

What Time Is It?
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
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1 January 2017

Breathe deeply. Sit up straight and take a big, deep breath. Hold it for a moment. Now release.

It's a new year. Thank goodness.

If you follow social media then you know that 2016 is the most all-around despised year in recent memory. For weeks now everyone has been saying how done they were with 2016 and ready for a fresh start.

Some of this had to do with the numerous icons who died this last year—Bowie, Prince, Mrs. Brady—to name a few. And then, in the final week, Carrie Fisher and her mother Debbie Reynolds one day later. In response a Go Fund Me page was started to protect Betty White from 2016. Other people were recommending that Ruth Bader Ginsburg be put in a safe room until New Year's Day.

Of course, 2017 may be just as bad or worse than last year, but at least we get a new start. This particular day as a new beginning is completely arbitrary, but that doesn't in any way lessen the importance of new beginnings. You may have now memorized one of my favorite quotes "Christians are the eternal beginners." What's most important is not that a new year has begun, but what you are going to make of that year.

This wise passage in Ecclesiastes reminds us that time is ever changing and prompts us to ask, "What time is it?" If there is a season for each of these things listed, which season are you in?

Part of the wisdom of this passage is that we reminded that seasons change. All of these periods of our lives will come and go. The 18th century Matthew Henry Commentary on this passage presents a sobering thought: "To expect unchanging happiness in a changing world, must end in disappointment." The happiest period of your life might be cut short by a sudden catastrophe, or the other way around. A dark and frightening era might end by wonderful good news.

The theologian Bruce Epperly writes that the New Year is about:

the quest for new behaviors, new attitudes, and new visions to mirror the coming of a new year. The New Year's resolutions, even when they last only a few days, remind us that we can be transformed; that we can become new creations; that we don't have to live by business as usual but can see our lives in a new way. . . . Behold God is doing a new thing and so can we!

Which made me think of Carrie Fisher. She may have been most famous as Princess Leia (who become General Leia in *The Force Awakens* as many fans reminded people this week). But her greatest influence was as a writer and speaker who shared openly about her mental illness and addictions. And she did so with amazing humour.

A column in Time magazine concluded:

The significance of her choosing to open up about her struggles can't be stressed enough. We live in a world where we're supposed to only be projecting lives that showcase our prettiest parts and shroud the darkness; the female lead of the most iconic movie of its time was pretty much obligated to only show the bright and shiny. Fisher took the opposite route.

The author continues:

The fact that the book was written by Princess Leia, of all people, meant that the way society looked at addiction would never be the same. When she later shared about being bipolar with similar hilarity, she gave mental-health awareness the same gift.

So, if you were a fan of Carrie Fisher, an important part of her legacy would be taking time in this new year to remember that you can be transformed. Even your worst instincts don't have to control you.

I saw a clip from an interview she gave Charlie Rose in which she said something like, "Talk about your weaknesses with your strongest voice."

A new year, especially coming as it does during the season of Christmas, is a reminder that God is at work within you, giving birth to something new and wonderful.

Today might not be your day. Nor tomorrow. But someday. For everything is constantly changing and there is a time for every season. Isn't it wonderful that we can change? What time is it for you today?