

## DON'T GO QUIET

Welcome // New // online

**In your life have you ever wondered, “Why is this happening?”**

**Often the answer you arrive at will determine your attitude.**

### **Ecclesiastes 8:1**

**Who is like the wise?**

**And who knows the interpretation of a thing?**

**A man's wisdom makes his face shine,  
and the hardness of his face is changed.**

Now we look at that and think the wise have faces that shine b/c they know WHY everything happens.

But a wise person would be the first to tell you that's not true.

Wisdom isn't having the right answer all the time.

Wisdom is comfortable in mystery.

**There is an old Chinese proverb that gets to the heart of this.**

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Once upon a time, there was an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years.

One day his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came to visit. "Such bad luck," they said sympathetically, "you must be so sad."

"We'll see," the farmer replied.

The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it two other wild horses.

"How wonderful," the neighbors exclaimed! "Not only did your horse return, but you received two more. What great fortune you have!"

"We'll see," answered the farmer.

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune. "Now your son cannot help you with your farming," they said. "What terrible luck you have!"

"We'll see," replied the old farmer.

The following week, military officials came to the village to conscript young men into the army. Seeing that the son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out. "Such great news. You must be so happy!"

The man smiled to himself and said once again.

"We'll see,"

See, there is an interpretation for everything that happens.

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There is the easy interpretation ... if it looks good it must be good / or, conversely ... if it looks bad it must be bad.

But the wise learn to interpret differently ...

“Don’t rush into quick decisions.”

More importantly than that ...

**The wise are not easily swayed.**

### **Ecclesiastes 8:2-9**

**2 I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. 3 Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. 4 For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, “What are you doing?”**

The argument begins this way ...

Keep the king’s command ...

Or to make it more relevant to today, “obey and submit to authority.”

Now, there are different types of obedience:

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1. blind obedience that says ... “It doesn’t matter what “my king” does I’m on his side.”

And, then there is another type of obedience ...

2. wise obedience that says ... “I will submit to the “king”, but I won’t turn a blind eye from evil.”

**God never calls us to live in blind obedience.**

**He only calls us to live in wise obedience.**

**And wise obedience submits to God’s authority above all.**

But, the wise also recognize that God created authority for our good.

And he calls us to live under authority.

Too often we look at people that live in blind obedience, or look at a time when we were hurt by our blind obedience ...

**Instead of learning wise obedience, we reject authority altogether. [that’s the easy/simple solution]**

But it says here, don’t be so hasty.

**Don’t be quick to change your convictions & allegiances.**

Don’t easily adopt every new idea or cultural norm.

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It's tempting to do that b/c often it's the path of least resistance.

### Ecclesiastes 8:5a

**“Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, “**

This doesn't give us an out to follow bad authority.

Nazis kept Hitler's commands, but they did evil ... they knew evil.

The Bible isn't saying “Good job Gestapo!”

**What it means is that following orders is a good way to avoid punishment.**

**But obedience at the expense of what's right isn't being commended here.**

It goes on to say ...

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**Ecclesiastes 8:5b-6**

**“and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. For there is a time and a way for everything, although man’s trouble lies heavy on him.”**

**The wise are courageously patient.**

Sometimes people in charge do evil and call us to do evil with them.

Bosses can be wrong ... spouses can be dangerous ...  
friends can be misguided ...

And they need accountability just like the rest of us.

**So here’s what we are being encouraged to do ...**

**Look for the opportunity to be that accountability.**

**The wise heart will know the proper time and the just way.**

You might be the one wise voice left to speak truth and call people to repentance.

But that won’t happen if we jump ship at the first leak we find ...

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**Sometimes, God calls us into unsafe places to be his voice of wisdom.**

**Do you have room for that in your belief system?**

Consider the prophets in the Bible ...

They were hated in their days.

The prophet Elijah lived on the run from King Ahab b/c he obeyed God, which meant saying truth that the king wasn't a fan of.

**But wise obedience doesn't promise safety from persecution.**

**It prepares us to hold up under it.**

**Wisdom prepares us to hold true despite the outcome.**

**7 For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be? 8 No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. 9 All this I observed while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun, when man had power over man to his hurt.**

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We don't have power to predict the future.

We don't have power to stay alive forever.

We don't even have power to avoid our appointed day of death.

That's where wisdom begins.

It embraces our weakness so that we don't live like we are invincible.

See, the wise heart is able to endure b/c it knows the trial is inevitable.

