

## 85 - The Sovereignty of God is His Delight

In the past week, Barbara and I have been in multiple conversations with people, and with one another, dealing with understanding the sovereignty of God—at least indirectly—as we experience it in our everyday lives, or as we witness it play out in the lives of those around us.

As the Lord guided the preparation for this study tonight, it took a completely different direction than what I thought it would. Truth is, I wasn't really excited about looking at some of the examples of God's sovereignty in the scriptures. Frankly, if stories are not taken in through the eyes of the spirit, the scriptures sometimes make the Father appear scheming, arbitrary...even malevolent. Of course, He is the opposite of all of those.

Next door to my family growing up were two catholic families. Lots of friends were Catholics, and I often heard a phrase that made me angry, even as a young kid: "You just have to take it on faith." To me that was code for, "We don't have a clue; we're not going to have a clue—maybe EVER—so this is how we deal with God when when we can't make sense of Him. We just aren't supposed to get it. That's it."

For us mere mortals, the difficulty seems to be in comprehending how God's sovereignty actually works; whether we have anything to say about our lives at all. If God is sovereign (i.e. totally in charge of everything), how does anyone have a choice in matters that could even determine the course of his or her life.

It is critical throughout our study tonight to keep "Heaven's View" in sight. Without it, we will find ourselves despairing, because of the failures and limitations of human logic and perception. We are attempting tonight to fathom the mind of God and it is an avowedly impossible exercise. In the end, the choice left to us is to acknowledge the undeniable truth of the Lord's words through Isaiah:

### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,"  
declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### **Romans 11:33**

33 O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable [impossible to search out] are His judgments [His decisions that pass on the faults of others], and untraceable His ways [they can't be searched out or comprehended]!

You may well ask, "If this is an impossible exercise, why make it?" Good question. Remember what Moses said:

### **Exodus 33:13**

If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you."

Was Moses simply foolish to ask God to teach him the ways that Paul said cannot be searched out or comprehended? Not at all. We've been seeking the Lord in the same way since the beginning of these studies!

The first time we looked at the issue of God's sovereignty was clear back in April, 2010, during only the second study of "Light Up the Scriptures." At that time, we noted that the word sovereign itself does not appear in the Hebrew scriptures, though some versions contain it by mistranslating Yahweh Elohim as "Sovereign Lord" or "Lord God." In Greek, the word sovereign appears once:

### **Colossians 1:18**

And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is **Sovereign**, Firstborn from among the dead

The word for "sovereign" here is "Arche," meaning "Original" - the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader; that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause. All this makes perfect sense, according to the beginning of John's account:

### **John 1:3**

2 This was in the beginning toward God. [speaking of the "Christ"—in Hebrew, "haMashiach" (the Messiah), or "the Anointed One"]

3 All came into being through it [or Him], and apart from it not even one thing came into being which has come into being.

### **Revelation 3:14 refers to:**

the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, and God's Creative Original

The words “sovereignty” and “sovereignities” when they appear in scriptures refer mostly to governmental entities, both terrestrial and celestial. It really helps to avoid confusion by keeping these terms straight. A quick search of 5 OT versions on bible Gateway led to only 2 mentions of the word sovereignty, both referring to governmental offices.

The word Sovereign—as in “Sovereign Lord”—comes up in the NIV, while other versions have it as “Lord God” or, less commonly, “Lord Jehovah” (Darby). That’s close to the CLV, which renders it Lord Yahwheh.

So let’s look at how the sovereignty of God plays out in the context of its true meaning. Let’s look His original-ness; His “first-hood”—even before, over, and above His “Creative Original, Christ.”

Keep in mind, as we go through this, that God doesn’t see things like we do. That seems foolish to reiterate, but here’s how important a principle this is to grasp when we don’t understand why God does what He does:

### 1 Corinthians 1:9

9 **Faithful is God**, through Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

...

18 For the word of the cross is **stupidity**, indeed, to those who are perishing, yet to us who are being saved it is the **power of God**.

19 For it is written, **I shall be destroying the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the intelligent shall I be repudiating [I will be giving it NO PLACE!]**.

There is a wonderful example, early in our study, of God’s sovereignty demonstrated in two words – **“I SHALL”**

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the discussor of this eon? Does not **God make stupid the wisdom of this world?**

The wisdom of this world is indeed stupid, compared to God – He is, remember, the “original, the active cause”

21 For since, in fact, **in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God**, Don’t think for a second that, through worldly wisdom, anyone will succeed in knowing God. HIS wisdom has already determined that can’t happen—it’s impossible! In the 2<sup>nd</sup>

chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, Paul says more about this, but also gives members of the body of Christ a unique picture of access and understanding:

### 1 Corinthians 2:12-

12 Now we obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God,

13 which we are speaking also, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the spirit, matching spiritual blessings with spiritual words.

