

Who's in Charge?

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[0 : 00] All right, let's go ahead and get started with our message this morning, and the title of this morning's message is Who's in Charge? We know that we live in a troubled world. We live in a world where there's wars, there's rumors of wars, there's conflict between political parties, there's conflict in neighborhoods, and everywhere we turn, it seems like there's another active shooter that's taking one, two, three, ten, twelve lives, and this is happening over and over and over again, and it seems that our world situation today incubates worry, that the more things that happen and the more interconnected we are as a world, something happens across the world, and we hear about it within moments, and the more things go on like this, the more people tend to worry, and so some will ask, do we even have any answers?

Does anyone have the answer? Is there hope for better days ahead? What will become of us? Some people don't even listen to the news anymore because there are no good news that people hear anymore, so people wonder, is there ever going to be any good news? And people ask the question, who's in charge? Well, let's take our Bibles this morning to Psalm 97, and we'll look in verses 1 through 6.

Psalm 97, verse 1 says, The Lord reigns. Now we could stop the message there, close our Bible, and go home. Because doesn't that answer all the questions?

Who's in charge? The Lord reigns. But the psalmist does not stop there. The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad.

[2 : 08] Clouds and darkness surround him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. A fire goes before him and burns up his enemies round about.

His lightnings light the world. The earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord. And the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord, the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. Let us pray. Father, this morning, we are so thankful for your goodness.

We're thankful that you reign. And while there may still be difficult, uncomfortable, painful things that come into our lives, and we ask the question, God, where are you?

God, how could you? God, why did you? We can still, even in the midst of our sorrow and our tears and our groaning pain, know that we live in a sin-cursed world and that you are still there, you are still in control, and difficult things will happen to your people as well as happen to the rest of the world.

[3 : 37] But, Father, we thank you that even though it does not feel like it, even though we may not feel like it, you are in control.

We thank you for that, and we pray that you would give us the grace to praise you, not only in the dark, not only in the good times, but in the dark days as well.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, the Lord reigns. So what? Relax.

I guess that's what we could tell everyone. God's in control. Just relax. And people might say, well, that's easy for you to say. You know, pie-in-the-sky attitude and Pollyannish attitude.

Everything will be okay. Well, it doesn't mean that everything is going to feel okay. It doesn't mean that everything is going to be la-di-da and fun and roses all the time.

[4 : 38] It just simply means that in the good times and in the bad times, God is still in control. God still reigns.

The Lord reigns for one. The Lord reigns. Let the rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad. Here's the thing. Nothing makes God by surprise. No.

Nothing surprises God. Nothing awakes God and they say, oh, God, about this. Oh, I don't know.

What shall we do? And with God wringing his hands, it doesn't work that way. It works that way for

us, but not for him.

He tells us in 1 Peter 5, verse 7, to cast our cares upon him because he cares for us. God understands and God knows. God realizes what we need.

Matthew 11, 28 to 30, come to him with your burdens and he'll carry them. That's what we're told in Matthew 11, verses 28 to 30.

[5 : 39] Spurgeon had a quote about this. He says, absolute power is safe in the hands of him who cannot make a mistake. Stop and think about that for a moment.

Absolute power is safe in the hands of him who cannot make a mistake or act unrighteously. When the books of God are opened, no eye will see word that should be blotted out, one syllable of error, one line of injustice, one letter of unholiness.

And in our difficulty, in our pain, we might ask, where was God? How could God allow this to happen to this innocent child? How could God allow this or that?

But when absolute power is wielded by one who cannot make a mistake and one who cannot act unrighteously, who are we to say that was wrong? Who are we to say, God, you don't know what you were doing or how did you or why did you allow that to happen?

So, number one, we can say who's in charge? The Lord's in charge. So, just relax. When someone knows what they're supposed to know and when someone is an expert in something, for instance, let's say it's medical or it's someone who, or wives, when your husband tries to fix the plumbing and you call in the expert and the expert comes in, then what can you do?

[7 : 25] You can relax. He's got it taken care of. There was a, there was a, the trucks that ran around Birmingham all the time and it was the plumbers and their, their, their byline was we fixed what your husband broke.

And so, when the person who knows what they're doing comes along, it's like, now, we can relax because we know, now it might cost a little bit, but we know that it will be taken care of properly. So, God's in charge. The Lord reigns. Relax. What is the second thing that we see in this psalm when we ask ourselves the question, who's in charge?

