



The Seasons

A Thanksgiving Devotional by Hannah Beck

© 2017
Hannah Beck

Science can try to explain it away all they want, but year after year - without any initiation on our part - the seasons cycle. The trees blossom and bloom; leaves hide the nakedness left over from winter. As summer passes and the sun warms the earth, the fruits of the trees mature and fall to the ground. Autumn takes its annual course of action chemically altering the color and state of those very same leaves rendering them gorgeous shades of red, orange, yellow, and, ultimately, brown as they, too, tumble to the earth. Once again bare, the trees enter a state of hibernation for the winter, void of fruit and growth for many months, only to, once again, bring forth an array of leaves and blossoms.

I don't think I will ever find myself in a place that lacks awe of this incredible cycle. Before our very eyes, we slowly watch this process unfold and repeat itself over and over again in our lifetimes. The changing of the seasons is very orderly, even in the messy nature of fallen leaves and melting snow. Predictable, in fact, and something we count on regularly. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and everything on earth has its special season." This isn't merely referring to the 'seasons' we experience from a weather standpoint, but also the ever present and ever changing seasons of our lives.

Fear can so easily set in when we recognize the fact that, alone, we are unable to uncover the great mysteries of who God is and why he allows our boats to be rocked amidst the forming waves.

As humans, our nature is to resist change. Even the best of us inwardly struggle to alter what we know and are comfortable with. Fear can so easily set in when we recognize the fact that, alone, we are unable to uncover the great mysteries of who God is and why he allows our boats to be rocked amidst the forming waves. We might attempt to let the current simply take us where it may, but inevitably someone is always driving the ship. Either we are trying to grasp the wheel, we are attempting to allow someone or something else to take that responsibility from us or we are handing the task of navigating the ship to God. The choice is ours.

It appears that the disciples were faced with this same set of options as they boarded a boat and unknowingly headed out into a storm on the Lake of Galilee. Mark 4 has the story for us:

35 That evening, Jesus said to his followers, "Let's go across the lake." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him in the boat just as he was. There were also other boats with them. 37 A very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves came over the sides and into the boat so that it was already full of water. 38 Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on

a cushion. His followers woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are drowning!"

39 Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind stopped, and it became completely calm.

40 Jesus said to his followers, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 The followers were very afraid and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Afraid and likely worn after a long day of Jesus-following, these men did what you and I likely would've done in that situation - freak out. No shelter and seemingly no chance to shore, this was like getting caught in a lightning storm on a tall hill without any place of refuge in sight. But, Jesus didn't quite sympathize with them in the same manner. I love how bluntly Luke puts it in 8:25, "Where is your faith?" There is not even a single ounce of compassion in that phrase.

Where is your faith? Not, *It's going to be alright, guys! Have a little faith?* But, *where is it?* I'm sure his voice was gentle, but his words, no doubt, cut deep.

The disciples had entered this new season of life unaware of what they had truly gotten themselves into. To be hand-selected by Jesus was the greatest call possible for mankind and this motley crew of rejects was exactly who the Messiah had wanted to use to achieve his goal.

Moses, another man hand-picked by God, was 80 years old by the time he went back to Egypt and stood before Pharaoh. To the naked eye, this aged, former-prince, Israelite, refugee-of-a-man was probably rag tag at best, but God had put him through many-a-season for the sake of successfully evacuating the Israelites out of Hell on Earth.

Even before day one, Satan's attacks were desperately trying to thwart the plans God had for Moses. Exodus starts out by informing us that the Israelites had become strong causing Pharaoh and his rich friends to quake in their sandals. They feared what these people might do and Pharaoh wasn't shy to ask for brutal retaliation, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." (Exodus 1:16) We've all heard the horrific story, countless precious baby boys were fed to the alligators when the midwives refused to do the King's bidding. So, Moses' mother hid her beloved child (2:3). As we read on, we are aware of the rapid transitions that boy faced as he grew into a powerful man. He rose in power, having been adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter and elevated to be a member of the royal family (2:9). He later witnessed the beating of an Israelite slave and murdered the Egyptian responsible for this heinous act (2:12). From there, he fled, once again fearing for his life (2:15). Not long after, we find him hero of the hour, rescuing a small group of female shepherds who were being harassed (2:17). He married one of those girls and settled down for a time, experiencing his own sort of '40 years' wandering in the desert.

Then one day (Exodus 3), that all ended. God put his foot down and told Moses it was time for him to do what he had been called to. He'd enjoyed this carefree life as a shepherd for long enough. It was time to return.

God didn't just decide one day to slap together a few ideas and superglue 'hero' on the back on Moses' jersey.

Ups and downs, living here and there; powerful and impoverished. Moses experienced it all and the beauty of it was that God had only begun to work in Moses' life. He could've said, "God I am too old! I am worn out and tired, just please let me live my life in peace." He could've mentioned the fact that he was a wanted criminal in the exact place God intended for him to go. He did mention the fact that speaking wasn't his forte and kindly asked God to choose another vessel, but God quickly quieted all of those concerns.

You see, God had planned Moses' life before Moses was even a thought in anyone's mind. He had carefully selected the temperaments and tendencies, the surrounding circumstances and what would appear as overwhelming

odds. God didn't just decide one day to slap together a few ideas and superglue 'hero' on the back of Moses' jersey. God fully intended for him to play in the game and had been practicing him for some time. Moses just wasn't aware that he'd jumped from the PeeWee practice fields to the Big Leagues. In his mind, he was not merely benched, but ejected from the team all together.

Seasons come and seasons go. The trying times are not forever, contrary to what we might think in the moment. God does not intend to take us into the battle and then abandon us on the frontlines. He fully intends to prepare us and execute the perfect plan, pulling us out at the appropriate moment. Satan's goal through it all is that our inability to see the other side of a trial will be what he needs to diminish our faith and squash out God's plan. He likes to whisper in our ear that God has left us to our defeat, sitting up in Heaven overlooking the earth as an observer in a great Roman coliseum. Satan wants you to think God doesn't care and he will attempt to twist Scripture so that you think God really doesn't care. The fact of the matter is, though, that Satan is a liar and unfortunately, a very good one, at that.

Even before day one, Satan's attacks were desperate trying to thwart the plans God had for Moses.

As I mentioned before, seasons come and seasons go. Inevitably, we experience dry times and plentiful times. Over the course of those seasons, we also encounter growing pains - which are the least bit pleasant, but entirely necessary. God is still present, though, and active in your life. He is still steering you down his planned road for you. Are you willing to trust him through it all?

Additional Scripture: Judges 6, Exodus 3, Esther 4

Discussion Questions:

What is God asking me to do that I keep saying, "no," to?

Looking forward, what makes me feel incapable?

What in the past that is causing me to doubt God's power?

How can I daily remind myself that God can do the impossible?

Prayer:

Spend some time in prayer asking the Lord to give you the courage to do what He is asking and to remind you that He is the God of the impossible.

hannahbeckmusic.com

Email the author: hannah@hannahbeckmusic.com

Facebook: Hannah Beck Music

Twitter: @hannahbeckmusic