

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Perfect Timing

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

SYNOPSIS God is never too soon and never too late. He's always right on time.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Perfect Timing

It is said baseball is a game of inches. In reality, it's a game of milliseconds. Consider baseball's most basic interaction – the one that takes place 60 feet, 6 inches apart roughly 300 times a game for 162 games each season... The pitcher versus the hitter. Hitting a major league pitch is one of the hardest things to do in all sports. It all happens so fast. There's plenty of science that backs up how difficult it is to see a fastball, react to its trajectory, and make contact – all in less than ½ of a second. League-wide batting average is only around 25% and the very best hitters still only hit about 1/3 of the time. God's batting average is 100% - he never misses.

Timing is the choice, judgment, or control of when something should be done. We all tend to struggle with getting the timing right in various situations, but God has perfect timing – his choice and judgment of when things should happen are always right. And, ultimately, he controls the timing of everything.

Perfect Timing, by the Sweet Comfort Band

*...You're always in the right place at the right time, To catch me when I fall
You've got perfect timing, You're not a minute too soon, Not a moment too late
You've got perfect timing, I can see when you move, I can feel when you wait
You hold tomorrow in the palm of your hand, Everything runs by your master plan
You've got perfect timing*

God's timing is perfect in all things!

Here we are on the cusp of a new season. It's warming up, crops are growing, we'll be outside a lot more. It doesn't seem all that long ago that it was cold and icy. It doesn't even seem that long ago that we watched the farmer outside our back door harvesting his crop. A lot can happen in a pretty short time frame. This morning, we're going to talk about God's timing in our lives.

☞ Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

"1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

There are four things you need to know about God's timing in your life:

☞ **God's timing is sovereign.** (Eccl. 3:1a)



In the book, The Hiding Place, Corrie ten Boom tells of a night when German and English planes were dogfighting above them in the skies over Holland. After hearing her sister Betsie stirring in the kitchen, Corrie raced down. For an hour, they sipped tea together until the sky was silent. Corrie returned to her bed in a darkened room. She ran her hand over the pillow and felt a piece of metal. There was a ten-inch piece of metal that had fallen onto her bed. She rushed to tell Betsie, " 'Betsie, if I hadn't heard you in the kitchen-' But Betsie put a finger on her mouth. 'Don't say it, Corrie! There are no "ifs" in God's world. And no places that are safer than other places. The center of His will is our only safety – O Corrie, let us pray that we may always know it! ' "

Have you ever found yourself wondering, “What if...?” I do. How many of you have ever prayed for something and your prayer went unanswered, or wasn't answered the way you wanted it to be answered? All of us, right? And we start to wonder about God's timing in our lives. We start to ask questions like, “Why didn't God answer my prayer?” “Do I not have enough faith?” “Doesn't God care about my problems and how I'm feeling?” All the “what ifs.” I wish I could answer all those tough questions for you today, but I can't. But here's what the Bible can answer for us: God's timing is sovereign.

☞ That means **He is in ultimate control**. The writer says, “There is an appointed time for everything.” Not most things. Not happy things, only. Not positive things, alone.

☞ There is **an appointed time** in God's timetable **for everything**. And if you can learn to live with that in mind, it'll make those unanswered prayers a lot easier to cope with.

Hebrews 4:13 says, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.” He has seen the past clearly and He sees the future just as clearly. Now, listen to verses 15-16...

Hebrews 4:15-16

we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The writer is saying, “Don't hesitate to approach God, for He already knows what the future holds and He's already gone through the same stuff we go through, so let's come to Him, because He can relate to us.” There may be times when you don't feel like you have a real friend in the whole world. But you have one in the Lord. He can relate to you.

☞ Another way to word this is to say, “God's help is always **just in the nick of time**.” How many times in your life have you been faced with a seemingly impossible situation and God intervened just in the nick of time? God's timing is sovereign.

☞ **God's timing is sufficient.** (Eccl. 3:1b)

Have you ever been in one of those places in life where you felt trapped, like there was no way out? The last part of Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “And [there is] a season for every activity under heaven.”