The Lord reigns. Rejoice. Verse number one. The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of isles be glad.

So, what's our response to who's in charge? God's in charge. Relax and rejoice. Be glad. Let the earth be glad. Do you realize that the world conditions today were known before it created the world?

[8 : 35] God knew what was going to happen in November of 2018. He knew what the outcome of these elections were going to be. He knows what the outcome of the December 8th.

Is that when the next election is? He knows the outcome of the December 8th elections. And so, that ought to let us not only relax, but rejoice to know that no matter what happens, God is in control and we know that the Bible is still true when it says, all things work together for those who love God and who are the called according to His purpose.

It may not align with our own preferences, it may not align with our own desires, but when God does something, they're right.

So, we may be sick tomorrow. It may not be fun. You may get a new boss next week and it might be the worst boss possible. But you know what? God's still in control and all things still work out for good to them who love God and who are the called according to His purpose.

So, God reigns. Relax. God reigns. Rejoice. Jesus revealed the signs of His return. Matthew 24. He revealed the signs that were going to be taking place and not all of them were good.

[10 : 02] We also, Paul told Timothy that perilous times would come. He told Timothy that in the book of Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 through 7.

Timothy, these are the things that are going to be taking place before Christ returns. They're going to be perilous times. They're going to be dangerous times. How are we to act when these times come?

We're told in Luke 21 verses 25 through 28, and there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars, and on the earth distressive nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. For the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now we realize when this is going to be the second coming, but we know that even prior to the tribulation, there are going to be difficult times as well.

And verse 28, now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift your heads because your redemption draws near. Now we have to remember when this comes, this is going to be the second coming.

[11 : 20] This is going to be after the great tribulation. But I think the same principle holds true for us today. For us who know, for we who know Christ have the ability to relax and rejoice because we know that our redemption one day is going to be coming.

When we breathe our last breath on planet earth, we're going to be ushered into the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are going to see God's prophetic events unfold, whether it's in this age of grace, prior to what we see as the great tribulation in the book of Revelation, we're going to see God's prophetic events unfold, just as people are going to see God's prophetic events unfold before the second coming of Christ.

These are going to be happening. There's nothing that we can do to change them. We're to look up and be encouraged, just like those in this time where we see in the book of Luke.

We're to lift our heads and rejoice. God is in control. Here's the thing. When we remember who's in control, we can rejoice.

Look at Romans chapter 8, verse 28. We quoted that a little bit earlier. And we know that all things, let's read this together. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose.

[13 : 05] Romans 8, 28 tells us to not what? Don't worry. So, relax, and we can rejoice when we know that God reigns.

He has got everything under control. So, the Lord reigns, relax. The Lord reigns, rejoice.

Just like he tells us in verse number 1. The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice in the multitude of isles, be glad. And then also, I think what we see is the Lord reigns, and we can remember.

Remember, we are not the first to live in difficult times. If we look back at biblical history, at the history of the Bible, history of God's people, even going back to the first century, we're not the first people to experience these problems that we're experiencing today.

We're not the first to experience political unrest. We're not the first to be part of a regime or the part of a political party or political times that were uneasy.

[14 : 31] We're not the first. So we're not the first to experience difficult times. Israel was enslaved to Egypt for hundreds of years. David, King David, was pursued by Saul.

Saul sought to kill him. The earthly church, during the first century, second century, third century, even today, different places around the world, the church is being persecuted.

Christians are being killed today around the world. So when we stop and we think about that, when we stop and think that we think we have problems today in our area, in America, there are Christians across the world who are being severely beaten, tortured, watching their family being killed, beaten, and tortured for their faith.

So things God understands, God knows what's going on. The church endured terrible persecution, including martyrdom. We see that in Hebrews chapter number 11.

When we're feeling down, consider Jesus. What did Jesus go through? And why did Jesus go through what he went through? He did it for us. He did it because he was going to be paying for our sin.

[15 : 47] Isaiah 53 says that he was going to be despised and rejected, and he was. And Jesus did that for us.

Matthew 27, he endured the shame and the pain of the cross for us. He allowed it to happen. We were talking this morning in Sunday school about Peter cutting off the ear of the soldier, and Jesus said, come on, Peter, this has to happen.

And then he puts the guy's ear back on miraculously. What was Peter's problem? Peter didn't see the big picture. Peter didn't see that this did not, this arrest, this unlawful arrest, and this trial, this trial that was going to take place that was a farce, was in the prophetic plan of God.

