

The Sovereign God

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[0 : 00] Well, before we take a look at Exodus chapter 11, I want to talk about something that God's been teaching me as I look at the book of Exodus over these past couple of weeks.

So thinking back towards the month of December, when Jonathan was, when he determined that Exodus was where we were going to continue our journey as a church, I was really excited about that.

I was excited about that prospect. I felt this is what our church family needed. But that excitement was more of a sense that I couldn't really articulate. And now that I think recently over the last couple of weeks, the Lord has helped me understand why I need the book of Exodus, why we as a church need this book.

So think of this as a bit of a preface to the sermon that comes before the introduction. So sort of as a bit of a preface, let's talk about the book of Exodus as a whole. Basically, you can break the book of Exodus down into three parts.

So the first part of the book is where we are at right now, as we are in chapter 11. We are still in the first part of the book. It extends from chapter 1 all the way through chapter 15.

[1 : 11] So here we are learning that God is great. That God is great. Through his mighty works in the land of Egypt, God shows his people that he is powerful, that he is awesome, that he is without rival, that nothing is impossible for him.

So that is the first part of the book. It teaches us that God is great. The second part of the book is in chapters 16 through 24. And there we are going to learn that God is good.

That God is good. Through his care for his people in the wilderness, through the revelation of his good laws on Mount Sinai, God is going to show his people that he is good.

He is good in his very nature. He is right in all the actions that he takes. He is desirable. He is satisfying for you and for me. And then the third part of the book of Exodus is going to be in chapters 25 through 40.

And there we are going to learn that God is with us. That God is with us. Now, through his tabernacle and his priests, and in spite of the idolatry of his people, God shows his people that he is not distant.

[2 : 21] He is not unknowable. He is near to us. He cares for us. He longs for us to be holy just like he is. And it's very critical that we believe all three of these things.

That we believe that God is great, that God is good, that God is with us. And the problem is that I, myself, I don't really believe them. And if I'm frank, I think that we as a church, we don't really believe them either.

And that is the root of so many of our problems, so many of our frustrations in our own lives, in our families, in our church.

First, maybe we believe that God is great and that God is good, but we don't believe that he's with us. And so, if you're like that, you talk about God as though he's just a theoretical concept.

You use glowing terms, even. You talk about him as though he's a theological abstraction.

Something to be grasped with the mind, but his presence with you doesn't make a lot of difference in your life.

[3 : 26] And we live our lives as though his spirit, his Holy Spirit, is not present among us. We live as though God has not called us to a holy calling. Well, maybe we believe that God is great and that he is with us, but maybe what you're struggling with is that maybe God isn't good.

And so, to you, God seems like this strict master, this strict master who gives you rules and gives you regulations to follow out of a grim sense of duty. And we have to be good little stoics, and we can't find our joy in the Lord.

We have to draw our true joy, our happiness, out of other people. Out of our hobbies, out of our achievements. Because that's where the good life is found.

Or maybe we believe that God is good, and we believe that God is with us, but he's not great. And so, what happens then is that when we face difficult situations, or difficult relationships, they terrify us.

They overwhelm us. And we're afraid that other people, these other people who seem so big when God seems so small, we're afraid that these other people who are so big now, that they are going to judge us.

[4 : 39] Or that these people won't love us, or won't approve of us, or that we're going to disappoint them. When God looks small, other people start to look a whole lot bigger.

But when you know that God is great, other people start looking smaller. And you don't need them anymore to prop yourself up. And so, we need to recapture these three truths.

That God is great, God is good, and God is with us. And over the course of 2017, that's what we're going to learn from the book of Exodus. So, that's our preface.

And now, let's talk about our introduction as we lead into Exodus chapter 11. Because first, we need to recapture the truth that God is great. And I'm praying that the Lord has been doing that for you.

And if not, that he will begin to do so, as we look at Exodus chapter 11 today. This idea that God is great, that God is in a position of authority and control, that God is king, God is sovereign, that there is not an atom of the universe over which he does not exercise control and ownership and authority at all times.

[5 : 53] This idea is not a popular idea in our culture. We are suspicious of lines of authority, of lines of hierarchy. A lot of times we've seen them abused.

