tells me I am everything. And between these two, my life flows. *Nasargatta*
- Listen to the rhythms to life. Everything happens in its own time. *Sue Krebs*
- Stability of the heart does not come naturally. But the simple rhythms of tending to body and soul — making oatmeal and saying prayers, keeping house and singing songs — bring me back to a center, to a still point that is fixed in this place. I do not know how to eliminate distractions (even if I shut down my e-mail, turn off the cell phone, and drive to a pristine retreat center, my thoughts are still with me.). But I can keep the rhythms that are given to me by my church and community. I can listen to my son and watch the birds more closely. *Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove*
- We feel grounded, centered, in touch with the ancient and eternal rhythms of life. Power and passion well up like an artesian spring and creativity dances in celebration of life. *David N. Elkins*

Questions

Just because we recognize there are “rhythms to life”—that all things end in death, for example, does that mean we just have to accept them? Do we understand from Ecclesiastes that there should be a “time to kill”? In what ways can we better cope with this life with all its uncertainties? How does all this reflect on God?

Bible summary

Genesis 1 gives us the Creation account when everything was set up by God in order. Gen. 8:22 explains that the regularity of the seasons and day and night will always continue. Ps. 90:10 tells us we will live to 70 or 80 years old. Job’s misfortune recorded in Job 1:13–19 tells us that nothing in life is certain! Acts 9:1–22 records Saul’s conversion to Paul. God promises he brings things to completion (Phil. 1:6). We are assured “no condemnation” in Jesus (Rom. 8:1). “Everything has its own time—a time for all that happens here.” (Eccl. 3:1).’

Comment

When we read the story of the first human family in Genesis, we should realize all those implications that are there in terms of the sweep of history. Adam and Eve were not the first of God’s created children. Nor were they the first to sin. The family of God was already disrupted by the rebellion of Satan. Adam and Eve were part of God’s answer, and when they failed, the family of God was damaged once more. This “lesson book of the universe” tells its story so eloquently of what sin truly is, how God responds, who he

is, what he does, and how he finally restores family harmony. So maybe that's the best place to begin. While we recognize the "rhythms of life," we must admit they are all flawed, they are all subject to the curse that sin brought.

For we need to see Creation, history, even ourselves, in the light of the Great Controversy. We have to understand what it all *for*, and the part that we are playing right now. While these lessons direct us to family life, this is just part of the Christian experience, and we recognize that all families are defective in some way. What we look for is to be part of God's family—now, and the perfection of the earth made new.

So we ought to ask ourselves, "What is the kind of family God is looking for?" It is not based on blood relationship, lineage, or descent, but on the deliberate choice of doing and being right, an acceptance of God and his kingdom. The Father of this family does not rule by virtue of procreation or position or power, but by inviting choice and acceptance. Our heavenly Father is so different to an earthly father it is hard to comprehend, but God has chosen family relationships to most closely represent the relationships he wants with us. So it is indeed a good idea to look at these models, while recognizing they are but images of the perfection God has planned for us in our eternal relationship we each can have with him.

This in turn means it all comes down to love. That can sound very trite. Love is a damaged word that can mean many things. But in the sense of the altruistic principles by which God runs his universe, then it means so much. That is what John is explaining in 1 John 4. So ultimately through the love we may find in family we can catch a glimpse of God's love in his family. And despite all the failures and misrepresentation in our earthly families, "We have experienced and trusted in the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them." 1 John 4:16 FBV.

Ellen White Comments

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11, R.V.); and true beauty will be secured, not in marring God's work, but in coming into harmony with the laws of Him who created all things, and who finds pleasure in their beauty and perfection.

As the mechanism of the body is studied, attention should be directed to its wonderful adaptation of means to ends, the harmonious action and dependence of the various organs. As the interest of the student is thus awakened, and he is led to see the importance of physical culture, much can be done by the teacher to secure proper development and right habits. {Ed 198.2}

Age after age, the curiosity of men has led them to seek for the tree of knowledge; and often they think they are plucking fruit most essential, when, like Solomon's research, they find it altogether vanity and nothingness in comparison with that science of true holiness which will open to them the gates of the city of God. The human ambition has been seeking for that kind of knowledge that will bring to them glory and self-exaltation and supremacy. Thus Adam and Eve were worked upon by Satan. {CC 17.7}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed... With undimmed vision they gaze upon the glory of creation—suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed. {DD 62.2}

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