

Message for August 30, 2020

Well, it's the end of August and the season of summer is drawing to a close. We are about to begin a new season of cooler weather, falling leaves, and shorter days. Seasonal change is the way of life on earth. Summer changes into fall, fall into winter, winter into spring and then back to summer again. Over and over this cycle repeats itself. And each season has its positives and its negatives. For most of us we joyfully anticipate the coming of some, but we dread the arrival of others. But regardless of our feelings, each season has a purpose established by God. So it is with the other seasons in our lives.

Other seasons? What other seasons? Well, there are a whole multitude of other seasons. Seasons of hope, or despair; seasons of challenge, blessings, fear, grief, loneliness, elation, turmoil, and peace; seasons of abundance or need, health or illness. The list could go on and on. Have you experienced any of these seasons in your life? Of course you have! And each one serves a unique purpose in God's plan for our lives. Some of these seasons show us God's grace and overwhelming love in order to comfort and encourage us. Others challenge us to trust and persevere, stimulating our spiritual growth. Still others involve pruning away unfruitful things in our lives in order that we might produce even better and more abundant fruit. And then there are seasons for which we have no answers, only God knows why we experience them. Yet each one is indispensable and purposeful. For that reason we need to learn how to embrace each season, regardless of whether we perceive it to be good or bad. Since God is with us throughout each one, we have nothing to fear or be anxious over in the troubling ones. We should rather rejoice in His presence and grace, just as we would in the good seasons. It may not be easy, but that is the very place we are all being brought to, where we walk by faith, not by sight, and have the victory in all circumstances. Growing up into the fullness of Christ may be difficult at times, but it is never optional.

One other thing to remember, that just as the natural seasons are constantly changing over time, our spiritual seasons change as well. Seasons are periods of time, and each one will eventually come to an end. So if you are entering, or in the middle of experiencing a difficult one right now, be encouraged that you *will* get through it to then enter a

new and better season. The Lord has great plans for each of you, and He will never forsake you. Trust Him with the seasons of your life!

Love & blessings,
Pastor Joe

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

*To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck
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 cast away stones, and a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain,
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 of war, and a time of peace.*

James 1:2-5

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing
that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its
perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If
any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally
and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

LEARNING FROM AUTUMN LEAVES

Every fall, I marvel at the beautiful leaves, studying the intricate shapes and God's creative, colorful displays. Despite its deterioration, the foliage reveals splendor — mere months after bursting out in spring and providing summer shade.

I often think I'm like an autumn leaf. Through many seasons, God has transformed me from a self-absorbed person to one who trusts his steadfast promises. Winter is approaching for me too. Yet the Holy Spirit keeps molding me to reflect God's goodness and beauty. During the autumn of my life, I pray that God helps me embrace changing seasons while reflecting his love and light to all.

—MaryAnn Sundby

FOR EVERYTHING A SEASON

Wanting his sons to learn not to judge too quickly, a man sent each, in turn, on a quest to look at a pear tree far away and report what he saw. The first son went in winter, the second in spring, the third in summer and the fourth in fall. Finally, the father gathered the young men together. "What did you see?" he asked.

The first son reported seeing an ugly tree, bent and lifeless. The second disagreed, saying it was budding with fresh new life. The third son reported finding a tree laden with sweet-smelling, beautiful blossoms, while the fourth insisted it drooped with ripe fruit.

