Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

5 October 2014 Message 11 of 17

NLT 40 Minutes

**Submission & Joy**

Title

***Ecclesiastes 8***

**Topic:** Submission

**Subject:** How should we respond to authority—to both God and man?

**Complement:** Humbly submit to man and God—and you’ll get joy!

**Purpose:** The listeners will submit to man and God and get joy as a result.

# Introduction

### Interest: Today is Pulpit Freedom Sunday in the USA. It reminds us that we submit to government but ultimately to God.

PFS
(5 slides)

### Need: To what extent should we obey the government?

Submit?

#### Should a Christian *always, without question* do everything the governing authorities demand?

#### If so, how can you have God as your highest priority in life?

#### If not, then how do you decide where you draw the line on the areas where you will not obey?

#### Christians need to know how to relate to authority—especially when their country is doing things that are very controversial.

#### We also need to see how to respond when we don’t understand all God is doing as our ultimate authority.

### Subject: How should we respond to authority—to both God and man? What is the right response to the perplexities of both human and divine authority?

Subj

### Background: The passage today is actually written by a politician—yet Solomon knew the limits of government.

#### Last week we saw that wisdom gives us three benefits: balance, strength, and insight.

MI of
Eccl 7

30x

1

#### The words “wise” and “wisdom” occur over thirty times in Ecclesiastes 7–12.

### Preview: Solomon relates wisdom to submission to the king and to the perplexities of "justice" which we can't understand.

#### The first section magnifies wisdom but the last verse acknowledges wisdom's limitations.

#### The first half of the chapter shows what a wise man **should** do (8:1-9) and the second half shows what even a wise man **can't** do (8:10-17).

### Text: Ecclesiastes 8:1-17

(First, how should we respond to human authority?)

# I. Obey authorities due to the many advantages (8:1-9).

MP

[There are many benefits to submitting to government.]

## The wise possess a clear mind and a cheerful countenance (8:1).

### We all have a variety of expressions.

Boy

Pastor

### But wisdom normally informs your face!

### So show me what a wise countenance looks like, OK?

Happy faces

## The wise see advantages to submit to human authorities (8:2-9).

Benefits

### Submit to authorities because you promised God to obey them (8:2).

2

### Submit to authorities because you must (8:3-4).

3-4

### Submit to authorities because disobedience has consequences (8:5-9).

Tears

#### The authorities won’t bother most who obey (8:5).

5

#### Rebelling against authority eventually returns upon us (8:6-7).

6-7

#### We can’t escape the results of disobedience until we die (8:8).

8

##### Which is the better translation of *ru’ah* (“wind, breath, Spirit, spirit”) in verse 8?

###### NIV, NAU, NET: “No man has power (NIV)/authority (NAU) over the ***wind*** (NIV)/ to restrain the ***wind*** (NAU)”

###### NLT, KJV, ASV, WEB, ESV: “None of us can hold back our ***spirit*** from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death…”

##### The meaning is not significantly different—just as you don’t have control over the wind, you also don’t control the day of your death.

##### In fact, the next verse says that that day might be in the hands of someone more powerful than you!

#### Those with authority can hurt us (8:9).

9

(So we should obey authorities due to the many advantages. There are many benefits to submitting to government, but government is not perfect. How’s that?)

MPI

# II. We punish the wrong people—so it puzzles us (8:10-14).

MP

[People are fallible—including government—so leaders don’t always get it right.]

## We don’t punish bad people (8:10-13; cf. 3:16; 4:1).

Who to punish?

### We honor evil hypocrites after they die (8:10).

10

### Failure to punish criminals quickly often leads others to sin (8:11).

11

### The wicked may not be punished now, but still fear God since they will eventually be judged (8:12-13).

Good

12-13

## We punish good people instead (8:14).

MPII

MPI

14

# (So how should we respond in light of the command to obey authorities and those authorities often punish the wrong people? The end of the chapter says to…)

# III. Enjoy life and submit to God even though He won’t tell us His reasons (8:15-17).

MP

[The Lord isn’t obligated to answer all our questions—but we should still live with joy & obey.]

# (Should life be all hard work? No!)

Asleep at desk

## Enjoy life in the midst of your hard work (8:15).

### Eat, drink, and be merry!

15

#### Is this Epicureanism? Hardly! Solomon lived 600 years *before* Epicurus! So he obviously wasn’t quoting him!

Epicurean?

#### No. Solomon had tired it all, but here he recommends enjoyment from God. Epicurus said to *indulge* yourself, but Solomon said to *enjoy* yourself. Epicurus advocated indulgence due to doubt about the afterlife, but Solomon said we are accountable to God.

• die

#### Richard Dawkins, like Epicurus, never smiles. He says, “Be thankful you have a life, and forsake your vain and presumptuous desire for a second one.”

Dawkins

### The purity of enjoyment and fun—well, kids can teach us much about this!

Kids

### Live well. Laugh often. Love much!

Trilogy

### Joy Johnson might have something to teach us. She crossed the finish line in 2013 — “and then continued on to the great beyond,” says the *San Jose Mercury News.* “A celebrated octogenarian runner who loved the sport so much that she proclaimed ‘I want to die running’ suffered a deadly injury when she stumbled during Sunday’s New York City Marathon. Joy Johnson, 86, of San Jose, Calif., died Monday from complications of blunt trauma to her head and blood-thinning drug therapy for a heart ailment, according to the Medical Examiner’s Office.”

Joy Johnson

### We are all going to go, so why not while running? More importantly, why not while we serve the King of kings?

## Submit to God even though you don’t know His ways (8:16-17).

Key

### Wisdom sees endless burdens on earth (8:16). Scientists know this best!

Scientists

16

### Even the wisest people can’t understand all that God is doing (8:17; cf. Isa. 55:9; Rom. 11:33).

17

 (So how should we respond to authority—to both God and man? What is the right response?)

