

The Mystery of Life -Ecclesiastes 3 – (1 Mar 15)

Allow me to turn your attention straightaway today to the book of Ecclesiastes and chapter 3. And today, we are going to cover the entire chapter in Ecclesiastes 3 and this is a wonderful series as I've mentioned, because this is so relevant for all of us living Life under the Sun. And we are on the pursuit for the real meaning of life.

There is a new in-thing in the gaming industry today. It's called the Reality Escape Game (An image of the puzzle game is flashed on the screen). The concept is very, very simple. You and your friends (picture shows a group of youths dressed up as detective Sherlock Holmes), you will gather in this room or in this place and in which you would find clues, you will solve puzzles, and you navigate your way out of that place within a given time frame.

So, let me show you by video what this Escape Reality Game is all about. (A video clip of one such game is shown). So this is a video from the website. They did not pay us to advertise. If you are interested to try, you can go try it with your friends, your family. I think it's rather fun. How many of you have experienced this escape game before? Can I see a show of hands? Come on, raise it up. Quite a few of you, may be just a handful - 10, 20 of you.

I know it's quite popular because I see that on our church members' pictures on Facebook. (Pictures of different groups of our church members with their props to enhance the thrills of the game). I see all of you enjoy it. This is a particular care group that has gone. Our worship leader is here. (Pointing to a picture on the screen). Can you see? He has been through this. Even Sister Hau Chun. She tried it in Malaysia as well. So, this is a game that is catching on across the world. It's an escape game, it's a reality game, it's a mystery game: trapped in a room and the idea is to find clues and get out, break out. (02:42)

Why did I say this? Well, because when I read Ecclesiastes chapter 3, which I asked you to read, this mystery game came to my mind. I look at life under the sun like as in life trapped in a room. You are not meant to live in this room alone. You are meant to live in another world altogether, but we are right now stuck in this mystery room, and we are to search for clues that we may break out of this life under the sun alone.

In chapter 1, we looked at the Circle of Life. In chapter 2, we looked at the great Experiment of Life. In chapter 3, today, we are going to look at the Mystery Room or the Mystery of Life, and, if you are ready, let's get started. It's going to be a very short sermon, by the way, so don't be scared I'm going to cover the entire chapter. It's going to be a really short sermon, and I think it's just one very simple point that we need to grasp at the end of it all.

So, let's begin with versus 1 to 9. Solomon says - this is a beautiful poem, many of you would have read this - it 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;
(this is an agricultural picture)
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
(architectural picture)
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones,
(this talks about preparing a land for agriculture)
and a time to gather stones together;
(to sabotage your enemy's land)
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
(a time for intimacy and a time not to)
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
(this is a [pastor says "spring cleaning" in Mandarin] time, a garage sale time)
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
(this refers really to grieving. You know, the Jews, when they grieve, they tear their clothes.
And when it's not time to grieve, it's 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.
What gain has the worker from his toil?
(Ecc 3:1-9 ESV)

These are beautiful poetic words. In 1965, I'm not sure how many of you were alive then. I'd better don't ask. In 1965, there is this band, this music band called The Byrds. And the - huh huh, someone already recognized... And The Byrds have a hit song. It's called 'Turn, Turn, Turn'. And that song became number 1 on US Billboard Hot 100. Do you know the lyrics from the song? Ecclesiastes chapter 3. In 1965, the words of the Bible became the number 1 hit song in US during that time. 95% of the lyrics are from here. There's just one statement at the end that is not.

And this passage is a very popular passage. Anyone who thinks about Ecclesiastes, you'll probably be able to say 'there's a time and season for everything'. And this is a passage people love to preach from, during funerals. I mean, a time to be born, and a time to die. Of course not 'ni gaisi' (meaning not that 'you deserve to die' in Mandarin) but there's a time to be born and there's a time to die. (06:28)

So people have found great encouragement from a passage such as this, but can I drop a bombshell for you today? Right from the word though, I'm saying, I think, as I study Ecclesiastes chapter 3, these are not words of comfort. These are not words to cheer. These are not words that make you feel good. That's not the intent of Solomon!