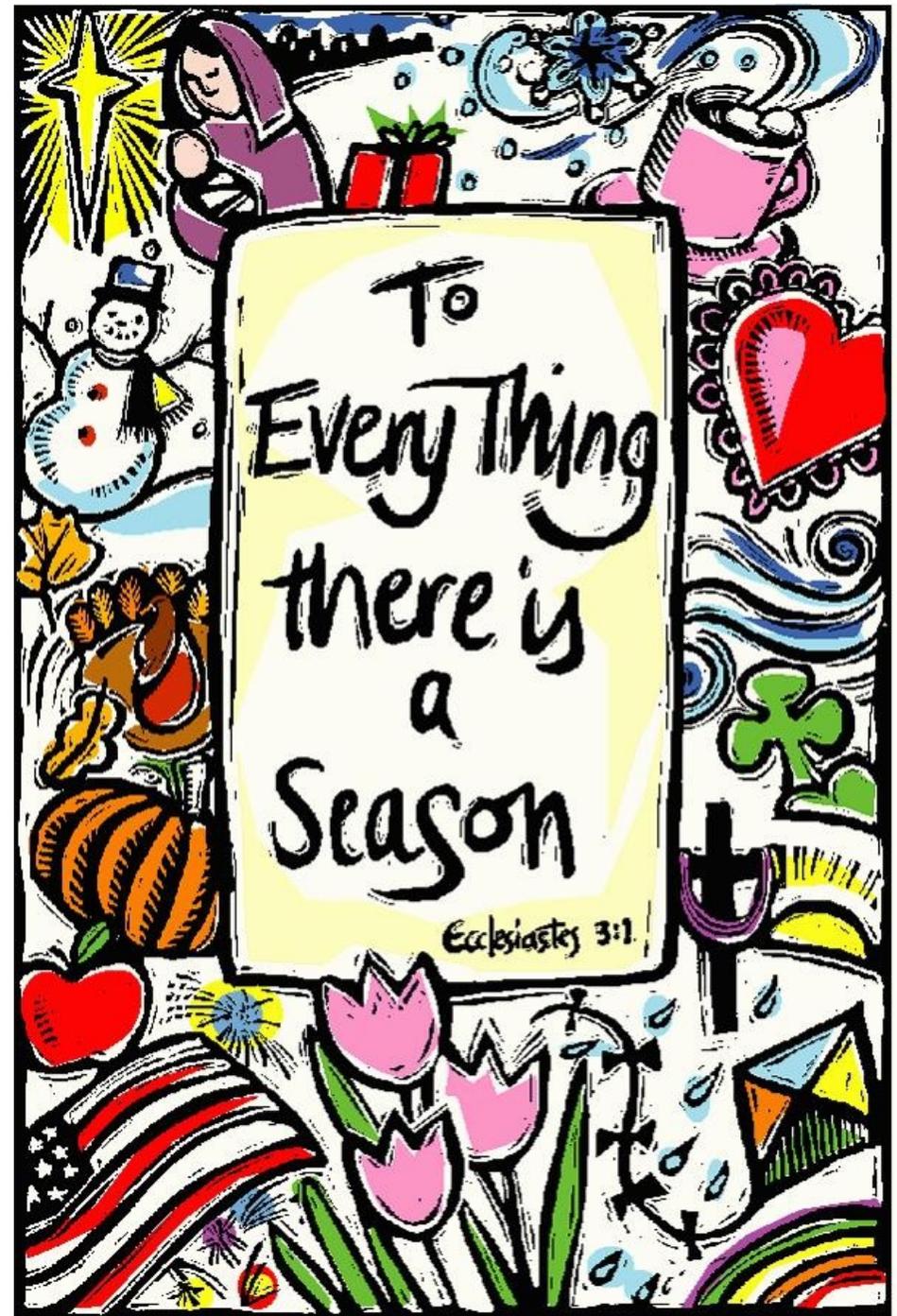
The father said his sons were all correct, for they'd seen the same tree, though at different seasons of its life. "Don't judge a tree — or a person — based on just one season of life," he counseled his children. "Who they are can only be known at the end, when all life's seasons have been lived.

"Furthermore," he added, "don't give up on your own life if you experience a hard season, such as winter, or you'll miss out on the renewal of spring, the joy of summer, the fulfillment of autumn."

THE SEED OF GOOD ACTIONS

Good intentions are, at least, the seed of good actions; and everyone ought to sow them, and leave it to the soil and the seasons whether he or any other gather the fruit.

-William Temple



"The Little Church That Could"
"Believing is Seeing"