

LIVING WITH UNANSWERED MYSTERIES

ECCLESIASTES 8 & 9

We will often live with the unresolved mystery...

- That all authority is instituted by God with POWER to HURT us.
- That EVIL will appear to go UNPUNISHED.
- That life and death and everything in between will seem RANDOM and by CHANCE.

In order to resolve life's mysteries GOD sent us his WISDOM.

FURTHER UP, FURTHER IN

1. Read Ecc. 8: 1 – 9. Discuss a time in your life that it was impossible to understand why God allowed something difficult to happen. What was your response to those times? (Isa 55:8 & Job 13:15)
2. When you consider the authorities in your life, do you believe they are from God? (see also Romans 13:1 – 2). What is the difference in submitting to authority and following them into sin? Try to think of practical applications. Should you submit to their leadership even though it may be to your hurt?
3. Read 8 – 13. Evil doesn't always get what it deserves. Why isn't God always swift when it comes to punishing evil? Is there scripture that you can point to that tells us God will ultimately deal with evil?
4. One of the points on Sunday was "life and death and everything in between will seem random and by chance". Read through 8:14 – 9:12 and point out instances where Solomon makes this point of random chance. Have you ever felt this way? How do we battle these feelings? Can you think of verses that would be good to memorize to remind us that life is not random chance?
5. Read 9:13 – 18. What is this about? Randy thought this was about God sending Jesus into our world under the sun in order to save us in our weak and vulnerable sinful condition. Do you agree? Consider the following verses. 2 Cor. 8:9, Mark 6:2 – 3, 1 Peter 5:8 and 1 Cor. 1:18 – 31.
6. Why is wisdom of this age so loud as compared to the wisdom of God? What will it take in your life for the wisdom of God to drown out the wisdom of the world? Read 1 Kings 19:11 – 12, Matthew 11:28 – 29 & Matthew 6:6 - 8. When you compare those verses side by side, how do you think God wants to interact with us?

"I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. . . . Come further up, come further in!" — C.S. Lewis, The Last Battle