You may be in a place in your life where you're wondering if God is ever going to show up. Maybe your marriage is in jeopardy. Maybe you're on the brink of losing your job. Maybe you're really sick and there isn't much hope. Whatever your situation is, God may not answer your prayer the way you want Him to, but I can promise you that you will make it through, if you hold fast to Him.

☞ God has a time for everything. **He's going to take care of you in everything.** He's going to be with you in everything. Not 99% of things... Everything. It may seem like time is running out, but God is always right on time. It may seem that there is not enough time, but God's timing is sufficient.

☞ **His timing is enough.**

Sometimes I get in a hurry in a situation and wonder why God isn't doing something. But then I look at this page of Scripture and God says, "I've got a season for every activity under Heaven." In other words, He's saying, "just be with me in my relationship with you, and obey me as I lead you, and I will bring every event into your life that you need, in the right time."

Maybe that's what God's trying to tell you through this Scripture, today. Or maybe it's the opposite. There are some that God's trying to say to you, "Don't just stand there, do something." That leads us into the 3rd thing you need to know about God's timing:

☞ **God's timing is seasonal.** (Eccl. 3:2-8)

Ecclesiastes 3:2-8

"[There is] a time to be born and a time to die a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

Notice something very important in these verses. Birth and death. Weeping and laughing. Scattering and gathering, and so on. Do you notice a pattern here? All of these seasons that the Bible describes are opposites, and they are seasonal. Life comes in seasons. It's not just one big long, monotonous grind. There are seasons of work, there are seasons of rest, there are seasons of loss, and there are seasons of refreshing and renewal. The key to really living a full life is to catch on to what God is doing in your life during each season.

☞ In your life, you've got to be willing to **move when God says, "move"** and to **be still when He says, "be still."** The same goes for the local church. If you've been around for any length of time, you know it's true, whether it's here or anywhere else. There are seasons of vitality and growth, and there are seasons of loss. The key is to not get cocky when things are growing, (*only God can make it grow*) and not to fall into despair when things are not growing (*God never leaves us*).

God's timing is seasonal. One more thing about God's timing:



☞ **God's timing is surprising.**

We're not always ready for it. He thinks outside our boxes. We have a very creative God, and who ☞ am I that I should ever know His ways? **His ways are higher than my ways and His thoughts are greater than my thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9)**, and about the time that I think I have God figured out, He takes me into another season and surprises me with another of His various ways of working through people – ways that I never thought possible. But I'm not God. And you know what? I'm glad. Aren't you glad that you're not God?

That would be a good choice for all of us to make. Put it at the top of your list: Stop trying to be God. Just learn to live and move and be still within His timing for you. I think that far too often, we have a low vision of God. When things don't make sense to our natural way of thinking, we're not sure we can trust God. But, He is so far above us, we can never fully understand him. We must simply trust.

I know people that are smarter than me, but usually I can outsmart them in something, even if it's only a minor thing. And, I've been smarter than others in certain situations, but then get shown up in another situation by that very same person. But with God, there is no competition. My very best doesn't even come close. Einstein barely scratched the surface of God's knowledge. Solomon's wisdom was nothing compared to God's, and what little he had came from God in the first place! ☞ So, we must **simply trust God**. His timing may be surprising, but it is **always right on time**.

Last week we talked about remembering God's goodness. Both the Bible and personal experience with God remind us that He can be trusted. And, we heard some testimonies right from this congregation to remind us of His goodness. So, trust God's perfect timing! He's not a minute too soon, not a moment too late. He's got perfect timing.

Some of you are holding on to promises from God and may be wondering when those are finally going to come through. I can totally relate. There are still some promises that I can't just dismiss, but have been a very long time in coming. It can be frustrating waiting, but remember that God's timing is always spot on.

What is going on in your life right now? Will you trust God's timing? Really, all you have to do is learn to hear him and follow his lead. Move when he says, "move," and be still when he says, "be still." It's kinda like the old game of "Simon Says." You do what Simon says, but only when Simon says it. God's timing is perfect!