

The Sovereignty of God
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We're in a series titled Knowing God and over the weeks we've learned many of the attributes of God including:

God is love, God is good, God is gracious
 God is immutable which means He never changes
 God is holy, God is a Jealous God, God is Faithful
 God is Just, God is Truth, God is Eternal
 God is Creator, God is Wise, God is Peace, God is Merciful...
 And really we've only scratched the surface of all that God is.

Today we're going to look at The Sovereignty of God. Sovereignty means two things: to be the supreme authority and to be free from external control.

First of all, only God is totally and truly sovereign. He alone has supreme authority and He alone is totally free from external control. No one controls God. There is never a time when God is out of control – or when someone or something else has control over God. You see - There is a God and you're not Him.

2 Samuel 7:22 says:

How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you.

You see God can do whatever He chooses, whenever He chooses, wherever He chooses, however He chooses, why ever He chooses. God is 100% free to do whatever He chooses because nothing or no one can hinder Him. He is not limited by anything. He rules the universe with all power and authority at all times.

He is His own reason for His actions.

He doesn't have to ask permission of anyone.

He doesn't have to explain Himself to anyone.

He is on the throne. He rules. He's the boss.

He is large and in charge.

He has absolute control over everything and everyone, everywhere in the entire universe! 1 Chron. 29:11-12 says:

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; You are the ruler of all things. In Your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

He is the supreme ruler over man, angels and all creation. Including Satan and his demons.

For God to be the sovereign ruler over all things He must be Omnipotent. Omnipotent means He is all powerful. In order for God to rule absolutely He must have absolute power. Revelation 19:6 says:

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

In this passage John connects God's rule with His power. But here's the thing. As humans we want to have power and be in control. We want to rule our lives and determine our own outcomes. But this is proof that we don't really trust God as our sovereign ruler. It means we really think we are more capable of controlling our lives than He is. Which really means we don't know God like we think we do.

That's when we get into trouble: when we try to control things. But we do it because we haven't had a true revelation of the sovereignty of God. Because if we knew how powerful God is we wouldn't even dream of trying to take control.

To be the sovereign ruler over all things God must be Omnipotent. He also must be omniscient which means all knowing. If God lacked even one little bit of knowledge no matter how small, His ability to rule would be limited. That one little bit of knowledge would belong to someone else and then God would be a limited ruler. But God alone is all knowing - He knows everything. Since He has all knowledge He is able to understand all things and is always right and good in His choices and decisions.

To be sovereign God also must be omnipresent which means He exists everywhere at the same time. God doesn't have to leave one place to go to another place. He never has to be somewhere at a certain time because he is already everywhere at all times.

So let me give you three reasons why we should surrender to the sovereign rule of God in our lives instead of trying to be in control.

1. We don't have enough power to rule our lives.

In fact – the truth is- we are powerless.
 We can't make things turn out the way we want.
 We can't fix everyone and everything.
 We're just not that powerful...but God is.

2. We don't have enough knowledge to make good decisions.

In fact- relying on our own knowledge usually makes a mess of things. Our knowledge of others and the world are limited. We think we're so smart and wise but the truth is we don't know half as much as we think we do...but God does.

3. We can't be everywhere at the same time so we have a very limited ability to control or make decisions.

We don't know how our decisions are going to affect our loved ones because we aren't with them 24/7 and we don't know everything they're going ...but God does.

You see God always deals with us in a way that is consistent with His being. The sovereignty of God is His right to rule that arises out of how perfect He is. All of His actions are always good and holy and just and righteous. God knows what He is doing and He is always doing what is best for each and every one of us.

Sometimes it might not seem that way or feel that way but here's one thing you can be sure of. God will always act in your best interest and He will never rule in your life in a way that could harm you. Luke 11:11-12 says:

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!

Like the words to the song that we sang in worship:
 In Your never failing love, You work everything for good.
 Whatever comes my way I will trust you.
 All my hopes, all my life, all of me, all my fears, all my dreams,
 All I need held in your hands.

In Romans 8:28 we have this promise:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

But what about the terrible things that have happened in my life? Where was God when my marriage fell apart, or my child died, or I became sick and suffered in pain, when I lost my job, or my friend betrayed me or my spouse cheated on me? Why does God allow children to be abused or innocent people to be hurt by others?

Many people can't reconcile a good God when the world is so bad. So they decide that there must not be a God or if there is a God then He should stop all the bad in the world.

The problem is they are looking at the world instead of looking at the word of God. You see, we live in a fallen and sinful world where bad people do bad things. God has given man a free will and therefore bad things do happen. We ourselves do bad things to others and our own sin causes bad things to happen in our lives. But God is not to blame for these bad things. He isn't out to get you or make your life miserable.

Just the opposite. God loves you and wants to bless you. He is merciful and forgiving and wants good things for you. When you suffer the consequences of your sin or the sins of others, God wants to help you and bring you through the difficulties. Genesis 50:20 says:

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.

When we experience pain or loss or disappointment, God is still God. He is still ruler over our lives. He is still able to take all the bad things we've gone through and use them for good. He will do everything in His power to bless us.

So here's the thing. If you think you know better than God and you are doing what you want to do with little or no regard for what God wants you are making a huge mistake. If you think God's ways seem difficult, ridiculous, insulting, humiliating or the exact opposite of the way you think it should be I would recommend you listen to God anyway. Isaiah 55:9 says:

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.

