

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Nov 4, 2018



Pastor Conway 8:15, Pastor Temple 9:30, 10:55

## Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's message, "Come Like A Child?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Opener: What season of the year is your favorite and why?

## Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture below, Ecclesiastes 3:1-11. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

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

**<sup>9</sup> What do workers gain from their toil? <sup>10</sup> I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. <sup>12</sup> I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. <sup>13</sup> That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>14</sup> I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will revere him.**

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- How do verses 2-8 above, poetically represent the theme of verse 1?
- Pastor Temple said “human experience is not a linear progression, but a tapestry woven from the times of our lives” and that “we weren’t made for sameness but for seasons.” What do you believe the author “the teacher,” means in verse 11, “He has made everything beautiful in its time?”
- Is it a stretch to think that truly awful life events can somehow be beautiful? Why or why not?
- Verse 11 also says that “He has set eternity in the human heart” yet, our partial knowledge may leave us wondering. What kind of longings of the heart do you believe the teacher is describing here?
- Pastor Conway said that saints weren’t necessarily perfect and were simply Christians growing in holiness or more into the likeness of Christ. Are you open to claiming the term “saint” for yourself? Why or why not?
- Christians who stand out in history as exemplars of Christian faith have long been honored as influential saints in the church. Pastor Conway lifted up two of them- Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria and Barbara Heck, the Mother of American Methodism. What “saints,” in history or in more recent times, have made significant impressions upon your Christian faith?

### **Another Related Scripture (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read Romans 1:7-12. Here the apostle Paul is writing to “all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.” What phrases in these verses suggest that these Christians were both already strong in the faith but also “saints in process?”
- Why was Paul so eager to meet with them?
- The “communion of saints” is a strength of the church lifted up in the Apostles Creed. How does verses 11-12 describe the kind of communion of saints that Paul was seeking?
- How have you been affected by the communion of saints within your Small Group?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional scripture above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- What do you most want people to remember about you after you have graduated from this life and moved on from the church militant to the church triumphant?
- How or when have you sensed in your heart, a measure of eternity that God has set there?
- What attitudes or practices this week can help the deposit of eternity in our hearts to become more attuned to our “heavenly homing beacon”?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- Who around us has lost a loved this year who could use a listening ear this week?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.