

Spiritual Seasons in Our Walk with Christ: A Season of Grieving
Mark 6:14-29

1. The recent political/social climate

- a. The riots at home and in the capital
- b. The corruption on high and among the low
- c. The isolation and disconnect of pandemic precautions
- d. How are we to respond?
 - i. Where do we focus our attention?
 - ii. What position does true faith take in the face of contextual calamity?

2. The Stories of Three Men

- a. Solomon the Self-Indulgent
 - i. Son of David, chosen by God to build the temple, endowed by God with wisdom surpassing that of any man before or since.
 - ii. He had everything a man could desire
 - (1) ***Ecclesiastes 2:3-11 (ESV)*** ³ *I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.*
 - (2) ⁴ *I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. ⁵ I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶ I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. ⁸ I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man. ⁹ So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.*
 - (3) ¹¹ *Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.*
 - iii. When he summed up his life he called it vanity, meaningless, a chasing after wind.
 - iv. What position does true faith take in the face of contextual calamity?
- b. John the Wilderness Wonder
 - i. Voice of one crying in the wilderness
 - ii. Call the people to repentance and faith
 - iii. Stood against the sins of the high and mighty as well as the meek and

- iv. lowly
Yet he winds up dead in a dungeon the apparent victim of a woman's whim and a king's cowardice.
 - (1) What was the point of all his righteous life if he just winds up dead?
 - (2) What good is faith if we still experience evil?
- v. What position does true faith take in the face of contextual calamity?
- c. Jesus the Crucified Crusader
 - i. Miraculous birth
 - ii. Holy life
 - iii. Murdered at the hands of a clueless mob, a jealous leadership, and a cruel government.
 - iv. What position does true faith take in the face of contextual calamity?

3. How you understand and respond to these three lives, and the experiences of our own lives in these days, depends entirely on the lens through which you view those lives!

- a. Solomon -
 - i. Meaningless? No!
 - ii. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (ESV) ¹³ *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.***
- b. John -
 - i. **Matthew 11:7-11 (ESV) ⁷ *As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.***
 - ii. Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist -
 - (1) Seen through the lens of divine sovereignty, John's life declares the greatness of God's eternal plan of salvation
 - (2) John's life and death serve as announcements of the life and death of Jesus, the Son of God, whose life and death are the foundation of our salvation.
- c. Jesus -
 - i. **Philippians 2:5-13 (ESV) ⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by***

taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

- ii. **Colossians 3:1-3 (ESV)** *¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

4. You can count on the world to fail you, disappoint you, even harm you or kill you, but God will never fail to keep every promise He ever made.

- a. He who loses His life will find it
- b. He who puts His faith in Jesus gains eternal life
- c. He who endures to the end will be saved
- d. Jesus to the church: He who overcomes
 - i. I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God
 - ii. Will not be hurt by the second death
 - iii. I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it
 - iv. I will give authority over the nations, he will rule them with an rod of iron
 - v. Clothed in white garments and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
 - vi. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and my own new name.
 - vii. I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.

5. The apostle Paul wrote, “If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:19, ESV).

- a. Faith in Christ, our daily walk with Christ, involves far more than the experiences we encounter in the flesh on this side of eternity.
- b. **1 Peter 1:3-5** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy he has caused us to be born again to a loving hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in that last time. In this you rejoice, though now, for a little while, if necessary,*

you have been grieved by various trials . . .

6. There will come, and there has come, into the lives of those who live their lives in and through faith in Jesus, seasons of grief

- a. Seasons when the world proves its faithlessness
- b. Seasons when the world proves its opposition and sinfulness
- c. Seasons when the world proves its inadequacy and deficiency
- d. Seasons when the world proves how fickle and self-serving is the corrupt human heart

7. Do not get lost in the cesspool of despair and hopelessness born of reliance on a sinful, broken world.

- a. **Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**
- b. Three Closing Words
 - i. Our original question: What position does true faith take in the face of contextual calamity?
 - ii. Three words
 - (1) Divest - get rid of sin and guilt through repentance and faith
 - (2) Endure - keep applying faith to the promises of God
 - (3) Concentrate - take a clear focused look at Jesus and imitate Him

8. Conclusions

- a. Rather than withdraw in fear or hopelessness, cast yourself more certainly and confidently than ever on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit within you, and run the race to which you are called, and in which you have been empowered by grace.
- b. A season of grieving doesn't need to be a season of defeat;
 - i. it may be just easily a season that motivates a deeper, more active, more vital experience of Christ Himself.
 - ii. Jesus said, ***"I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy."* John 16:20 (NIV)**
 - (1) You will grieve, that is true, but do not grieve as the world does, as those who have no hope.
 - (2) In this season of grieving, stand fast in hope, established in love, secure in faith, focused on Christ, pleading for the lost, and looking for the return of Jesus and the culmination of God's great mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory.