

'TIS THE SEASON...
(SERMON SERIES - PART 1 OF 2)

ALLISTAIR CLOETE

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1. INTRODUCTION

I asked some people in church, if they heard the term “**Tis the Season**” before.

Question: How many of you have heard this saying or line before?

Answer: It is a line out of the Christmas Carol, “**Deck the Halls**” –
By Melody (Nos Galan) & Lyrics (Welsh songwriter Thomas Oliphant)

*Deck the halls with boughs of holly
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
'Tis the season to be jolly
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la
Don we now our gay apparel
Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la
Troll the ancient Yule-tide carol
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la*

'Tis definition:

It means both "it is" or "this is".

However, its **etymology** comes from "it is".

Therefore – “It is the Season to be jolly.”

I’m a big fan of this season and love this time of the year. I find it to be a jolly time – Most people are happier, music is louder, my boys are excited.

- A colleague use to palsy Christmas music the entire year.
- Bonny M – Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens – 23 December 2018

I need to recognize that it was a **hard year for many:**

- With the loss of a loved one (Many lost a parent or loved one)

So it many it may not be a “jolly time”.

But this season is not only a time to be jolly – **It is also a time for doing other important things or 'Tis also a time for other important things.**

Which is what we will be speaking about in this two part series as we head towards the end of 2018.

2. PRAYER

...

3. KEY SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 2

1 I said to **myself**, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out **what is good**.” But that also proved to be meaningless. **2** “Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does **pleasure** accomplish?” **3** I tried cheering myself with **wine**, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see **what was good for people to do** under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

4 I undertook great projects: I built **houses** for myself and planted vineyards. **5** I made **gardens and parks** and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. **6** I made **reservoirs** to water groves of flourishing trees. **7** I bought male and female **slaves** and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more **herds and flocks** than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

8 I amassed **silver and gold** for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man’s heart.

9 I became **greater by far than anyone** in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; **I refused my heart no pleasure**. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. **11** Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, **a chasing after the wind**; nothing was gained under the sun.

12 Then I turned **my thoughts** to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king’s successor do than what has already been done? **13** I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. **14** The wise have eyes in their heads, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that **the same fate overtakes them both**.

15 Then I said to myself, “The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?” I said to myself, “This too is meaningless.”

16 For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered; the days have already come when both have been forgotten. **Like the fool, the wise too must die!**

17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. **18** I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. **19** And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.

20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. **21** For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. **22** What do people get for all the toil and **anxious striving** with which they labor under the sun? **23** All their days their work is grief and pain; **even at night their minds do not rest.** This too is meaningless.

24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. **This too, I see, is from the hand of God,** **25** for without him, who can eat or **find enjoyment?** **26** To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and **happiness**, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

'Tis is meaningless!

CONTEXT

- Bible scholars are still debating who the author of Ecclesiastes is but most lean towards it being king Solomon.
- Even if he is not the Author, it is rather clear that King Solomon is the wealthy, wise person referred to in this chapter.

What can we take away from this portion of scripture and how can we use what will learn in the up coming Christmas season?

WE WILL TALK ABOUT 6 THINGS TO REMEMBER THIS FEASTIVE SEASON –

- 3 TODAY and 3 IN TWO WEEKS TIME.

4. MESSAGE

1. 'TIS THE SEASON TO REFLECT

There is no better time than the end of the year to Reflect and remember:

- the highlights and low lights
- What helped you grow and what stunted your growth
- The good, the bad and the sad
- Your victories and shortcomings (Character and spiritual growth)

This is exactly what King Solomon was doing in this chapter of Ecclesiastes...

He was thinking back – what was good.

Ecclesiastes 2:12

12 Then I turned **my thoughts** to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly.

Without Reflecting or thinking back there growth is impossible.

We did a lesson with the teens earlier this year on “How to grow in anything” and we used the acronym

“MR DRI”

M – Mentor

R – Read

D – Do it!

R – Reflect

I - Intensify

M - Mentor (Find a mentor)

R – Read (Read all you can on the topic)

D – Do it (Put into practice what you learned)

R – Reflect (Did it work or not and why?)

I – Intensify (If it didn't work, try another strategy – if it did intensify your efforts because that is what growth is)

There needs to be regular examination done – Short accounts

Daily, Weekly, Quarterly, Yearly e.g. Sales Strategies

Lamentations 3:40

Let us **examine our ways** and **test them**, and let us return to the **LORD**.

Growth = Examine the ways (From the past = Reflection), then test them (Do it) and make a decision.

Psalm 119:59

I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws.
(NLT)

WE RELECT WEEKLY WHEN WE TAKE COMMUNION

Perhaps the reflection may mean **CLOSURE** for some – on the loss of a loved one. Rather than try and forget about it – Celebrate the person.

SHARE MY EXPERIENCE WITH KAREN AND HER FAMILY.

- **Reflecting may be difficult but it is healthy**

SO USE THIS TIME OF YEAR TO:

- Think through what you could have done differently and change it, if necessary.
- Pray and Connect with God; and
- Grow in 2019

2. 'TIS THE SEASON TO RESTRAIN

What does restrain mean:

Dictionary Definition:

RESTRAIN - DEFINITION:

“Prevent (someone or something) from doing something; keep under control or within limits.– Oxford Online Dictionary

King Solomon did not restrain himself; he did whatever he wanted – To test what was good for man.

Ecclesiastes 2:10

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.

He found his Wealth, Accomplishments and Possessions meaningless. It did not satisfy him and did not make him happy.

It's like chasing the wind – You can feel it but you cannot grasp it!

Many of us get **our Annual Bonus** and feel like **we deserve to spoil our family and ourselves...** After all we worked hard for it!

Be careful, there is **someone else who also loves this time of the year** and loves when people think like that...

1 Peter 5:8

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Don't OVERSPEND and OVER INDULGE (opposite of Restrain)

This is the time of the year when most of us do Over spend and Over indulge:

- **Food** – Different types of meats, deserts, etc
- **Alcohol** – SA in Top 20 countries consuming the most alcohol (Drunk Driving)
- **Clothing and Jewelry,**
- **Technology**
- **Gifts**

Question: From which Christmas Carol are the words:

“JINGLE ALL THE WAY”

Answer: Jingle Bells – written by James Pierpoint (meant for Thanks giving)

I thought about this song and especially the “Jingle Bells” part...

- Bells don’t “Jingle” – THEY RING!
- Do you know what jingles? – MONEY!

JINGLE - DEFINITION:

“A light ringing sound such as that made by metal objects being shaken together” – Oxford online dictionary

Mmmmm... Temptation!!! The temptation to spend!!!

JAMES 1:

13 When tempted, **no one should say, “God is tempting me.”** For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; **14** but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their **own evil desire and enticed.**

FISHING – OBJECT LESSON: FRANCIS CHAN
Previously used in Teens

“Enticed” – *Lure, Hunting or Fishing term*

- Grab fishing rod – Put on R20 – Entice someone in the church!

The Devil Doesn’t stop there – He will find something better to put before you until he finds your weakness...

- Replace with R200 note – Entice the same person...

Reality is different however – we are not tempted with one thing at a time...

- Put on the hat (with various temptations hanging from it)

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

You decide if you are you going to take the escape or not!

Will you found to be on the...

“Naughty or Nice list”

“*Santa Claus is comin’ to Town*” - written by John Frederick Coots and Haven Gillespie

“Because you’re worth it sermon series” – Give, Save, Live on the rest!

THE 4 P’s

Prepare for the Temptation

Pray about it

Partner with others (accountability)

Plan on how you will avoid the temptation

...So that you don’t find yourself overspending and over indulging

3. ‘TIS THE SEASON TO REST

What are King Solomons thoughts on working and resting?

Ecclesiastes 2:

22 What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? **23** All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

Verse 4:

QUESTION: Why do most people work so hard and want to achieve more?

ANSWER: Because they want what others have!

Ecclesiastes 4:

4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person’s envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Does this mean you must not work and be lazy? No!

5 Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves.

6 Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Explaining Verse 5 & 6:

- **Fools fold their hands (not using any hands)** = Laziness (ruin themselves)
- **Two handfuls of Toil** = Over working (chasing the wind)
- **One hand working and the other not working** = Tranquility

You need to work but you also need to rest.

Synonyms for Rest:

Relax, Ease, Time out, inactivity, pause, holiday

Resting is made up of :

- Body and Mind
- Emotional and Spiritual

A) BODY AND MIND:

- **GOD DECLARED THE 7th DAY A DAY OF REST** – (Genesis 2:2-3)- Not because God was tired but to set the standard for mankind.

HEBREWS 4:

9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; **10** for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

- **EVEN JESUS SLEPT** – Matthew 8:24 (Furious storm on the boat)

B) EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL REST – THROUGH CONNECTING WITH GOD

MATTHEW 11:

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

1 PETER 5:

7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

REST TIME (not) = **WASTE TIME** (but) = **Gathering fresh strength**

WE ALL NEED TO REST

NOT RESTED = Cranky, Short tempered, Absent minded, negative

RESTED = More grace, more patience, more mind space, more capacity, more positive, brighter

Because when...

“All is calm, all is bright”

“Silent Night” – composed by Franz Xaver Gruber

QUOTE:

“Rest to be your best”

5. CONCLUSION

Isn't it great to know that **God wants us to Reflect and Rest...**

Mmm... I can see many husbands use this as an excuse to **oversleep** (things in moderation) and to **do little at home**.

QUOTE:

Laziness is nothing more than the habit of resting before you get tired – Jules Renard

I tried to sort my pool out before I went on Holiday –
Focus on Resting, Reflecting

Then, also pray that you won't be tempted to SIN, OVERSPEND and OVER INDULGE...

King Solomon did and it was meaningless.

Ecclesiastes 2

24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. **This too, I see, is from the hand of God,**
25 for without him, who can eat or **find enjoyment?** **26** To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and **happiness**

We can only eat or find enjoyment in God because God gives wisdom, knowledge and **happiness**.

AMEN!