They rub us the wrong way. They infringe on our autonomy, on our individualism. Here's how a popular author put it a few years back in a book he wrote.

He said, Once you have a hierarchy, you need rules to protect and administer it. And then you need law and the enforcement of the rules. And you end up with some kind of chain of command or a system of order that destroys relationship rather than promotes it.

You rarely see or experience relationship apart from power. Hierarchy imposes laws and rules, and you end up missing the wonder of relationship that we intended for you.

So you'll notice a couple things in that quote. The first is that he views authority or structured authority, hierarchy, he views that as being antithetical to relationship.

[7 : 00] It's harmful to relationship. That you can't have love and authority at the same time. That they fight against one another. And the second is that he ends up by saying that you end up missing the wonder of the relationship that we intended for you.

And the we there is referring to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The words that this author wrote are words that he assigns to Jesus himself.

The book is *The Shack* by Paul Young that was released about nine, ten years ago and was recently remade into a movie. And it's important to understand that Paul Young himself, he has revealed that he suffered abuse.

He suffered abuse under an authority figure when he was a child. So it's not surprising. It's understandable that he finds authority so distasteful.

He's had bad experiences. But what Paul Young does is he throws the baby out with the bathwater. He's been hurt by authority.

[8 : 07] And so he thinks authority is bad. And that, what that does, that rejection of God's sovereignty, that rejection of God's authority, that it sort of worms its way throughout the rest of the book and takes the good things that are present in the book and it corrupts them all.

Thoroughly corrupts everything else in it. And it turns what could have been a good and healing book into a very bad thing, something that is dangerous. But the God that we encounter throughout Scripture, the God that we see in the person of Jesus Christ, the real Jesus that we encounter in the New Testament, the God that we see in the book of Exodus, this powerful God named Yahweh, this God is not a God who is afraid to show his authority.

He is a God who exercises his authority. And even in our culture, we do understand authority and hierarchy, not only are they a necessary thing, they're more than just a necessary evil.

But they could be good for us. In their proper place, they are good. This past week, I spoke with a couple of people, individuals who are not followers of Jesus Christ.

They're not Christians, but they spoke very highly of father figures, of mentors in their lives, of teachers who cultivated their desire to learn, of managers at their workplace who shared their knowledge, who taught them how to manage a business.

[9 : 31] Under the right sort of authority, you and I, we don't wither away. We don't lose the ability to love. Our relationships with others aren't damaged.

Rather, all of these things flourish under the right kind of authority. And so the idea of a God who is sovereign, that's not a bad thing.

That is a good thing, a very good thing. And it was especially a good thing for the people of Israel, people who were slaves, under an authority that was corrupted and cruel and abusive, under Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

But as we've seen in chapters 1 through 10 of Exodus, the Lord has shown his own authority, his own power, that he has over Pharaoh and over the whole earth.

And he's shown it through great plagues that he has inflicted on the land of Egypt to compel them to let the people of Israel go. And these great plagues have led to one final plague, which God now announces in chapter 11.

[10 : 39] Now, if you're using a blue Bible that one of our ushers handed out, you'll find that Exodus 11 is on page 53. Exodus chapter 11. The Lord said to Moses, Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt.

Afterward, he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. Speak now in the hearing of the people that they ask every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor for silver and gold jewelry.

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

So Moses said, Thus says the Lord, About midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die.

From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been nor ever will be again.

[11 : 54] But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, Get out, you and all the people who follow you. And after that, I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. But Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

This is the word of the Lord. So let's start here with the obvious. Obvious point number one, there is a sharp contrast here between the way the Lord treats the people of Israel and the way that the Lord treats Pharaoh and the people of Egypt.

So that comes out very clearly in verse seven, where the Lord says to Moses, the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

[13 : 05] So in verses one through three, especially, what we're going to see is that the Lord brings favor to his people. The Lord brings favor to his people.

And he shows his favor in three ways. So first, the Lord brings favor to his people by granting them freedom. By granting them freedom. So he tells Moses in verse one, Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt.