Subj

# Conclusion

### Humbly submit to man and God—and you’ll get joy! (MI).

MI

### Main Points

#### Subject: Man is ignorant of the perplexities of God's judgment

#### Complement: so a wise man obeys authority, realizes his limited understanding, fears God and enjoys life the best he can.

APP

### In what area do you need to:

#### Submit to an authority (IRS, boss, teacher, etc.)?

#### Recognize your limited understanding (wicked flourishing, another not punished)?

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Last week we saw that wisdom gives us three benefits: balance, strength, and insight.

### The words “wise” and “wisdom” occur over thirty times in Ecclesiastes 7–12.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### Christians need to know how to relate to authority.

### We also need to see how to respond when we don’t understand all God is doing as our ultimate authority.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The passage today is actually written by a politician—yet Solomon knew the limits of government.

### He also knew that God is the highest authority of all.

# Questions

### Which is the better translation of *ru’ah* (“wind, breath, Spirit, spirit”) in verse 8?

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# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Michael Wee Sermon

### Do you realise that in Outer Space there are solar winds? While we experience the breeze on our faces, in space the winds take a different form. They are affected by the solar flares and ionising particles in space. By dark matter and the inertia of space…. Cosmic winds. We have no power to control the earthly winds and it also good to remember that in outer space, the winds are also not controllable. Only God controls it.

### In 1994, a comet called Shoemaker–Levy 9 was drawn towards the Planet Jupiter. As it broke into six major pieces, it slammed into the Jovian surface and the largest piece’s impact created a cloud measuring the size of the planet earth! Yes, the size of the whole earth!

### Think for a moment if it impacted the earth. Death would result for all of us. Death where there is nobody else around to do the burying! In fact, if you could line up earth side by side, it would take 14 Earth planets to reach across the broadest part of Jupiter.

### I believe that things do not happen by chance. That event in 1994 was to remind us that the world we know will come to an end.

### While he compares the Wind, he also sees the limitations of man to determine the day of his death. This is in the second half of verse 8. We know that we are mortal and terminal. But we cannot determine when to die!

### When there is a great need, it is difficult to be excused, or discharged. We find in Verse 8 that no one can be discharged in time of war. That’s when you are really needed. We can’t say, “please discharge me, for my painters are coming to give a new coat of paint on my wall”. Or, Please discharge me… my baby’s due next week!

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Submission & Joy**

***Ecclesiastes 8***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

# Man is ignorant of the perplexities of God's judgment and the future so a wise man obeys authority, realizes his limited understanding, enjoys life and works hard while he can (8:1–9:10).

# The right response to the perplexities of human and divine authority is to enjoy life and submit to God.

# I. The reason the wise obey authorities is because of the many advantages (8:1-9).

## The wise possess a clear mind and a cheerful countenance (8:1).

## The wise see advantages to submit to human authorities (8:2-9).

### Submit to authorities because you promised God to obey them (8:2).

### Submit to authorities because you must (8:3-4).

### Submit to authorities because disobedience has consequences (8:5-9).

#### The authorities won’t bother most who obey (8:5).

#### Rebelling against authority eventually returns upon us (8:6-7).

#### We can’t escape the results of disobedience until we die (8:8).

#### Those with authority can hurt us (8:9).

# II. The right response to people punishing the wrong people is to still enjoy life and submit to God (8:10-17).

## We punish the wrong people—so it puzzles us (8:10-14; cf. 3:16; 4:1).

### We don’t punish bad people (8:10-13).

#### We honor evil hypocrites after they die (8:10).

#### Failure to punish criminals quickly often leads others to sin (8:11).

#### The wicked may not be punished now, but still fear God since they will eventually be judged (8:12-13).

### We punish good people instead (8:14).

## Enjoy life and submit to God even though He won’t tell us His reasons (8:15-17).

### Enjoy life in the midst of your hard work (8:15).

### Submit to God even though you don’t know His ways (8:16-17).

#### Wisdom sees endless burdens on earth (8:16).

#### Even the wisest people can’t understand all that God is doing (8:17; cf. Isa. 55:9; Rom. 11:33).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will submit to man and God and get joy as a result.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

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## We punish good people instead (8:14).

# III. Enjoy life and submit to God even though He won’t tell us His reasons (8:15-17).

## Enjoy life in the midst of your hard work (8:15).

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# Conclusion

### Humbly submit to man and God—and you’ll get joy! (MI).

### Main Points

#### Subject: Man is ignorant of the perplexities of God's judgment

#### Complement: so a wise man obeys authority, realizes his limited understanding, fears God and enjoys life the best he can.

### In what area do you need to:

#### Submit to an authority (IRS, boss, teacher, etc.)?

#### Recognize your limited understanding (wicked flourishing, another not punished)?

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

5 October 2014

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**Submission & Joy**

***Ecclesiastes 8***

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### How should we respond to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ —to both God and man?

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## Submit to God even though you don’t know His ways (8:16-17).

### Wisdom sees endless burdens on earth (8:16).

### Even the wisest people can’t understand all that God is doing (8:17; cf. Isa. 55:9; Rom. 11:33).

# Conclusion

### Humbly submit to man and God—and you’ll get \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea)!

### In what area do you need to:

#### Submit to an authority (IRS, boss, teacher, etc.)?

#### Recognize your limited understanding (wicked flourishing, another not punished)?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read Ecclesiastes 8 aloud. List when we should and should not obey government.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Submit (Why?)** | **Resist (When?)** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. How is slow justice *injustice*? What is God's purpose in punishment?

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. Why doesn't God punish sin immediately? How does this relate to you now?

Text

Text