### Jesus used a parable to teach us how this works.

He says a wise man builds his house on a rock.

He builds his life on the place that is hard to build foundations into.

It takes time and effort but in the end it is strong, assured, and its roots run deep.

It is a life prepared for the expected storms.

By Contrast, Jesus says the fool builds his house on the sand.

It's a lot easier to dig into sand than it is into granite.

The house goes up quick b/c the fool lives for today and doesn't think about what may come.

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Then the storm comes and whose house is ruined?

The fool.

### **It's tempting to build our lives on sand.**

We get the house up quick and enjoy all the benefits.

Popularity, acceptance, advancement ...

There is a lot of instant gratification that comes with building our lives fast and cheap.

That is why the life of the wicked is so alluring, and so many of us run after it.

It has some real benefits.

## Ecclesiastes 8:10-11

**10 Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.**

**11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.**

The wicked WILL get praised by the masses.

I dk whether its comforting or maddening to know that celebrity existed way back then too.

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This verse is talking about famously wicked.

Rich, powerful, wicked people.

No one is telling them to repent. OR, they are ignoring those who are.

They go to the holy place with their wickedness and presume upon God's grace.

They have no fear of God at all.

They go to church b/c its the "popular thing to do." OR, it makes them look good.

Maybe they gave a lot of money to silence the church with regards to their life.

Or maybe they used their power to do so.

Hitler / China ... put a limit on what churches could/couldn't say.

In return the church could avoid persecution or being shut down.

The wicked will always attempt to buy access and acceptance from the church.

But if the church doesn't stand up to call out sin who else will?

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It says here the city, the masses, will praise the wicked.

**Whether you're a Christian or not -- this plays at our hearts.**

**If there isn't a consequence for being wicked; than what benefit is it to be righteous?**

**If nice guys finish last ... why be nice?**

But wisdom doesn't give in to that.

**Wisdom doesn't live for the shallow rewards of this short life.**

### **Ecclesiastes 5:12-13**

**12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.**

It can be maddening to see the wicked go unpunished.

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**We look at evil and wonder how that can be?**

**God how can you allow that?**

**What benefit is there to being good?**

Those are the questions that many of us would be smart to wrestle with.

Many of you here haven't found a good answer to those questions.

And so you're faith is teetering on a knife's edge.

Or, you've given up on it altogether.

You know what ... that's okay.

I'm glad you're here with your doubts.

The wise don't switch allegiances quick.

I'm not asking you to ditch your brains and objections at the door.

**But the wise are slow to put periods at the end of their assumptions.**

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When we look at the world and see the wicked winning and the good suffering, how do we come to terms with God also being good?

Well ... there is two ways to look at it.

1. This life is the only opportunity for justice.

**OR**

- 2. Justice deferred is not justice denied.**

Jesus taught this parable ...

### Matthew 21:33

**33 “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. 34 When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. 35 And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them.**

This parable starts with a rich man creating a sweet crib. He then leases it out.

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But then something happened in the tenants hearts along the way.

The powerful owner was far away ... and so they stopped fearing him.

And so it goes that when he sent servants to collect the lease payment they didn't honor their obligation.

Nothing happened for their wickedness so they repeated it.

And as justice was deferred they became more bold...

**37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' 39 And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" 41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."**

We don't have a problem with the resolution of this parable.

We know these wicked tenants have it coming to them.

See, the justice was being deferred.

That makes us agitated ...

But, that is God's merciful patience ...

Even the wicked are offered the chance of repentance.

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**Now, we struggle with this ...**

**We demand justice ... until its us ... then we demand mercy.**

We are all wired this way.

Which contributes to our view of life being meaningless and confusing.

**Ecclesiastes 8:14**

**14 There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.**

It's just not fair.

The reward system on earth is broken.

**It seems the cosmic slot machine is paying out to the wrong people.**

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**You know what, It's okay to not be okay with that.  
That is part of accepting the futility of life.**

The wrong people seem to prosper and get ahead.

Now, we can get fixated on that.  
And that will leave us in despair.

I think that is why a lot of people are full of anxiety and  
depression today.  
Especially youth.

We live with these maddening headlines flying at us  
constantly.  
The wrong people seem to be winning.  
We are destroying each other, we are destroying our planet.