Actually, the intent of Solomon is to show you that we all are limited and confined by seasons and times and it is very frustrating to live life under the sun this way - because he asked this question, 'What gain has the worker from his toil?' He is despairing - he is not encouraging - he is despairing! Look at this.

This passage contains 14 couplets. 14 pairs of something. A time to be born, it's something happy, and a time to die, something sad. A time to plant and a time to pluck. A time to kill and a time to heal. So, what he's saying is that there is this extreme of human experiences in every realm - agriculturally, architecturally, everything has its extremes. You have your times of pleasure and you have your times of pain. You can't escape. You can't escape this. You wish that you can control life that it is all about healing, it's all about dancing, it's all about laughing; but no, he says there will be mourning, there will be weeping. You can't escape these extremes of life.

You can't control life. You can't control the day you are born, you can't control the day you die; you can't control war, you can't control peace. And so we are going round and round, he says, we just vacillate between these extremes of life and he says what is the point, where do we go? What gain, what profit has the worker from all his toil in these confines of time?

And, this is where I think we should pause and consider: what's your life like? You say, 'I want my life to be full of laughter and dancing.' Well, there will also be times of weeping and mourning which you don't like, but you will have. You say, 'life is about enjoying this present life under the sun.' Solomon is saying, what's the point? You can't control it. You're going to have the extremes of it. And so immediately, when I looked at this passage, I thought of the words of Ecclesiastes forming a kind of a mystery room, a kind of an entrapment, a kind of a prison. And we are all stuck here.

And this is the context with which we look at this passage. We are all, in a sense, trying to break out. We are all yearning to say, 'so, what is life really all about? I want to get out of this life under the sun.' So, in order to break out of the Mystery Room, what do you do? You've got to search for clues, right? I mean, that's what Hau Chun and John Chong had to do when they're in that game. They had to find clues, solve the puzzle and navigate their way out.

So, in this passage, Solomon is a very kind Game Master. He's going to lead us to clues. I'm told that when you play the game, you are sometimes really stuck. You've got to ask the

people, 'Hey, can you give me some hints?' And Solomon here is going to give you some hints. He's going to lead you to the discovery, to break out, and I hope you will listen to him.

First of all, Solomon says, in verse 10,

"I've seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with."

Now this life, with all its uncertainties, with all its extremes, with all its seeming lack of control, is really not random. There's a meaning behind the madness, as they say. There's a purpose, there's someone in charge, there's a plan, there's deliberation and there is more than meets the eye because this life is not just within the box. Someone up there is controlling it all. And so Solomon hints to us this is not random, this is not a mistake, this is not a mess, but God has designed this. God has planned this and we are in the plan of God, in this box of life under the sun. (11:13)

So, number 1, you've got to realize life is not just here because there's someone out there planning it all and you've got to get out of this box. Number 2, Solomon says, in verse 11,

"He has made everything beautiful in his time."

Beautiful means beautiful. It means good. It means glorious, and he's saying that there is a wonderful plan behind this seeming mess and craziness and madness, because God is planning something beautiful. Now, some of us will say, no lah, he is not planning anything beautiful. I'm suffering, I'm struggling. I have this cancer, I'm going to be bankrupt, I've lost my job, my wife is walking out on me... Life is not beautiful! Well, he says he's going to make everything beautiful - in...His...time.

So, it does not appear to be beautiful now but you can be sure at the consummation of time, it is beautiful. And, therefore, it is not just some things beautiful, or most things beautiful, or 99% beautiful, it's everything beautiful. So when you look at life and it's so frustrating and empty and painful, God says, or Solomon says, I know God is behind it but it's not random. There is a beautiful purpose of having everything come to fulfilment and beauty and glory at the end of it all. So this is what Solomon has been saying so far. And then, verse 11 goes on to say,

"Also, he has put eternity into man's heart..."

Now, this is a very important clue to tell us that life is not just lived under the sun, not just for the here and now. Why? Because in each and every human being is this heart that believes, that knows we are not meant for just the here and now. But we all ask about the hereafter. We all ask about what happens after I die because we all instinctively know we're not just going to disappear. We are concerned about what happens next. That's why great

cultures and people groups erect great monuments to prepare for the future. The pyramids are not for the present. The pyramids are built for life hereafter. And it's a lot of effort to build a pyramid. I'm told it takes 100,000 workers 40 years to build one pyramid.

