**Time**

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*

***2****a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;****3****a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;****4****a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;****5****a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;****6****a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;****7****a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;****8****a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, ESV)*

 God has given us time – and we are called to live and to work appropriately according to every occasion. Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we talk today about time. At every New Year’s Eve, we do an accounting of our past year. We think about it, analyze it, and resolve to do better and take other similar decisions about the new year. All the above falls within our awareness of the passage of time. If we feel the existence of time, if we notice its presence, we already can understand that it is one of God’s gifts to us. Therefore, today we’re going to talk about appreciating time. How can we live according to what is called for in every season, under the presence of God? My prayer is that through this message, we may understand this gift (of time), and become more alert regarding matters pertaining to it. Again, God has given us time, and we are called to live and to work appropriately according to every occasion. Let’s delve a little deeper into it…

 Living within God’s time entails finding the meaning of life in every work that is to be done. The book of Ecclesiastes presents to us a man who has come face to face with reality, most likely King Solomon, in his older age, who had seen everything there was to see in life, who became convinced of man’s insufficiency when functioning alone without God’s presence in his life. This third chapter of the book presents itself to us as a reminder that mankind has been given time to do every activity that encompasses life. However, the fact that time has been given means that there is a Giver who has connected meaning and purpose to time. In other words, every time-period or occasion has its meaning and purpose, but to find it, one must go to and receive those things from the Giver of Time, namely God Himself. All of these works, beginning from giving birth all the way to death and all deeds in between are simply reminders that every occasion, at every time, has its meaning and purpose. Still, however, the meaning of those realities cannot be found in and of themselves. Without God’s presence, man’s life is meaningless. Neither life nor death have meaning, if God is not invited into both to dwell.

 Let’s imagine for a moment that we received a gift that we had never seen before. It looked like a tool, the instructions on its use were included and it had already been assembled for us. However, within a week, everyone who received it had returned it to the stores from which the gift came, because there was one key element missing: nowhere within the box was the reason was the purpose of the gift found. When you turn on the television, you know that you are going to watch a program – you do not suddenly start thinking about what the TV physically tastes like (follow me here in my absurdity for a moment). When you drive a car, you do not say, “I wonder what notes I can play with this?” You know the purpose of each object.

 However, you will not find the meaning of life by getting busy with the activities within it. The meaning of your life is not to eat; it is not to have a successful job; it is not to build a family; it is not to have great wealth; it is not to see peace. No, the Preacher of Ecclesiastes says, “In the end, your life’s meaning is the following: fear God, and then do those works placed before you with that same God-fearing attitude.”

 So, on the eve of this new year, my prayer is that it will be one full of meaning and God’s Presence for all of us. May God give us the awareness to find in every occasion and give to every work the meaning that comes thru His Presence. May our new year be lived out with God, so we can enjoy it in the way that He desires us to do so. Happy New Year, and may the Lord bless you in it. Amen.