If you don't like what God is asking you to do or how He's asking you to do it...you are in danger of missing your God moment, your destiny, your answer to prayer and your healing...and when that happens please don't blame God. You may be missing out on God's perfect plan and purpose for your life. If you are questioning God's ways and ignoring His commands – it's probably not going to end well. – unless God in His sovereignty shows you mercy.

To me one of the greatest stories in the Bible about God's sovereignty is found in 2 Kings 5:1-17. It's about a man named Naaman who was a gentile and the commander of the army in Syria (Syria was an enemy of Israel)...and he had leprosy. Naaman's wife had a servant who had been taken captive from Israel. So she tells Naaman's wife about the prophet Elisha and how he is a man of God...whose God could cure him of his leprosy.

So the king of Syria tells Naaman to go get his healing and He sends a letter to the king of Israel asking him to cure Naaman. When the King of Israel gets the letter he flips out saying "*Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life?*" – he recognized the Sovereignty of God.

When Elisha hears this he tells the king to send Naaman to him. Again God sovereignly intervenes by putting it on the heart of Elisha to send for Naaman.

God might be getting ready to send a prophet to you. He already sent one to Grace. Phyllis Ford brought us the word that we would experience a “Tsunami of Blessing.” I wasn’t sure how I felt about a tsunami, but I know it’s gonna be good. It already is.

So Naaman goes but when he is at the door to Elisha’s house Elisha sends a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

But Naaman gets angry and in verse 11 he says, *“I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.”*

Naaman wanted the man of God to minister to him not just some servant. This is so indicative of how we think. God sends a servant to the hospital to pray for our healing and we get upset because it wasn’t the person we wanted or it wasn’t the pastor. Someone prays for us at the altar and we think the prayer wasn’t long enough or maybe it was too short or it was too loud or too soft or they didn’t have enough enthusiasm or they had too much enthusiasm...and I thought they would wave their hand over me and I would be healed. We get focused on the methods and miss the manifestation of miracles. And then we wonder why God didn’t move in our lives.

So, back to Naaman: Naaman also gets upset because Elisha chose the Jordan river instead of the rivers of Damascus. In verse 12 he says:

“Are not ... the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?” So he turned and went off in a rage.

First of all I’m surprised that God even heals him. But thank God He is sovereign and merciful.

But isn’t this just how we are? God in His sovereignty arranges all the circumstances to heal us and we are angry because He didn’t do it the way we thought He should.

Fortunately Naaman’s servants had more sense than he did. Which again reminds us of how sovereign God is. He puts just the right people around us to help us stay on track. Listen to what they say to him:

“My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?”

Think about that. Sounds to me like these guys recognized some pride there.

But just like Naaman we're so quick to obey God when He asks us to do a great thing. We're like "Yes Lord" "Thank you Lord" "of course I'll obey you." But what about when God asks us to humble ourselves and go wash seven times in a less desirable river?

So his wise servants continue by saying If you would obey God when He tells you to do some great thing...*How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'*"

Hello. I love this. I love how even though Naaman was being pretty foolish... God in His sovereignty uses not only a slave girl but now a bunch of servants to bring about Naaman's miracle of healing. And it worked because verse 14 says:

So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

You might think God's ways seem foolish or strange but today I ask... will you wash yourself seven times in the Jordan? Will you do it God's way?

So let me ask you a question. Why Naaman? Why did God choose to heal Naaman who was a gentile and a leper and whose country was an enemy of Israel. Here's what I think. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 says:

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him.

It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

God's sovereign grace goes beyond Israel and all its lepers to heal the Gentile Naaman. And He orchestrates every detail in Naaman's life to make it happen.

So let me tell you two statements today that can radically change your life if you will believe them.

1. God always knows what He's doing.
He certainly knows better than you do.

Apart from God...

2. You never know what you're doing.
Why don't you just admit it?

Here's the truth. Anything in your life that you have done that worked out well for you...only worked out well because God helped you in some way.

That great job that you have...the one that you think you got because you're so smart or you were at the right place at the right time. God gave you that job.

He also gave you the brain in your head that makes you so smart.

That wise investment – God!

That successful business you built – God!

That crisis you avoided – God!

Your wonderful children –God!

What about your decision to marry your amazing spouse?

Do you think you just happened to cross paths?

No, God brought that person into your life.

I want to share a story of God's sovereignty in my life. To this day this is the greatest act of God's sovereignty in my life.

I was 16 years old and was raised in a very abusive home. I was living a very worldly life. Then one day, I woke up, lit up a cigarette, smoked it, jumped out of bed and decided to go to church. Out of nowhere the thought came to me "I am going to do something with my life, I'm not going to end up like my parents." Somewhere deep inside of me I knew only God could help me. That day in a small Southern Baptist Church, I gave my life to the Lord.

This would be a very happy ending but it doesn't end here. As I gave my life to the Lord a young man in the congregation saw me. That young man was God's destiny for my life. We have now been married 42 years. My life changed that day because of the sovereignty of God.

Do you need a sovereign move of God in your life today?

Than ask Him.

He can heal your disease, provide what you need, and turn your life around.

There is nothing too difficult for Him.

He is the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords.

He bows before no one but at His name every knee will bow.

He is the first, the last and beside Him there is no other.

He's teacher of all teachers and the ruler of all rulers.

He's the leader of all leaders and the boss of all bosses.

He's the authority of all authorities.

Let's pray.