But why such effort? Because God has put eternity into man's heart. God has put eternity into Pharaoh's heart. He knows it's not just about riches and fun, and drinks and women in this life. There's something to come. And the reason why we are having this sense is because we are all made in the image of God. God is eternal and he has created that sense of eternality in all of us.

Now, this is what animals don't have, right? How many of you have seen a bird priest? A bird preaching? Any birds do that? There's no bird funeral service, there is no bird priest. Animals don't have the sense of eternity. The dog, when he is satisfied, he is full, he just sleeps. He doesn't care about what happens after he dies. He doesn't get stressed over these things. He's not afraid of death and what happens thereafter. But man does. And God is putting that in us like a clue to tell you, yes, you live life under the sun, but there is more than meets the eye. There's more than the here and now. (15:18)

"Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

(Ecc 3:11 ESV)

Solomon goes on to say, however, even though you have a sense of eternity, you can never really find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. You sort of instinctively know there is a grand plan, because He has set eternity in your heart, He is in control, He is going to make all things beautiful. But how? You don't know how it really works. God has set a limit to human understanding that we may be humbled before his presence, that we will not say, 'ah, I figured it all out!' No, you say, 'I do not know. I know there's something more but I can't quite understand the ways and the providences and the workings of God.'

Solomon goes on to say, however, this I do know:

"I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it."

(Ecc 3:14 ESV)

I perceived - this wisest man during his time, the smartest man to walk on this earth during his time - he perceived that whatever God does, lasts. It endures forever. It is perfect. It is permanent. Nothing can be added to it, and it is secure - nothing or anything can be taken from it. So all that humbles him to the dust. Hah, I am living in this mystery room but I'm so small. I don't understand, but I do know that something more than meets the eye. So this is

what Solomon has been saying: we are all creatures bound by seasons and times. There's nothing really eternal about this world - it's going to pass - but he has set eternity in your heart.

He has given you a glimpse that, yes, there's someone who is in control of it all. There's a clue right there - God. There's another clue right there that says everything will be beautiful. There's a clue that says you're meant for eternity. There's a clue that says we don't really know. There's another clue that says you will endure forever. And he's putting all these in the room and Solomon is pointing you gently to all these so that you may perhaps break out from simply this life under the sun. Now, piecing all these clues together, let's now try to solve the puzzle. Solomon is gracious, he doesn't hide it from us. He tells us what is his conclusion and how he broke out from this room. (17:52)

In verse 14, which is the key verse in this text actually:

"God has done it, so that people fear before him."
(Ecc 3:14 ESV)

Why put us in this Mystery Room of Life? God has done it, God has done all these. He is planning everything. He's setting eternity in our heart. He's not allowing us to know everything there is to life so that we might fear before him, so that we may see how small we are and how great he is - and fear him and love him and know him.

Ray Stedman, he says,

"God has sovereignly, independently, set up the plan of life in a way that we cannot interfere with. He has done so, in order that men should fear before him."

Some of us may say, 'well, all right, but are you really sure that the meaninglessness in this life, the lack of control in this life, the extremes of emotions and situations in this life, is so that we may see how small we are that we may fear God, know God, seek God? Do you have additional evidence?' Well, Solomon has. And he's going to now appeal to moral justice because he says, in verse 16,

"Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness."
(Ecc 3:16 ESV)

Moreover, I saw under the sun - I saw that this life, apart from God, there's this problem of justice, or the lack of justice. He says, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice - when there is supposed to be fairness and justice and equitable distribution of things - he says, I find that there is wickedness. In a place of righteousness, there was wickedness. I mean, the

world is corrupt: governments are corrupt, companies are corrupt, schools are corrupt. And when you're supposed to look for justice in the right places, there is no justice. You only find wickedness. You see people unfairly treated. You see righteous people being persecuted. You see evil people thriving in this life. And Solomon says this is mad, this is crazy. There's no justice. There must be more than life under the sun.