Afterward, he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. Pharaoh, up to this point, he has been believing, and he's been believing all evidence to the contrary, that he is sovereign, that he is the one who is in control.

Pharaoh is a cruel and evil sovereign. Pharaoh's controlling plan is to keep Israel enslaved. So the Lord is about to reveal that he is the one who is sovereign.

That he is the one who is in control. And the Lord's controlling grace, in contrast with Pharaoh's controlling plan, the Lord's controlling grace is to rescue his people out of their slavery to Pharaoh.

[14:20] So that they can serve him. Their good and caring master. Now when it comes to personal liberty, when it comes to freedom, people who live in western democracies, we have this understanding that this liberty, this freedom, it comes at a cost.

We have expressions, things that we say like, freedom is never free. This idea that you have to fight for it, you have to earn it. That's part of our mythos in western culture.

But we who are Christians, we have a different story to tell. God's freedom really is free. His freedom really is free.

The Lord tells Moses that Israel will not have to launch some sort of revolutionary war to gain their independence from Egypt. There is no need to fight for their freedom. Pharaoh is not only going to let them go.

He's going to drive them away completely. This is our heritage. This is our family history. This is our message of good news and freedom.

[15:33] We, the people of God, have been rescued from slavery by the unearned kindness of God. We have been granted our exodus through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who promised to free everyone who believes in him, to free us from the sin, from the enslaving corruption that controls us, that keeps us from following our good master.

Chapter 8. Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. You're a slave to those controlling patterns and habits and ways of thinking in your life.

And Jesus says, the slave does not remain in the house forever. The son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

If the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. So first, the Lord brings favor to his people by granting them freedom.

Now there's a second way that the Lord brings favor to his people. The Lord brings favor to his people by granting them funding. By granting them funding. So if they're going to break away from Egypt, if they're going to become a new and separate nation, the truth is the practical aspect of the matter is that they need financial capital.

[17:00] They need funding to support themselves and to support their worship of the Lord. So the Lord has a fundraising plan in place. And you see that in Exodus chapter 11 verse 2 where he says, speak now in the hearing of the people that they may ask every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor for silver and gold jewelry.

And don't you love it? That is the Lord's plan. The Lord's plan for getting the money that you need is you just ask for it. You go and ask your neighbors for it. Remember Pharaoh, king of Egypt, he has this controlling plan to keep Israel powerless and poor.

And he has made sure that they have very little to call their own. They've got nothing. And so the Lord is about to reveal that he is the one who is sovereign. He is the one who is in control.

And the Lord's controlling grace is to provide the wealth that they need to build a new nation. And they won't be working for that money.

They're going to go free from Egypt and Egypt is going to pay for it. There's no need even to hold any sort of bake sale. They don't have to sell cookies door to door. They just ask for the money and they get it.

[18:16] And this is our heritage. This is our message of good news and provision. That we, the people of God, we have been supplied all that we need.

All that we need by the unearned kindness of God. Because we have Jesus Christ, his Son, as our Lord and Savior.

The Apostle Paul, he writes in Philippians chapter 4, my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

There's no need to worry about where our food and our drink and our clothing and shelter is going to come from or what's going to happen to us tomorrow. Our Father is looking out for us.

So the Lord brings favor to his people by granting them freedom and by granting them funding. And then third, the Lord brings favor to his people by granting them fame. By granting them fame.

[19:20] Here's what we learn about Moses and about the people of Israel in verse 3. The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

So remember, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, he has this controlling plan. He's trying to keep Israel muzzled, to keep them suppressed. There's no free press. There's no one who's speaking up on

their behalf.

They have no ability to appeal their treatment, no ability to resist. And so the Lord is about to reveal that he is sovereign. He is the one who is in control. And the Lord's controlling grace is to give his people favor among the Egyptians and to give Moses a power and an influence, this fame that not only rivals but exceeds Pharaoh himself.

God's people, they don't need to raise awareness for their cause. To get political recognition, to run some sort of ad campaign, the Lord himself has already won their fame for them.

He has granted them influence. And this also is our heritage. This is our family history. This is our message of good news and favor.

[20 : 39] We, the people of God, have received a good name and influence by the unearned kindness of God. Why? Because we bear the name of Jesus Christ, his Son, as our Lord and Savior.

