**Ecclesiastes 8**

**“Your Wish Is My Command”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 8

**Memory Verse:** Leviticus 22:31 “*You shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I AM the LORD*.”

**Lesson Focus:** This chapter contains lessons about respecting authority, both earthly authority and God’s authority. As we march through the rest of this book, we will see the idea of the “fear of God” and obeying Him come out stronger and stronger as we do here.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of the Law. Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: Big Ears

**Introduction:**

Ecclesiastes is a book that challenges us to THINK. (Matthew 22:37, Romans 12:2)

To get kids brains in “think” mode, we will introduce each lesson of Ecclesiastes with some sort of brain teaser. For this week, below are several pictures communicating an idea. Draw them on the board and see if they can figure out each one (answers provided).



**Starter Activity:** “*Your Wish Is My Command*”. Ask the kids what they think of when they hear that. Many of them will think of the genie in Aladdin who grants three wishes.

This phrase, when spoken, implies a chain of command. In other words, someone is the master and the other is the servant.

Q: Is the one who says “*Your Wish Is My Command*” the master or the servant?

In our lesson today, we are going to reinforce the idea that when we are under someone else’s authority, we should have a similar attitude of “*Your Wish Is My Command*”.

**Bible Study:**

**Eccl 8:1:** Last week we munched on what we called “healthy wisdom snacks” from chapter 7. This verse teaches us that when we actually know and apply God’s wisdom, it changes us. For thousands of years people’s lives have been radically made better as they read and apply God’s word.

Q: Have you ever had that “a-ha” moment when you maybe didn’t know the answer on a test, but then you got it? \*

How much more “shine” do we have on our face when we know and dwell on the fact that we are forgiven and loved by God through Jesus Christ! The gospel, which is the wisdom of God, takes the grumpiest sinner (think of the apostle Paul before he was saved) and changes him from the inside out so that his face reflects the joy and peace of God! \*

**Eccl 8:2-4:** In these verses, Solomon teaches us that it is wise to obey the king. While we don’t have kings to obey in our day like there was in Solomon’s time, we have other authority figures on earth that God would have us obey.

Q: Who are some people that God has put over you that He would have you submit to?

1. Parents (this is the 6th commandment, Exodus 20:12)
2. Teachers (you being the student means you are to listen/learn)
3. Pastors (Hebrews 13:17 teaches that we are to submit to church leaders)
4. Government/Police (Romans 13 reminds us God has put governments in place)

So there is a sense in which God would have us say “*Your Wish Is My Command*” to these authority figures that He has put over us.

**Eccl 8:5-9**: These verses seem to teach that sometimes those in authority over us are actually not good people and it can be hard to know what to do. Should we obey if we are told to do something evil?

Q: Who knows who the Nazis are from World War II?

They were very evil people that murdered Jewish people (and others) in Germany. The ordinary German people were commanded to help the Nazis find Jewish people.

Q: Is that a command that Christians were to obey?

A: Corrie ten Boom was a Christian who actually hid Jewish people in her closet with her family. They ended up getting caught though and her family all got punished, imprisoned, and died. She, however, survived. If we are wise, we will know when to obey God rather than men.

Q: You might remember the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from Daniel 3. They were told to bow down and worship a golden statue of the King. But they said “NO” and got thrown into the fiery furnace. Who remembers what happened next? God protected and preserved them!

Most of the time we simply obey those in authority over us because they aren’t telling us to do something evil or clearly against what God would have us do. But as v. 5 says, if we are wise, if we know God’s word, we will know when to obey God rather than men.

**Eccl 8:10-11:** Solomon shifts gears now from teaching on respecting earthly authorities to respecting godly authority.

Q: Raise your hand if you have ever done something wrong/evil (sin) and gotten away with it. Be honest! (maybe stealing cookies from a cookie jar)

Q: When that happens, what can we foolishly trick ourselves into believing?

A: That I can keep doing it. That it is OK. Since I get away with it, it must not be a big deal, etc.

This is exactly what Solomon is talking about in v. 11. If there are no immediate consequences to our sin, our evil hearts whisper to us, “why not just keep sinning, it feels so good?”

But is there Someone Who knows? **Read Luke 12:2** spoken by Jesus! Think about that for a minute: **Everything** you have covered up will be revealed. **Everything** that you have done in secret will be made known.

You are taking advantage of God’s patience and mercy when you go on sinning.

