

Changes

by Rev. Dr. Sonja Tobey

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Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11 says:

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.

He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

I saw a quote contributed to Mark Twain, “the only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.” That certainly does make sense. Change can be difficult, even good change like a new baby or a new job. Yet change is inevitable. It’s not a matter of if things change, it is when things change. The anticipation of expected change can be agonizing. I am a planner. Of course, the church sign that reads, “if you want to make God laugh, make a plan,” was directed at me, I’m sure. I know I am not going to be able to foretell the future, but I want to see just far enough into the future, so that I feel like I can plan for anything that may be unexpected. (Now you see why this is all so humorous to God.)

The in Ecclesiastes, which tradition says was written by King Solomon in his old age, gives general words of wisdom. The conclusion of the book is that we cannot know the future, therefore we are to live each day as it comes. What can we count on then? There is a season for planting and a season for gathering. We know that if we are mourning, it will not last forever, as there will come an appropriate time to dance. And sometimes it is the right time to speak up, and at other times it is the right time to stay silent. It is not good to dwell on what is passed, and it is not good to obsess over what may happen in the future, but we have wisdom that comes from our past and hope that comes from looking to the future. This wisdom and hope keeps us living day to day.

Change is what we can count on. We can also count on God being there through it all.

I suppose as I watch the seasons change and the beautiful colors of fall appear, I see the leaves become their most beautiful as they begin to die. Things end, things begin. It is what it is. What do you need to let go of in your past, to move into the future with hope? What are you looking forward to that makes the tedium of the day bearable? For wherever you may be in your seasons of life, give it to God, live for the day, and enjoy the seasons.