And not only in front of the world but much more so in front of God, our Father. That's the one name that truly matters. In Acts chapter 15, James, the brother of Jesus, reminds his fellow leaders, God visited the Gentiles.

That's you and me, most of us, those of us who aren't Jewish. God visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name.

that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord. And all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.

We have been given this immense privilege of bearing the name of Jesus Christ. We are invited to take advantage of that, to stand before God, and to pray in Jesus' name, to come before him in Jesus' name, to speak of Jesus' name.

[21 : 59] When you and I who are Christians, when we stand before God on the day of judgment, we won't be appealing to our own reputation, we won't be appealing to our own righteousness, like those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will be left to do.

We've got something so much better. We will plead the reputation, we will plead the only true righteousness there is, the only complete righteousness there is, the reputation, the righteousness, the goodness of Jesus Christ.

Because we are called by his name. And so we can look forward to eternal life, we can look forward to the good life in the presence of the Lord forever and ever. The Lord brings favor to his people by granting them freedom, funding, and fame.

And all of that is the good news that is obviously good news. There's no mistaking that for good news for those who believe. But now we are about to read good news that is going to sound at first a lot more like bad news.

The Lord brings favor to his people and ruin to his enemies. The Lord brings favor to his people and ruin to his enemies. That is what is going to happen to Pharaoh and to his Egyptian subjects.

[23 : 17] The Lord is going to bring ruin on them in two ways. And the first way is in Exodus chapter 11 verses 4 through 7. Moses said, Thus says the Lord, About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill and all the firstborn of the cattle.

There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt such as there has never been nor ever will be again. But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

God if we look at this with fresh eyes, some of us have been in church or in most of our lives, and maybe you've heard the story again and again and again until you stop letting this hit you on a gut level, on a visceral level.

This is a horrifying warning. The previous nine plagues, they were bad enough, but now the Lord himself is on his way.

He is arriving at midnight, and he is bringing ruin to his enemies first through the death of their firstborn, through the death of their firstborn. The firstborn are the future family leaders in Egypt.

[24 : 48] They carry on the family names. This last plague is this terrifying, this awful kind of event that other scriptures describe as the day of the Lord.

The day of the Lord, a time, an event when the Lord saves his people through judgment and wrath. An event that occurs throughout history and will culminate on the day when Jesus Christ returns to

earth to judge the living and the dead.

Now I've heard people of all sorts talk about how great it would be to have God here present with us. What if God was one of us? Wouldn't it be nice to have God here with us?

The prophet Amos warned his countrymen who had grown complacent, who oppressed the poor, he warned them about that sort of daydream, that wishful daydream that just thinks how great it would be if God came and was with me, in the style of the shack, and spoke to me, and I was able to relate to him.

Here's what Amos warned in chapter 5. He said, Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, in all the squares there shall be wailing, and in all the streets they shall say, Alas, alas, they shall call the farmers to mourning and to wailing, those who are skilled in lamentation, and in all vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through your midst, says the Lord.

[26 : 26] Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord. Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light, as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall and a serpent bit him.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? This perfectly describes what is about to happen.

The Lord will pass through the midst of Egypt. It will be darkness, midnight. It will lead to wailing, mourning, lamentation.

And this plague, the death of the firstborn, is so often, it should take our breath away. It should be like a kick in the gut.

Now, if you're listening to that, maybe you're thinking, how can we call this just? How can the Lord be right to do something like this, on that visceral level?

[27 : 44] It's hard. It's hard to affirm God. It's hard to become that the Lord is well within his rights to put human beings to death.

Even young children who played no part in oppressing the people of Israel. And that's hard to affirm. The reason it's hard to affirm is because you and I are used to thinking about other humans doing it.

We're used to thinking about other humans taking life, and we look at that and we say, that's playing God. Taking a life. That's playing God. That's correct.

That is exactly what it is. It is playing God. And the Lord is right to do it because he is God. In Genesis chapter 2, we read, the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature.

So the Lord grants the breath of life. He graciously grants it. It is not something that we have earned. It is not something that is owed to us. He grants it as a gift.