God has placed in you a sense of justice, isn't it? You get upset when children are being abused. You get upset when women are raped. You get upset when people are unfairly killed. Why? Because in us, not only is there a sense of eternity, there's a sense of justice. Solomon says, 'I don't find it in life under the sun.' So, there must be more than meets the eye. And, therefore, he says, however, I do know:

"I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work."

(Ecc 3:17 ESV)

Things will be right. All the crooked will be made straight one day for there is a time, and this time is not life under the sun. It will be life above the sun or beyond this world, for there's a time for every matter and for every work - perfect righteousness, perfect justice is what we can look forward to when you break out from life in this mystery room. So, we're saying there is a very strong reason why. So Solomon again brings all these so that we may see how small we are and how great God is .(21:30)

I asked Hau Chun how she felt when she was in the Mystery Room. She thought for 0.5 seconds and the first words she said - exact words, hah, I quote her, hah - 'why I so stupid?' See, when she was in the Mystery Room, she realized how inadequate she is to find the clues, solve the puzzle and to break out. 'I realize how silly, how inadequate I am.' You know why God puts you in the Mystery Room of Life? So that we may see how small we are, so that we may fear him. That's why Solomon goes on to say, in verses 18 to 20,

"I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so does the other. They all have the same breath, & man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return."

(Ecc 3:18-20 ESV)

He is testing us. He is putting us in this life - this miserable, endless, repetitive cycle, this life that does not have perfect righteousness - that we may see that we are but beasts. We are nobody. We are nobody without God. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same

breath. We all have this life from God, and we, without God, have no advantage over the beast. All is vanity. All go to one place. All are from dust and to dust all return. So why put us in this box? Verse 14 again, and, like I said, this is the key verse:

"God has done it, so that people (man) may fear before him."
(Ecc 3:14 ESV)

So what is Solomon saying? If you're still not catching it, it's right here (image of a cube with the figure of a man trapped inside it). We are bound by seasons and times. We are bound by a world of wickedness. We seem to be unable to break out but we know there's something more. And God has placed clues in our lives, clues that include a sense of eternity and also a sense of justice and he's placed it all so that, perhaps, we may be wise to figure them out and then realize that life, in order to break out, is about fearing God. That's what he's saying. The Bible then tells us

"I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil - this is God's gift to man."
(Ecc 3:12-13 ESV)

You know, right after the first service today, somebody asked, actually commented, 'I don't feel like I fear God.' It's a very honest statement: I don't feel like I fear God. Now, let me ask you, do you know if you fear God? How do you know if you fear God? In this text, it tells us what it means to fear God. To fear God is joyful. This is paradoxical because we always think that, somehow we have this idea that God is a cosmic killjoy - he doesn't want anybody to be happy. So 'fear God' means very solemn, very sad, very scared of something that will happen.

But the fear of God is not in opposition to being joyful, enjoying the things that God has given in this life, and also to do good. There is great joy to those who fear him. There is great joy. Why? Because the fear of God is what allows us to break out of this meaningless, mundane, repetitive cycle of life. It is a fear of God that gives us joy because our hearts are made for him and made by him. And when you fear him, you know him, there is deep joy. And now, in this life, in this life under the sun, you begin to enjoy the pleasures, the gifts that he has given, not just in and of themselves, but because as you enjoy these things, it leads you, it points you, back to the God who is worthy of our worship. (25:36)

So, real joy or real fear involves joy and real fear involves obedience to do good. Fear God and keep his commandments. I tell you how you know if you fear God: do you obey His commandments? It's really not a feeling thing. The fear of God is a very real and practical thing. I know a God-fearing man not by what he tells me about his feelings. I know a God-fearing man by the way he lives his life, whether he obeys God. He can say all he wants about

feeling, but if he doesn't obey God, he doesn't fear God. A God-fearing man is joyful in God. A God-fearing man does good and obeys the Lord. Again, in verse 22, it's the same:

"So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot."

(Ecc 3:22 ESV)

Why does he now rejoice? Because he has broken the mystery, he has solved it, he has realized: yes, there is toil, there is pleasure, but it is not meaningless because it's all bringing me back to God. And in the light of who God is, in the light of my relationship with him, I can rejoice in my work. I can rejoice in all that He's given in this life. Solomon has solved it, you see. The fear of God is why God puts us in this Mystery Room of Life. And today, Solomon is leading us step-by-step to break out: to fear Him, to be joyful in Him and to obey Him.

