

April 3, 2022

Stephy's Place Reflection by Kevin Keelen

### *A Time for...*

When I was young, my older sister's favorite tune was a song by The Byrds, "Turn, Turn, Turn." Although I liked it as well, I had no idea what it was about. As I aged and began to unfortunately attend more and more funerals of loved ones and friends, I began to hear the lyrics of the song from their original source, the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is read at many funerals. Now as I reflect on those words, I realize that at each stage of my life, I hear them differently. This is the passage:

*Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, 11 -There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. God has made everything suitable to its time.*

I'm sure these words are familiar to most of you, if not from the biblical passage, perhaps from the vintage song.

And so... here we are... most of us, in a time of mourning, and hopefully in a time of healing. We have experienced the tearing down, the uprootedness of everything. We've wept and weep still. Things, most things, life really, has been scattered. We are in a time of loss. The world is in a time of war. Some people have decided that it is a time to hate. Others take the time to pray and work for peace. All the while, babies are still being born and friends and loved ones die.

In the past, I have called the Book of Ecclesiastes 'ancient reality therapy.' It speaks of our reality, - the reality of living a life and experiencing all that life throws in our path.

Understandably, many of us may be having a hard time with the fact that time is moving forward, that the world is still spinning with little regard for our sadness and pain, and life continues without our loved one. We may be longing for a time to laugh and a time to dance. But before that time usually happens in grief, we need the necessary time to heal.

The word 'bereavement' comes from the root word "reave" which means 'to be ripped apart' or broken in pieces. We who are bereaved are certainly broken, and we need the space and the time to rebuild and to heal. In the time of healing, we need to take care of ourselves, to be gentle and kind to ourselves, and to give ourselves permission to mourn so that eventually a time will come when we can give ourselves permission to live.

Grief likes to whisper horrible untruths into our ears, - things like: 'I'll never laugh again,' or 'I'll never know happiness again,' or 'I'll never feel differently than I do right now,' or 'This was my fault,' or ... well you know the drill all too well. The *stinkin thinkin* of grief which causes the *woulda shoulda couldas* is haunting and horrible. But it is not truth. The truth is that there is an appointed time for everything. While we are in a time of deep mourning or raw grief, we can't even imagine a time when we will laugh or dance. In my experience of grief, and in grief work, it seems that this time usually comes for most of us. It just comes at a different time for everyone. One of the signs that it may be arriving are brief moments of laughter and little sparks of joy. There may in fact come a time when we are able to dance while having both joy and sorrow in our hearts.

Try to be patient with the process and the time that it takes, there is no speeding it up no matter how hard we try. Try to be patient with yourself as you go through all of these difficult 'times.' *There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.*

I look forward to seeing many of you at our ***Light Up the Night Gala*** on April 30<sup>th</sup>, this will be a very special time for us to be together, a time to let in some light and love, a good time where we can have moments of laughter and joy and dancing to boot!

Since this is a most holy **time** with Ramadan, Easter, and Passover,

May each of you be blessed with light, serenity, consolation, and love,

Kevin