

**A SEASON OF HEALING**  
**October 8, 2017 –Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11a**  
**The Church of the Covenant**

It has been said cynically that the church is the only place that “shoots its wounded”. When someone needs a little TLC and can’t slap a perfect Christian smile on their face then “church world” expects you to get over it immediately. I am glad The Church of the Covenant is not that kind of church. At its core you are a wonderful group of very caring, very loving, very patient people, who genuinely love and pray for one another and seek to support folks in tough times. I know you have for me and I am grateful.

For me, this last two years has been a tough time for me personally. Various things have happened in “church world” as I like to call it that have hurt my heart. My church family disagreed. My Dad passed away. My Mother has declined. While I have tried to do my best with my ministerial work there are times when I have not been as “johnny on the spot” or as focused and driven or capable of doing my normal 70 to 80 hours per week. Honestly, I have been in “A Season of Healing”. There are times when we all need to enter into such a season. Allow the Lord to minister to our heart. Allow ourselves to admit we are sad or wounded. Allow angels to come and bind up our spiritual wounds. Be in a fallow time of rest and prayer and entering into the healing restoring presence of the Lord. If pastors need it, and we do, then congregation members need it also.

Our scripture from Ecclesiastes 3 notes that, *“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3: 1)* In the front of my worship book, written by my dear Mother, is another quote from Ecclesiastes, a quote first written by my great-grandparents to my grandparents and then to my parents, and then to me. They wrote the words from Ecclesiastes 12: 10: *“The Preacher sought to find pleasing words, and uprightly he wrote words of truth.”* So I seek to find the right words for someone who might be hurting right now, and going through a tough time, and who needs to enter into a season of healing to allow the Lord God Almighty and the Holy Spirit to minister to their heart. Perhaps that person is you?

Our scripture from Ecclesiastes notes that there is a time...”to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted. There is a time to heal. There is a time to build up. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh. There are times to mourn and times to dance.” Many times and many seasons there are.

I think sometimes life comes at us and bruises our heart. Maybe wounds it deeply. Good Presbyterians then pretend and say, “Merely a flesh wound”, when in point of fact it feels much more like a mortal wound. Don’t put a band-aide on a mortal wound. Hearts can be hurt. Hearts can be broken. Our hearts are the very place where springs the wellsprings of life. It is the place, I believe, where our faith in God is also lodged. Our desire to love and serve the Lord rests in our heart. When our heart is hurting or broken it can affect our relationship with the church. We are not made of stone; we are made of flesh. We are not gods; we are frail human beings. Cut us and we will bleed; pound our heart and it will bruise; life pounds on it enough and the human heart can even break.

And if our heart is wounded or bruised it takes time to heal. We want instant everything but we discover we cannot control our heart; our heart controls us. Our heart will take however much time it needs to heal; not the amount of time we think it should take to heal. Consider a bruise on your arm.

You bump into something and it hurts and your flesh becomes black and blue. It looks ugly. It turns that ghastly color of purple-ish, blackish, blueish. It hurts just to look at it. In the beginning it is painful. Then it starts to fade away and the pain is lessened. Then the black and blue begins to go away. But for the longest time the bruise is still there. And then one day you notice even the bruise has faded away. Heart pain and a bruised heart are a lot like that. In the beginning it hurts a lot; it looks purple and ugly and it feels worse. But gradually over time the Holy Spirit comes and revives the human heart, and takes away the pain, and gradually, ever so slowly, restores it and removes even the bruise. That's why people need seasons of healing. That's why there is a TIME TO HEAL.

I believe God never leaves us with the bruise. God never condemns us to have that hurting, broken heart forever. God is at work, slowly, imperceptively at first. We may even ask HIM, as Jesus asked HIM, "Lord, why have you forsaken me?" And then we see the bruise beginning to lessen, and the pain beginning to go away. Some heart-pain will never go away entirely, nor, may I say, should it. We will always miss a loved one and that is right to do so. But one day we wake up and the bruise is lessened and we realize our heart is in the process of being healed. And one season, a season of healing, has prepared us for the next season. Because Spring follows Winter. Harvest follows Spring. Growth follows a fallow period. God makes certain we make it through a season of healing in order to get us to a season of growth. God prunes for growth, not for harm. One season plants, another waters, but God always provides the increase. We can look at nature itself and know this wisdom to be true. God paints his plans in the seasons changing all around us every year. It is always a message of HOPE and renewal.

As a congregation we have been through a two year season of healing. I waited patiently and I prayed. I prayed not just for my own healing, but for our healing as a congregation. That we would look around and say, "Gee, we really do love all these people. I may have disagreed with them in this matter or that matter, but I am glad once again to call them my sister or my brother. We DO need one another. Our heart is healing. We really are ready to take on some new, exciting things for the Kingdom of God. A season of healing is replaced by a season of planting and plucking up what has been planted. Maybe it is a season of laughter again? Maybe it is a season of love? Maybe it is even a season of dancing? Of such joy that we cast off restraint and enjoy the presence of the Lord and one another so completely, that our hearts are so full of love and the Spirit, that we are able to rejoice and rejoice abundantly again.

I think that's where we are—a Season of Healing is winding to a close...a season of growth and love and joy is about to break forth. I know by your love and kindness and prayer my heart is largely healed. My heart is ready for what's next. Maybe yours also?

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. The Preacher has sought to find the right words and uprightly he has sought to preach words of truth today. In Jesus' name. Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania  
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*