

SUNDAY - May 31, 2026

The Grind: Ecclesiastes 8:1-17 - Wisdom's Shine

SERMON SUMMARY:

Ecclesiastes 8:1-17 teaches that wisdom is not God giving us paint-by-numbers answers for every decision, but shaping us into people who can navigate life's complexities with godly judgment. Solomon shows that wisdom helps us deal with power, timing, authority, and the consequences of our choices. Rather than turning us into robots, biblical wisdom provides guardrails that help us make faithful decisions in situations where there is no simple chapter-and-verse answer.

Solomon also confronts the realities of injustice, mystery, and tension. Wicked people often seem to prosper while good people suffer, yet wisdom calls us to fear God and trust that His justice will come in His perfect time. Life is filled with unanswered questions and unsatisfying answers, requiring us to walk by faith rather than sight. The wise person learns to hold both sorrow and joy together, lamenting the brokenness of the world while still enjoying God's gifts, knowing that faithfulness means trusting God even when life does not make sense.

SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 8:1-17, Proverbs 31:6, Romans 13, 1 Timothy 2:1, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:26, 3 John 4, Isaiah 30:18, Romans 8:24, Romans 12:15

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to Ecclesiastes 8:1, how does wisdom affect a person's appearance and demeanor?
2. The sermon compared wisdom to "highway rumble strips." What practical purpose do these serve, and how does this analogy apply to biblical wisdom?
3. What example did Solomon use to highlight the tension between wicked people receiving praise and delayed justice (Ecclesiastes 8:10-11)?
4. How does the sermon describe the relationship between lament and joy, using Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection as an example?
5. Why does Solomon connect wisdom to a "shining face" (Ecclesiastes 8:1)? How might this contrast with a life lived by rigid rules or "paint-by-numbers" spirituality?
6. The sermon argues that "haste always leads to waste." How does Moses' story (Exodus 2:11-15) illustrate the danger of acting outside God's timing?
7. Ecclesiastes 8:14 acknowledges that righteous people sometimes suffer like the wicked, and vice versa. Why does Solomon still "commend joy" in this broken reality?
8. How does the "relational budget" described in the sermon (prioritizing God, family, then work/hobbies) reflect Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:33?
9. Wisdom is compared to rumble strips—boundaries that "jolt us awake" when drifting. What areas of your life (habits, relationships, priorities) might need these "rumble strips" to stay aligned with God's design?

10. The sermon encourages gratitude for government, even when flawed. How could you shift from complaining about leaders to praying for them this week?
11. Moses' impatience cost him 40 years in the desert. Where are you tempted to rush ahead of God's timing, and what practical step could help you wait?
12. The "relational budget" prioritizes God, spouse/children, then other responsibilities. What one adjustment could you make to protect these priorities from being overshadowed by work or hobbies?
13. Solomon commends holding lament and joy together. How can you practice acknowledging life's brokenness and celebrating God's goodness all in the same day?
14. The sermon warns against "diagnosis inflation" from dwelling only on darkness. How could you intentionally balance honest lament with gratitude for God's gifts this week?