14 Now the soulish man is not receiving those things which are of the spirit of God, for they are stupidity to him, and **he is not able to know them, seeing that they are spiritually examined.** **May we be ever examining spiritually, so that we MAY know, AMEN?**

15 Now he who is spiritual is, indeed, examining all, yet he is being examined by no one. **[Get this...IF you are spiritual, no one is examining you; that is, no one will be able to figure you out anymore than they could figure God out!]**

16 For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will be deducing from Him? **Yet we have the mind of Christ.**

Let me ask, if we have the mind of Christ, which we just read, by virtue of being in Him, is it not possible to conceive that we are capable of knowing what He knows, to the extent He is sharing it with us? Isn't that exactly what Jesus declared in John 16:13, when He said, the Holy spirit **"will be guiding you into all the truth?"**

Go back now to **1 Corinthians 1:21:**

21 For since, in fact, **in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, God delights**, through the stupidity of the heralding, to save those who are believing,

22 since, in fact, Jews signs are requesting, and Greeks wisdom are seeking,

23 yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity,

24 yet to **those who are called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God,

"God Delights" in verse 21 is a tremendous declaration of His sovereignty! You want to know why God does what He does? Here it is, again in two words: "God delights."

Remember **Ephesians 1:11**

11 in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of **the One Who is operating [the] all in accord with the counsel of His will,**

This is God's wisdom..His privilege—not His whim, as if He were cavalier. That's a human description. Not even Satan is cavalier in his activities, but his timing and the scope of his influence held within certain limits.

We are dealing with God here, Who is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent; ***“the same God Who is operating [the] all in all. 1 Corinthians12:6***

Our only choice is whether we will trust Him or not. Either way, His purpose continues unchanged, unhindered and unhampered.

And, just as a wonderful encouragement to all of the Body of Christ, look at Ephesians 1:3-12

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ,

4 according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight,

5 in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with **the delight of His will,**

6 for the laud of the glory of His [the] grace, which graces us in the Beloved:

7 in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of [the] offenses in accord with the riches of His grace,

8 which He lavishes on us; in all wisdom and prudence

9 making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with **His delight,** which He purposed in Him)

10 to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ -- both that in the heavens and that on the earth --

11 in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand **according to the purpose of the One Who is operating [the] all in accord with the counsel of His will,**

12 that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:24** refers to **those who are called** – if you're still listening to this, and receiving its message, everything we just read in Ephesians 1 applies to you. For

that matter, the whole book is yours...to learn from, to receive wisdom, instruction, and comfort...and to be blessed by.

OK, back to **1 Corinthians 1:25**, and we'll move on. There's lots more to go

25 for the stupidity of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble,

27 but the stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong,

28 and the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is,

29 so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight.

30 Yet you, of Him, are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance,

31 that, according as it is written, He who is boasting, in the Lord let him be boasting.

We're about to look at the God Whom we love and into Whose heart we peer every week. We're about to look at the Creator, Who operates THE ALL in accord with the council of His will, and not all of it is pretty to behold. Some of it seems downright heartless, capricious or even terrifying. Remember that it's none of that, but is all part of His display to the celestials of His multifarious wisdom in the face of which all we can do is fall on our faces in adoration of His faithfulness to us in Christ Jesus.

### **Ephesians 3:8**

8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the **untraceable riches of Christ** to the nations,

9 and **to enlighten all** as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been **concealed from the eons in God**, Who creates all,

10 that now may be **made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God**,

11 **in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord**;

12 in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith.

Also Keep in mind that the administration of grace, by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, changes God's relationship to us

as well as ours to Him. We are no longer enemies of God. He is not our enemy either. He never has been. He is, however “Operating the all” to fulfill His “purpose of the eons.”

Finally, Let’s look at Paul’s incredible tapestry woven through Romans 8. As we look into this in the context of God’s Sovereignty, look not only at what God does, but why. When Barbara counsels people, she often relates what God said to her one day, “I’m showing you this so that when I do what I do, you’ll know why I did what I did.”

## Romans 8

14 For whoever are being led by God's spirit, **these** are sons [and daughters] of God.

15 For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but **you got the spirit of sonship**, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!"

16 The spirit **itself** is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God.

17 Yet if children, enjoyers also of an allotment, enjoyers, indeed, of an allotment from God, yet joint enjoyers of Christ's allotment, if so be that we are suffering together, that we should be glorified together also.