CS Lewis, he says,

"Our Heavenly Father has provided many delightful inns for us along our journey, but he takes great care to see that we do not mistake any of them for home."

What a thought. Life has many pleasures, don't you think? Sports, family, food, sleep, beauty. These are delightful inns for us but they are not meant for totally satisfying us. So whilst God has given all these pleasures, remember, these inns are designed to lead us, ultimately, home. So, life under the sun has many inns but they are all meant to direct us back home to God - to fear him, to love him and to know his love. That's Solomon's wisdom and profound thinking as he considers the mystery or the mystery room of life. That's all he's saying, but what an amazing thing he's saying. What a man to be able to sit back, look at life and say, it's like a box, it's like a mystery. This life under the sun, break out! And God wants you to break out. He has silently put all these clues so that perhaps you may seek and find God.

I want to end with some simple applications. It's a beautiful verse and you can't run away from it. We should not ignore it - that God has made everything beautiful in His time. It does not always appear that way, like I said, because you, right now, some of you are facing bankruptcy charges. You may be facing a doctor's diagnosis that you have stage 4 cancer. Someone might have told you that your husband is having an affair. It's absolutely difficult. And you begin to question God. And you ask why. Well, there are some preachers, some churches would say, 'Oh, these things are from the devil'. I say to you, God is still in charge, and sometimes he does allow painful things to happen... but he's going to make all things beautiful, in His time.

Corrie Ten Boom is a lady who was a prisoner of war in a Nazi camp. She suffered a lot together with her sister. But there's this beautiful poem she wrote. She writes about how we often see life on the underside. It's like an embroidery. You know cross stitch? On the top it looks, what, absolutely beautiful but if you were to look at a cross stitch underneath, it is absolutely ugly and messy. And Corrie Ten Boom says, 'My life is like that. I realize life is like that. I always look at life from the underside. It looks so ugly but in God's time, He's going to turn it around and show you the beauty on the other side.' She says it so eloquently in a poem here : (30:37)

My life is but a weaving
Betwixt my God and me,
I do not choose the colors
(colors of joy or colors of pain)
He worketh steadily.
Oftimes he weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride
Forget he sees the upper
And I, the underside.
Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
(when everything stops)
Will God unfold the pattern
And explain the reason why.
For the dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In a pattern He has planned.
("Life is but a Weaving", Corrie Ten Boom)

Very hard to believe God on this side. Ah, how could that tragedy be beautiful? How could that trial be glorious? I don't know. But we have a skilful Weaver who takes the black and the gold and the silver, and when all is said and done, he unfolds the pattern and he tells you the reason why. And therefore, we sing this glorious song. Very simple, short song in the Christian church:

In His time
In His time
He makes all things beautiful
In His time

And it's a word of great comfort. I often share this but I'll say it because there may be someone who is new. When my son was diagnosed with autism, I felt my world crash. I'm looking at life on the underside. It is absolutely messy, it's so tangled up, it's hopeless. I felt - I really felt that way. But then, there was that one day when I saw my son just playing by himself - making a mess of the room because he can't handle games properly - that I chose, even though I was not feeling well, not feeling great, I chose to say I need to worship the Lord and one of the two songs I sang that day or I chose that day, is 'In His Time'. I wanted to remind myself that it does not make sense to me now but it will make sense one day. I do not know how Shawn is going to bring glory to God. I do not know how my family is going to bring glory to God in this mess. But I know in His time He makes all things - even sicknesses, tragedies - beautiful, in His time.

Lord, please show me every day
as You're teaching me Your way
that You do just what You say
in Your time

And because he makes all things beautiful in his time, I need to say, 'God, show me every day just what you want me to do or what you are doing, in your time. And,' just a reminder, 'you make all things beautiful in your time.' Do you know that when you believe that God is sovereign and wise and absolutely in control, it allows you to thank God for every circumstance? The Bible says give thanks always. How? In tragedy? Yes. Why? Because he makes all things beautiful in his time. Do you know that when you realize that he is sovereign and he is good and he's in control, you can abandon yourself to full obedience to Jesus. So many of us, we're trying to preserve our lives, we don't dare to risk it all for Christ. You know why? Because we feel he will not make all things beautiful in his time. I'd better preserve myself. But a real trust in who God is allows us to radical obedience to Jesus and his word. It allows us to trust him with our all. It allows us to be generous in our giving, it allows us to take huge steps of faith that will advance his kingdom. But it begins here, that you believe that he makes all things beautiful in his time.