Come on, Peter, you're not seeing the big picture. This has to happen in order for me to pay for your sin. This has to happen in order for God's plan to be able to come to fruition.

And when we think about events today, if we see the big picture, there are things that are going to take place in order for God and Jesus Christ ultimately one day to set foot on the Mount of Olives and to be able to usher in what he is going to bring to pass.

[17 : 13] And so these things are going to take place. And as we said in Sunday school, we brought out, we're not to have a fatalistic attitude. We're not to have the attitude that, well, it's going to happen, so we might as well just sit on our hands and just let it happen.

God's will will be done, but I think God also expects us to be engaged and involved in our civic responsibilities and our social responsibilities as well.

So we do those as God provides, as God supplies, and then leave the results up to him. It's like planting the seed, watering it, tending it, and then it's up to God to give the increase.

It's up to God to get the plant to grow out of the ground. It's up to God to do the rest. But we know that on the third day, what happened there in that tomb?

Jesus Christ rose from the grave, and the resurrection vindicated his message, it vindicated what he was doing, and it guaranteed our salvation.

[18 : 20] We see that in Romans chapter 1 and verse number 4. And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

God's plan for our life is unchanged by what's happening in the world. Think about that for a moment. God's plan for your life is unchanged by what's happening in the world.

If things go awry, God's still accomplishing his plan for your life, for my life, in whatever way that he deems it to happen.

So, why worry? No matter what's going on around us, God's still doing what he wants to do in our life. Whether we're in sickness, whether we're in pain, God's way is going, God's will is happening in our life.

Now, what part do we play in that? We have the responsibility to what? To obey and to submit.

[19 : 29] Once we do our part, the rest is up to him. So, as we wind this down, who's in charge?

God's in charge. And creation is witness to that fact. We continue on in Psalm 97, as we continue verse number 2 through verse number 6.

Clouds and darkness surround him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. A fire goes before him and burns up his enemies round about.

His lightnings light the world. The earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord. At the presence of the Lord, the whole earth, the heavens declare his righteousness and all the peoples see his glory.

The Lord reigns. Relax. The Lord reigns. Rejoice. The Lord reigns. Remember, we're not the first ones that have gone through trouble, gone through trial, gone through pain.

[20 : 39] And as we think about this, we can remember that God is still in control. So what do we do?

We commit everything to him as the Lord of all. And we stop worrying. I mean, ultimately, when we think about it, God is in control.

The Lord reigns. Who's in charge? God's in charge. So what do we do? Relax. Don't fret. Don't get all anxious about when we want.

Now, it doesn't mean that you have to watch the news all the time. Because you know what?

Sometimes we can take a break from the news. But don't take a break from the news just because you're worrying and it makes you anxious.

because when we watch the news and we see all these horrible, upsetting, and depressing things taking place, what does it tell, or what can we, how can, what can our attitude be toward that?

[21 : 49] Things are only leading toward the end times when we know that God said things are going to be worse before the Lord returns. So we can almost look at it the same way that John told the believers in the book of Revelation.

Look at these things and let it be an encouragement to you. These things are going to take place, but God's in control.

And we can look at today's events, we can look at the news in the same way. God is in control and we can take comfort knowing that even though things are, times are bad, God is still in control and he is still, it's like looking at the underside of the tapestry.

It may look like all disjointed, it may look like a jumbled mess. God can see the beauty of the tapestry from above and he knows that it will all fit together and it will all make a beautiful picture one day.

Even though to us it looks like a mess, to God he's working it out. So commit all to the Lord of all and stop worrying.

[23 : 10] Father, this morning we're so thankful that you are in control. We're so thankful that you reign. We're so thankful that even though things seem to be bad, even though things seem to be falling apart, even though people are calling wrong right and right wrong.

Your word told us that that would be the case. You told us that people would be doing that. And so it should come to us as no surprise, but that your events, your prophetic events are unfolding as you bring them to pass.

us. And so Father, we thank you for the realization. We thank you Father for the encouragement that you reign, that allows us to relax, that allows us to rejoice, and that we can remember that you are in control and we are not the first to go through difficult times.

Be with us today, dear Lord, we pray. Father, I thank you for each one that is here, this morning. I pray, Lord God, as well, that you would bless this offering for these military Bible sticks that we're about to receive in just a moment.

Father, we thank you for what you are going to provide, and we thank you for being in charge. We pray this in Jesus' name.

[24 : 39] Amen.