

Seasons
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May 24, 2020

1 Corinthians 15:1-26, 51-57

There one thing we might all agree upon this week, and that is that this season of springtime in New England is wonderful.

I love it when the dull grayness of late winter begins to wear off and the landscape becomes green and alive before our very eyes. Maybe I'm witnessing it a little more closely this year, because the only fun place to go seems to be the back yard!

And here in New England, we can trust that the year has seasons, as we can anticipate and plan our lives around that change. Usually it's pretty predictable... well, I guess with the exception of snow last week.

Just as there are seasons in nature, there are seasons in our lives. We describe them with such terms as: prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, middle age, and, at our church anyway, the "Young at Heart".

In our prenatal state, we have absolutely no idea of the kind of world into which we will be born. If we could comprehend how it is we are to be born, we would probably reject the idea as strongly as some of us reject the idea of death. Maybe that's why so many babies are born crying!

In childhood and adolescence, we want to grow up. We anticipate all the privileges and opportunities of our older friends or siblings. My ten year old wants to drive and have a job so that she has money. She has saved about \$40 in allowance and wonders if this is enough to move out on her own. Clearly, she's ready for the big time.

When you get closer to my age, the eagerness to press begins to wane. We know less about what lies ahead, and more about what we've already been through. We may become more cautious about many things, lest our years on this earth run out.

Within each season of life are things which must be accomplished if we are to grow. If by circumstance or neglect, we do not resolve the issues of our earlier years, they might attach themselves to us and plague us from one season to the next until they are resolved.

Last week, Paul spoke about aging as a normal progression, saying "When I was a child I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, but when I became a man, I gave up childish ways."¹

Paul goes on today to speak about another season which lies around the bend in the river of life which we call "death" ~ a season in which there will no longer be a need for former things and in which there will be no lack of "knowledge" and no lack of "love." In these seasons, "we see through a glass darkly, ~ but then we shall see face to face ~ understand as we are understood and know even as also we are known."

The writings of Paul (and really, the entirety of the New Testament) suggest that the full meaning of life will not be attained in this world, but that beyond the veil there is another season.

I can't offer you any technical proof of everlasting life, because the power of God lies beyond the rationality of humankind.

And yet, while we do not presume to understand the full meaning of what lies ahead, I am also aware of the vast inequities in this life. And I hope that in the next season, a just God will square things.

Look at the underlying theme of every Disney Movie, Harry Potter Book, or the Star Wars franchise... each one claims that we live in a world in which good is ultimately rewarded and evil is ultimately set right

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There's a funny story that I heard about a couple that decided to go to Florida to thaw out during a particularly icy winter. They planned to stay at the same hotel where they spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier.

Because of their hectic schedules, it was difficult for the couple to coordinate their travel plans. So the husband left their home in Minnesota and flew to Florida on Thursday, while his wife planned to fly down the following day.

The husband checked into the hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send an email to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter of her email address, and sent the email without realizing his error.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. He was a Baptist minister who was called home to glory following a heart attack.

¹1 Corinthians 13:11

The widow decided to check her email, expecting condolence messages from family and friends.

But after reading her very first email, she screamed and fainted.

The widow's son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read:

To: My Loving Wife

Subject: I've Arrived

Date: March 21, 2012

I know you're surprised to hear from me. They have computers here now and you are allowed to send emails to your loved ones. I've just arrived and have been checked in.

I've seen that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then! Hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was.

P. S. Sure is hot down here!!!

It's good to laugh about serious things, every once in a while.

I believe what Jesus said about life and death, and life after death, and how it all comes from God. I don't know the mechanics of it all. But when I pay attention to his teachings, telling me that what we have become in this life, for better or worse, we will take with us into a new setting, the exact nature of which we do not know or understand, I'm comforted. Thanks be to God! Amen.