**Eccl 8:12-14:** Here Solomon brings God into the picture and an “above the sun” perspective.

Q: Who does Solomon say it “will be well with”?

A: The one who “fears God”. The one who says to God, “*Your Wish is My Command*”.

But wait a minute, in v. 14, he is saying that bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.

Think about Jafar winning in Aladdin, or Ursula winning in The Little Mermaid, or Mother Gothel winning in Rapunzel. While this would make for really bad Disney movies, this does happen sometimes in our fallen world. Consider this:

1. Maybe you studied hard on a test and got a C while the kid next to you cheated and got an A.
2. Maybe you waited patiently for a cookie, but didn’t get one because other kids stole the few that were left and got away with it.
3. Or go back to Nazi Germany: Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader, prospered while Corrie ten Boom’s family suffered and died for doing what was right and courageous.

Q: If those who don’t “fear God” continue in their evil ways and continue to get away with it, when will it “not be well” for them?

A: Eternity! Solomon knows God will make everything right in eternity after we die.

**Read Luke 12:4-5**. Remember Jesus said everything hidden will be known in Luke 12:2? He continues here to say that because of this we should fear God. We might be able to fool our parents, our teachers, or whoever is in authority of us, but we cannot fool God!

**Eccl 8:15-17:** Throughout this book, Solomon is always trying to answer the question, “*Why*”. *Why* do good things happen to bad people? *Why* are there sometimes bad people in authority? Notice in v. 17 he acknowledges God as in charge, but he also admits that there are certain things we cannot understand.

When we ask “*Why*”, God doesn’t always tell us. The question then is will we trust Him?

This chapter makes it clear there are only two kinds of people in the world.

1. Those who fear God and trust God, those who say to God, “*Your Wish Is My Command*” and obey Him and love Him even in the unanswered “*Why*”.
2. Those who do not fear God, who do not trust God, and don’t want God messing with their lives. In one sense, God says to THEM, “*Your Wish Is My Command*” in that they get exactly what they want in hell away from His presence and love forever!

Q: Which group do you fall into? Our memory verse shows us that God is not messing around. He is the King and you play either by His rules or your own rules.

**Key Point:** Though God will punish, **He also loves to save!** Your sin may be great, but His love is greater! Do you want to obey, but have a hard time obeying? Come to Jesus! When you come to Him by faith and love Him, He will help you obey. He will help you listen. He will change you from the inside out (remember the shine from v. 1!) so that it will be your joy to say to Him, “*Your Wish Is My Command*”!

**Read Psalm 147:11**. This verse makes it clear that God loves it when we fear Him and trust in Him. He loves it when we say to Him, “*Your Wish Is My Command*”.

Bring It Home

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 8 **Lesson Theme**: “Your Wish Is My Command”

**Memory Verse:** Leviticus 22:31 “*You shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I AM the LORD*.”

**Teachers/Parents:** In Ecclesiastes 8:1, we discussed how learning and growing in God’s wisdom changes us. Perhaps no more so then when we were first saved and overwhelmed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:30). Share an experience with your kiddos of how the grace of Jesus Christ caused your face to “shine” and change you.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. **Eccl. 8:2-4** provides some instruction on submission to earthly authorities and we discussed several examples of these in class. Which authority figures are the most difficult for you to submit to and why?
2. Certain authority figures have been put in place over us by God (i.e. government, parents, church leaders, etc.). How should knowing that God has put those authority figures in place over us affect our ability to submit to them?
3. **Eccl. 8:9** indicates that there are sometimes earthly authority figures that can cause hurt. In such cases, it may be appropriate to disobey those authorities. One example in Scripture we discussed is Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from Daniel 3. Read **Acts 5:27-29** for another example. How do we know when it is appropriate to “obey God rather than men”?
4. **Eccl. 8:11** teaches us a very general truth that we all observe. Where there is no threat of punishment or consequences, sin increases. Sometimes we think we are clever when we get away with our sin. Read **Psalm 10:11** which is the echo of our hearts in temptation. We might be able to fool those in authority over us on earth, but can we actually fool God?
5. **Eccl. 8:12-13** says it will be well for those who “fear God.” We tied this to the well-known phrase, “*Your Wish Is My Command*”. While God definitely wants our obedience, is that all that He wants? Read **John 14:15**. What is present before the obedience?
6. Go on reading **John 14:16-18**. How will Jesus help those who love Him obey?