[28 : 59] And what the Lord gives, he can choose to take it away. He can choose to take that life away to demonstrate his just and appropriate wrath against the human sin and corruption.

That is rebellion against his sovereign authority and that brings harm to the people that he loves. the Lord is doing this to show his wrath against Pharaoh for his campaign of murder and oppression.

Against Pharaoh who chooses to play God by taking human life. Pharaoh who is making an arrogant claim to divine sovereignty. And so the Lord decrees that he himself is going to visit Egypt and his judgment will be so thorough that from the palace of Pharaoh all the way down to the hut of the lowest slave even out into the fields of Egyptian cattle.

Not even the animals escape. Not a household will escape this final plague of death. As the Israelites cried out. They were crying out for many years under the oppression of the Egyptians and now the Egyptians will be the ones who cry out in sorrow.

But even through this the Lord promises to preserve his own firstborn son to preserve dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel either man or beast.

[30 : 27] Not even their animals are going to come to harm during this tenth and final plague on this day of the Lord. And this is also our heritage.

This is our family history. This is our message of salvation through judgment. We the people of God will be saved on the great and final day of the Lord Jesus Christ returns because we have been united to Jesus Christ by faith.

And so the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or

asleep, we might live with him.

And that's important to remember. the supremacy of all earthly kings and nations, the dominion of the devil himself, they will all come to an end, they will all be wiped off the map on that great day of the Lord that is coming.

And every man and every woman on earth is going to recognize willingly or not that Jesus Christ is Lord. It'll be just as Moses promises the Egyptian officials what they're going to do in Exodus chapter 11 verse 8.

[31 : 54] All these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me saying, get out you and all the people who follow you and after that I will go out. so not only will the Lord bring ruin to his enemies through the death of their firstborn but the Lord is bringing ruin to his enemies through the destruction of Pharaoh's supremacy through the destruction of Pharaoh's supremacy the commentator Douglas Stewart writes about this promise from Moses Moses words paint an image of the royal officials abandoning their Pharaoh that is when Moses would leave Egypt when the king's policies have been proved worthless by their abandonment even at the hands of people supposedly the closest and most loyal to him so Pharaoh's officials they will abandon him they are going to come crawling on hands and knees to Moses because they no longer report to the great king of

Egypt they report to Moses the man of God Pharaoh is going to be left alone in his palace desolate helpless and humiliated ruined by God forsaken by his countrymen in light of that judgment in light of Pharaoh's fate let us take care to approach this God this our God with reverent fear because we know that the Lord not only brings favor to his people but he brings ruin to his enemies in this case through the death of their firstborn and the destruction of Pharaoh's supremacy now this should lead us then to ask why is the Lord doing all this why would God go to such great lengths to bring favor to his people why would

God take such drastic measures to bring ruin to his enemies maybe some people would say well who knows who can understand what the Lord is doing God is distant God is far away we don't we can't read his mind the world seems confusing and unknowable maybe his motives and his will are so inscrutable that we're never going to have any insight into why God chooses to act as he does real life sometimes seems like that but God's word gives us guidance and shows us the way that he works in the world and the Lord himself tells us in his word why he acts with favor and ruin why he acts with love and wrath in verses 9 and 10 we read a summary we read an explanation of all that has taken place so far in the book of Exodus the Lord said to Moses Pharaoh will not listen to you that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of

Egypt Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land so what we find is a God who is in complete sovereign command throughout this entire confrontation with Pharaoh the Lord brings favor to his people and ruin to his enemies in order to affirm his sovereignty in order to affirm his sovereignty these actions confirm his sovereignty in two ways first they affirm his sovereignty by multiplying miracles by multiplying miracles in verse nine the Lord he explicitly tells Moses that that is why he is acting as he does Pharaoh will not listen to you that in order that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt so Pharaoh not listening is part of

