

**Message #29****Ecclesiastes 8:15-17**

In the Bible there are some wonderful and powerful statements concerning the sovereignty of God. For example:

- 1) Psalm 119:91 says, “all things are Thy servants.”
- 2) Daniel 4:35 says, “But He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.”
- 3) Ephesians 1:11 says, “we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

Clearly, the Bible time and time again testifies of the sovereignty of God. There is no sense trying to dodge this or even completely understand it. The truth is the Bible clearly affirms God is the one who is calling the shots.

If the world were one big “never, never land” most would be quick to acknowledge God’s sovereignty because most want a big, loving, happy God. But when some see tragedy or calamity in the world, some want to minimize God’s will and maximize man’s will.

Most want a forgiving God, but not a fearful God. Most want a God of love, but not a God who is Lord. Most want a God who is just, but not a God who is judge.

In these verses Solomon came to realize that there are things in this world that we cannot explain. He came to see that sometimes the wicked seem to fare better than the righteous—that is just the way it is. But he begins to wise up a bit here because he also came to realize God was in control of it all and so the best thing for him to do was just enjoy his own life and leave these other things to God.

**IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE CANNOT RESOLVE OR KNOW ALL THAT GOD IS DOING IN HIS SOVEREIGN PLAN, MEANING AND FULFILLMENT WILL BE FOUND BY ENJOYING OUR OWN LIFE GOD HAS SOVEREIGNLY ORDAINED AND NOT BY TRYING TO DISCOVER THINGS WE CANNOT EVER DISCOVER.**

It is possible to invest so much time trying to resolve matters best left to Deity that we can live an empty, meaningless and futile life. It is far better for us to leave to God His matters and enjoy the life He has sovereignly granted to us.

**THOUGHT #1** – Every person should try to enjoy what God has given him. **8:15**

The way to live in a meaningful and fulfilled way is to trust God for what we don’t know and to enjoy what we do have.

In the midst of seeming contradictions, in matters of retribution (8:11, 12), the best thing we can do is to leave that to God and enjoy what God has sovereignly given to us.

We cannot predict, control or even explain adversity or calamity, but what we can do is to live each day for the glory of God and enjoy what God has given to us.

Now this is about the fifth time that Solomon has brought up the subject of enjoying what God has given us and finding pleasure in life: 2:24-25; 3:12-13; 3:22; 5:17-19.

We may notice that twice in this verse the phrase “under the sun” occurs. It is far better to enjoy some life while here on this earth rather than to spend all of life trying to figure out the secrets of God’s sovereignty which stems from His heaven.

The image of eating and drinking is imagery especially for Israel, of enjoying life and rejoicing in all the blessings of God (i.e. I Kings 4:20).

One commentator wisely writes: “...it is better to enjoy the good things of life than to pine after an impossible ideal; to eat the fruit of one’s toil in spite of all that is calculated to sadden and perplex” (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 9, p. 222).

**THOUGHT #2** – No person can completely comprehend or understand God’s sovereignty. **8:16-17**

Now we may notice as we read **verse 16** that it is a dependent clause that is subordinate to **verse 17**. The main idea is that “man cannot discover the work of God.”

**Fact #1** – Man cannot discover all the sovereign work of God even if he gives his heart to this objective. **8:16**

Solomon’s heart was in his quest. He put everything he had into trying to discover everything God was doing. There were nights he didn’t sleep because he was examining, analyzing, thinking, contemplating and worrying.

You can put your whole heart into whatever you want and still never find fulfillment and meaning.

**Fact #2** – Man cannot discover all the sovereign work of God, even if he sees every work of God. **8:17a**

We can try to look at every work God does, everything God permits and we still will never decipher the complete “why” of it.

**Fact #3** – A wise man will admit he cannot discover all the sovereign work of God. **8:17b**

As a believer, we do not have to understand or be able to explain everything God does to find meaning to life. God does what He does. He does not demand that we be able to explain it. What He does demand is that we trust Him and fear Him and obey Him. That is the mark of wisdom. That is the mark of a meaningful life.

There are many mysteries of God that exist in this world. We will never be able to resolve them and that is okay. We can still have meaning and fulfillment if we will keep our focus on God and continue to enjoy what He has given to us.