

# NO ROOM FOR OPPOSITES

**B**efore arriving in Washington, DC I had spent a week in Massachusetts, in a city outside Boston called Quincy. Heard of it? Probably not, though it may sound vaguely familiar if you know any of our early presidents. Our sixth president, John Quincy Adams was named for the town, and born there, incidentally. However, it was not for him that I was there. I was on a quest to visit the birthplace of his father, our second president, John Adams. This was a godly man. He was perfectly unswerving in his principles, and made extraordinary personal sacrifices to be a midwife for the birth of our nation. His final home was called Peacefield, and even to this day you can feel the love of this man for his land, his people, and his God.

My entire drive down the coast to DC was punctuated with moments of savoring the beauty of this man's life and his impact on the world.

I made it to Washington DC in spite of my daydreaming half the way there, and after I finished fussing at the hideous maze they call their streets, I settled into figuring out what to do next. The first choice was easy, a favorite spot I could stay at for hours. It was while I was there that I decided upon the second place to go, which was not going to be so easy. I was going to go to The Holocaust Museum for the first time.

**What can I say? Nothing really prepares you for such an experience, if, in fact, you are truly willing to experience it.**

You must remember that I just finished soaking myself in a man who, while still very human, was admirable and honorable in a whole lot of ways. Now I found myself plunging into the sinister darkness of a man whose lunacy was only surpassed by his demonization. Talk about whiplash! Adolf Hitler was a haunting parallel to John Adams, he tore down and destroyed as much as Adams built and preserved.

I will always remember the impact of the tangible evidences of WWII brutality, like the enormous pile of shoes collected from the dead in concentration camps. But it wasn't grief over the suffering of mankind that stood out to me the most that day. What stood out to me were these two men. Two men on two absolute opposite ends of the spectrum.

As I slowly walked out of the museum and found a place to sit outside, my spirit was churning. How could these two men exist in the same world? **How could they be created by the same God?** How could that God love both of them? Who IS this God that can sustain a world where the darkest evil and the purest light both inhabit the lives of mankind? What does that mean about Him? And why has He been so long suffering with a race whose bipolar behavior is enough to send any psychiatrist running to the monastery?

I knew, even as my spirit churned, that I was looking for answers I wasn't likely to find in this lifetime. But I had to keep asking them because every time I did, I could feel my spirit expand. My willingness to glimpse at the frightening unsearchableness of God left me in a profound state of awe.



We humans do not like to hold opposites in tension. We want things to be clean, orderly and explainable. We don't do messy. Far too often, we try to solve the problem by disposing of one side or the other and settling into a definable world. It's safer and easier, true enough, but it is a paltry world. Some of the greatest mysteries of God lie in our grappling with mixture, with the tensions of life, with things we haven't a clue why they are the way they are. This is the playing field where we can meet Him again and again, each time our spirit expanding through an awe experience. We may not always get an answer. Am I closer to understanding how God manages a world where John Adams and Adolf Hitler both existed? No. Not really. **But my spirit is bigger, more robust, more deeply connected with God for having dared to process those emotions, having dared to look at good and bad at the same time, and having embraced the vulnerability of being so completely out of my league.**

What about you? Are you willing to ask? How often are you willing to hold opposites in tension? How often do you let your spirit experience God in a world that is far from neat and orderly? It isn't easy. It reframes the way you look at things that have happened to you and makes you think about things that could happen. *It makes you realize that being at the mercy of an unsearchable God could mean just about anything.*

But ask Him all the same. Be willing to let God show you a world where contradictions, opposites and things unexplainable all function beneath the power of His mighty hand.

Ask.

## **Really, God, Who *are* You?**

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