I think God is doing something beautiful this morning. I do not know how but what weak words are coming forth from my mouth, I believe God will take it to make it beautiful in his time. Maybe you're here this morning because God wants to do something beautiful in your life. He wants you to see the futility and emptiness and the meaninglessness of this box, this mystery room you're living in. And, perhaps, this morning, you can break out, fear him, and believe His Son, Jesus Christ, who will save you from your sins.(35:21)

Perhaps, this morning, he's drawing you to himself. Perhaps you've gone through disappointments and tragedies, just in the week, in the month gone by. You say, 'why?' Maybe it's to draw you to him. So, would you, this morning, stop and consider that he's

drawing your heart to himself? I'll tell you something about God's timing. It's always perfect. Not only is he drawing you to him, the Bible tells me he has sent His Son to you. Look at this verse:

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."
(Galatians 4:4,5 ESV)

When it is the right time. When it is the right time, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law. He gave us Jesus to be born as man, to be born subject to the law, obeying everything there is in the law. Why? So that he may give his life, he may die, to be the payment, to redeem us, to pay back, to buy back those who were under the law, those who failed under the law. And because of Jesus, we might now receive the adoption as sons. We may now become the children of God, not because of what I have done, but because of what Jesus has done. My friends, this is the glorious message of the Bible. He has sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins, to save you from your sins. And this morning, this mystery box of life drives you to know his love, to fear him and to trust him. Would you do that this morning?

Let's bow for a word of prayer together. It's a very straightforward, simple message - wisdom from a man who looks at life. Yes, it's philosophical but it's very real, isn't it? Because we all have experienced the lack of control in this life. We have experienced the extremes of emotions and experiences. We've all realized that, ultimately, this world can never truly satisfy. As Augustine has said, 'God has made us for himself and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Him.' Why tragedies? Why disappointments? Why success? Why blessings? You know why? Because, ultimately, they are clues to point you to the fear of God. He has set eternity in your heart. He wants you to be on this pursuit of meaning in him.

So this morning, would you think about this? My friends, if you are here today for the first time, there's this one message for you: God is, no doubt, leading you, this morning, to himself. The question is: Today, will you listen? Will you humble yourself? Will you say, 'yes, indeed I am small and you are great. You are the holy God and I'm a sinful man.' But at the very same time, you also say, 'but I thank you for loving us and giving us Jesus Christ Your Son to be born as man, to die on the cross to save me from my sin.' This morning, you can know God, you can have this assurance of life, you can fear him by turning from sin and believing in Jesus. This is the good news of the Bible. Good news sent down from heaven - from above the sun to life under the sun. This is what you need to latch on to break free. Would you break free today? Would you escape from this meaninglessness of life? Would you trust in Jesus Christ?

Maybe some of you today are going through the hardships. You are my brothers and sisters. You know Jesus, but there's pain, there's disappointment, you are bitter, you are upset, you are angry with God. May the gentle music and the words of 'In His Time He makes all things beautiful, in his time' bring comfort and faith to your soul this morning. Will the thought that he makes all things beautiful in his time allow you to take steps of faith in giving, in service, in obedience? Why? Because he makes all things beautiful, in his time.

Father, we thank you this morning, thank you for allowing us not to just [be] running frantically in the rat race of life but to take a step back and to perceive that there is more than life under the sun. I pray today that each one of us would lift up our eyes and to see you that we may fear you. For those who need to, that they will repent and believe in Jesus Christ for salvation for life. For your children, who are your people already, that they will be reminded - even though they go through the apparent mess and chaos of life - you are sovereign and you are working all things together for good to them that love you. So we thank you for your Word. Bless each heart this morning. We pray all these in Jesus' name. Amen.