And you can choose to fixate on that, and it will make you  
informed, but it don't make you wise

**Here is a tip that the wise live by ...**

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**The wise find joy in suffering through God's simple graces.**

### **Ecclesiastes 8:15**

**15 And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.**

The false wisdom of this world doesn't commend joy.

Right now it is commending outrage.

**“Let's look at all our problems and foment.”**

The ethic of our cultural moment is to go beyond just crying out when injustice happens.

It goes looking for injustice.

It will even dig up historical graves to find it.

It's cool to be unhappy.

It's hip to be angry.

All this makes it harder and harder to enjoy anything.

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**The secular orthodoxy today is big on asceticism.**

**That idea that denying yourself any pleasure makes you holy.**

**Why should I be happy if others can't be?**

That seems like a noble axiom.

**In this day, being joyful is an unsanctified characteristic.**

But this is a foolish response to the madness of life.

What we are doing is putting ourselves in the impossible place of trying to redeem injustice through our own suffering.

And God is saying don't do that ...

It is a fool's errand ... a total waste of time.

Rather, enjoy the simple provisional graces of God.

If you get three square meals a day ...

Eat them, be thankful that you get to ... don't feel guilty for enjoying God's gifts.

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There may be a temptation to think, why me?

Why do I get life better than a poor kid in Africa who scrapes by?

This is where we get into the territory of the impossible question.

And you may think ... “aha!”

“There it is ... you don’t have all the answers.” (Your faith is useless).

**I’m okay with not having all the answers ...**

**Are you?**

But here is my question to you ...

**Does truth require that every question be answered?**

**There are many truths that don’t have every question answered.**

Take gravity for instance.

We know a lot about gravity and how it acts.

But scientists don’t know WHY it exists.

That part is a mystery that scientists are no closer to solving.

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Yet, who would say b/c that question isn't answered I don't believe in gravity.

**And so it is with God ...**

**The wise embrace the mystery of God's ways.**

**Ecclesiastes 8:17**

**16 then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.**

**Spend time with a four year old and you realize how little you know.**

They might ask you a question about why the sky is blue.

And if you paid attention long enough in your freshman science class you could give an answer.

But the curious mind of a four year old doesn't stop there.

They will ask "Why?" again and again.

Quickly you start to realize how much you don't know.

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**My poor kids find the end of my brain a lot sooner than most.**

**But here's the thing ...**

**How many Why's has God answered in your life?**

**How many Why's has he answered in the Bible?**

**How many Why's has he answered in this little chapter?**

See, truth needs evidence ... and God gives us plenty of answers to our Why's.

But he doesn't have to answer all of them.

Not b/c he can't, but because he's revealed enough.

Like gravity proves to us, some of the truest truths can be shrouded with mystery.

We can choose to stand obstinately and demand that all our questions be answered before we believe.

Christians in the room ...

... you can do this with obedience to God ...

I need all my questions answered ... I need to know all the outcomes ... I need to know Why ... then I'll obey.

But that is not faith.

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## DON'T GO QUIET

Faith says, "God I don't understand it all ... but I trust you."  
I can't see how this is good for me, but I know you are  
Good.

### Can we know for sure that God is good?

Yes, b/c it's been revealed in Jesus.

You can go to the Gospels and see how good God is and  
how much He loves you.

### [BAND COME UP]

### What is your relationship with God built on?

Are you needing another proof // another sign // beyond the  
testimony of the Gospels?

See, faith isn't solely dependent on your mind agreeing to  
the Gospel message.

Now its certainly not less than that ...

But, there is a necessary ingredient to faith.

The gospel has to be ratified and confirmed by the Holy  
Spirit.

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If you are a skeptic, I don't want you to think faith is an easy change.

I don't believe in easy conversions.

Nothing in the Bible shows me that.

It takes more than you being a good student of the bible.

It takes God the Holy Spirit intervening.

That is another mystery to us.

B/C it doesn't work like a formula.

Jesus said the Spirit of God is like the wind. It blows where it wants.

You can't chase it down.

You can't conjure it up.

But, there is a posture we can take ...

If you earnestly seek Jesus, the Holy Spirit will prove He is real.

That is my testimony.

That is the apostle Paul's testimony.

That is the testimony of every true believer.

It is as sure as the bread and cup are real that we are about to take.

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## **DON'T GO QUIET**

When we come, rest in the mystery of Jesus revealed by the Holy Spirit.

If you are here and not a Christian.

I invite you to earnestly pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make the hidden mystery of Jesus real.

**PRAY**

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