God's plan so on the one hand with each of these ten plagues the Lord has included for Pharaoh an opportunity to repent an opportunity to turn from his resistance to God's will an opportunity to let the people of Israel go and the fact that Pharaoh has refused at every single turn makes it look like God is failing again and again and again and again and it's not working but on the other hand Pharaoh's resistance is not a failure not on God's part because God has fully intended from the beginning to multiply these wonders in the land of Egypt God is not coming up with a plan B and a plan C and a plan D on the fly God doesn't even do plan B because his plan A always accomplishes exactly what he intends God's miracles have demonstrated the

[37 : 06] Lord's supremacy over all of the false gods of Egypt over all of their supposedly divine son Pharaoh king of Egypt the Lord affirms his sovereignty by multiplying miracles and second the Lord affirms his sovereignty by maneuvering Pharaoh himself in verse 10 we read a phrase and this is a phrase that we encountered all the way back in chapter 4 we encountered again and again through the first nine plagues the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land we saw in the nine plagues over and over again the statements made that Pharaoh hardened his heart Pharaoh's heart was hardened the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and

those three statements mixed all together we were reminded of Proverbs chapter 21 verse 1 the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord he turns it wherever he will he turns it wherever he will and we learn then how this is entirely just when we looked at this in chapter 4 we learned how this is entirely just for

God to do and how this demonstrates God's love for his firstborn son his love for the people of Israel his love for the true Israel the man Jesus Christ and his love for you and me who have been included into God's people who have been united with Jesus Christ by faith and somehow and I don't know that I really have the answer or that there is even necessarily an answer that you and I can comprehend somehow I can't explain how God's offered a Pharaoh to end these plagues every single time God has offered it has been a completely sincere and real offer Pharaoh is over and over presented with a real choice that he is really responsible for making and every time that Pharaoh hardens his heart and refuses to let the people go he is doing exactly what he wants to do and he is responsible for that decision and yet at the same time

Pharaoh's resistance has been decreed it has been ensured by a sovereign God who exercises complete command of every atom of the universe he created and over Pharaoh himself human beings make real choices for which they are truly responsible and at the same time God is completely sovereign including over those choices and the Lord affirms his sovereignty by maneuvering Pharaoh king of Egypt this is a tension you might call it a paradox I've seen it called an antinomy divine sovereignty on the one hand human responsibility on the other hand both are affirmed over and over in scripture sometimes affirmed within within a breath of one another and many theologians they're uncomfortable with this this doesn't make sense to them and they want to try to resolve it neatly and in a way that makes us feel like we've got this under control like we've got God figured out and the way we can resolve it neatly in two ways we can either try to limit or curtail divine sovereignty by saying

God is just figuring this out as he goes along or by saying that you know God is just kind of allowing these things to happen but he's not really planning them that runs contrary to everything we've seen in the book of Exodus or maybe we try to curtail this to limit human responsibility by saying yeah God's in control and people are just kind of you know he's just making them do all this stuff and there are people out there who kind of have this fatalistic view of life who view themselves as not really responsible for what's happening we are not meant to resolve this tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility we're meant to embrace it you and I are meant to consider to contemplate God's sovereignty to marvel at it to even to enjoy it to be comforted that our God who brings favor to his people and ruin to his enemies he does it in order that we may see and savor his sovereignty that's what we've been reading as we memorize psalm 103 together as a church psalm 103 verses 6 and 7 the lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed he made known his ways to

Moses his acts to the people of Israel and verses 2 through 5 bless the lord oh my soul and forget not all his benefits who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles by knowing the ways of the lord and his acts that we have seen in the book of exodus you receive the benefits in your soul of a god who is good he satisfies you he renews you and you and I find the good life that we've been missing when rather than avoiding the sovereignty of the lord we're trying to fix it instead we see it and we savor it and because the lord is not only sovereign the lord is sincere I want to stand here and urge anyone who doesn't believe in his son Jesus Christ to urge you with the words of

[43 : 11] Jesus Christ the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel don't persist any longer in this choice that you have been making that you have already made and are continuing in don't persist any longer in that real choice that you've made to reject the lord or to hold him at arm's length embrace the sovereign authority believe in the death and resurrection of a son believe that he lived died and rose again for you believe and pronounce that belief publicly by being baptized so that you can join us in proclaiming that the lord brings favor to his people and ruin to his enemies in order to affirm his sovereignty especially