18 For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not **deserve** the glory about to be revealed for us.

19 For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the **unveiling** of the sons [and daughters] of God.

Here comes a scripture I was asked about within the last week:

20 **For to [the] vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it,**

Let me stop here a moment and ask, aren’t we part of “THE CREATION” that Paul writes about in Romans 8:20? Yes? So we were subjected to vanity, along with the rest of the creation, not voluntarily—we had no say in it—because of Him who does the subjecting—God—the original and active cause of the all. If we stop reading there, we’ll get hung up on the “APPEARANCE”—the appearance only, mind you, that God is pulling strings on people like a puppeteer with marionettes. When we KEEP reading, however, we discover WHY He subjected The creation to vanity. The key is in the last part of **verse 20 of Romans 8:**

20 ... **in expectation [on account of expectation]**

21 that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of [the] corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

22 For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now.

23 Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body.

24 For to [the] expectation were we saved. Now expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also?

25 Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, we are awaiting it with endurance.

26 Now, similarly, the spirit also is aiding our infirmity, for what we should be praying for, to accord with what must be, we are not aware, but the spirit itself is pleading for us with inarticulate groanings.

27 Now He Who is searching the hearts is aware what is the disposition of the spirit, for in accord with God is it pleading for the saints.

28 Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, who are called according to the purpose

29 that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for [into] Him to be Firstborn among many brethren.

30 Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also.

31 What then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

32 Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?

33 Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier?

34 Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes?

35 What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

36 According as it is written that "On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day, We are reckoned as sheep for slaughter."

37 Nay! in all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us.

38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Can you see with me how, given what we just saw together, we'd almost be asking God, "Could you please, Father, subject us all to THE vanity." Here's the principle I believe is essential to understanding the sovereignty of God: the outcome justifies the process to accomplish it.

### **Ecclesiastes 7:7-9**

The end of a **matter** is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.

It's important to get that principle firmly in our hearts and minds, because of what we'll look at next:

### **Romans 11:32**

32 For God locks [the] all together in into stubbornness, that He should be merciful to [the] all.

This is the same picture, almost as Romans 8:20, where the creation was subjected to vanity, not voluntarily. Again, look at the outcome. Is the outcome—the expectation—worthy of the process? If yes, you can be certain of your own calling. If no, your own conciliation to God; that is, YOUR part, is a bit shaky at best and needs work.

Here's some more to chew on:

### **Romans 9**

13 According as it is written, "Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate."

14 What, then, shall we be declaring? Not that there is injustice with God? May it not be coming to that!

15 For to Moses He is saying, "I shall be merciful to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be pitying whomever I may be pitying."

16 Consequently, then, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful.

17 For the scripture is saying to Pharaoh that "For this selfsame thing I rouse you up, so that I should be displaying in you My power, and so that My name should be published in the entire earth."

18 Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening.

19 You will be protesting to me, then, "Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention?"

20 O man! who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God? That which is molded will not protest to the molder, "Why do you make me thus?"

21 Or has not the potter the right over the clay, out of the same kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor?

22 Now if God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries, with much patience, the vessels of indignation, adapted for destruction,

23 it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He makes ready before for glory --

24 us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also.

25 As He is saying in Hosea also: I shall be calling those who are not My people "My people," And she who is not beloved "Beloved,"

26 "And it shall be, in the place where it was declared to them, 'Not My people are you,'" There "they shall be called 'sons of the living God.'"

27 Now Isaiah is crying over Israel, If the number of the sons of Israel should be as the sand of the sea, the residue shall be saved,

28 for "a conclusive and concise accounting the Lord will be doing on the earth."

29 And according as Isaiah declared before, "Except the Lord of hosts conserved us a seed, As Sodom would we become, And to Gomorrah would we be likened."

30 What, then, shall we be declaring? That the nations who are not pursuing righteousness overtook righteousness, yet a righteousness which is out of faith.

There you have it, the Alpha and omega of God's sovereignty. It's all about Him, For Him, the Laud of His glory, and it's all into Him Who at the consummation, will be all in all. This is what we are leading up to. This is the great climax when the eons are over:

### **1 Corinthians 15:22**

22 For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified.

23 Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence;

24 thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying every sovereignty and every authority and power.

25 For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy is being abolished: [the] death.

27 For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects [the] all to Him.

28 Now, whenever [the] all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects [the] all to Him, that God may be All in all.)

I'll close with a quote from my book, GO GOD!:

The Father is the one Who is **“Operating;”** present tense. He is *“at work, putting forth power, effecting [everything]”* (Thayer, 215). Not only *is* God operating right now! He **“is operating [THE] all in all.”** What Paul saw over 2,000 years ago is still true: *“God is operating TODAY — right here, right now. He is in charge. He has everything under control and nothing escapes His attention!”* Everything He does has the glorious end insight, when ?He will be All in all. AMEN