

SERMON STUDY SUMMARY

OUR SOVEREIGN GOD Part 2

Speaker: Dr. Henry Schorr

September 24 / 25, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Children choose what LEGO pieces they want when building something. Similarly, many adults construct God in the way they want rather than acknowledging God as He is. In Paul's time, the Jews approved a holy and just God but stumbled on God being gracious; grace for the undeserving was simply too easy. In Romans 9, Paul unpacks truths about the sovereignty of God that they, and we, need to understand and accept. God's sovereignty means that:

1. **God has the right to choose who He will work through to accomplish His purposes.** (See Part 1)
2. **God has the right to bless whoever He wishes to accomplish His purposes.** Romans 9:14-16, referring earlier to God choosing Jacob and rejecting Esau, highlights that neither deserved God's mercy. God was under no obligation to bless either man.
 - a. **God has the right to bless, empower, and work through whomever He wants to** (9:20-21). By us questioning God, we position ourselves as greater than God. Our word becomes the standard. The problem is evident: We are not God and chaos results when we think we are.
 - b. **God blesses people differently for a purpose** – that His children be restored to right relationship with Himself. Therefore, He chooses and blesses people to be channels of His love and influence in the lives of people who need the Lord. We are given gifts and talents to introduce people to Jesus within our unique sphere of influence, using what we are given by God diligently and wisely rather than comparing and competing with one another.
3. **God has the right to have mercy on whom He wants and to harden the heart of whom He wants** (9:17). Pharaoh was purposely chosen to bring glory to God as God displayed His power through Pharaoh to be seen by the known world – not to make a mockery of him. Pharaoh was hard-hearted going into the Exodus story. Each plague was an opportunity for Pharaoh to humble himself. God gave Pharaoh over to the choices of his own heart to travel the well-worn path Pharaoh was already taking. By continually rejecting God (Romans 1) Pharaoh's own choices hardened his heart. Through the consequences of Pharaoh's choices, God showed the rest of the world that He is God, and that Pharaoh was not. Imagine the impression Pharaoh would have had on the watching world witnessing the miracle of Pharaoh denouncing the gods of Egypt and worshipping the true God (2 Pet 3:9). The plagues would have been unnecessary. As with Pharaoh, God extends mercy and grace to all, wanting everyone to come to Him in repentance (9:24-29), justifying those who respond (8:30).
4. **God does give us a measure of freedom** (9:19). Pharaoh had freedom of choice. As do we (John 1:12), but not complete freedom. For example, you can do what you choose on a cruise ship, but you cannot alter the ship's destination. We cannot change God's purposes, plans or principles. Only God has complete freedom (Isaiah 55:8-9). In the end we will all give an account to God for what we did with Jesus and with what He gave us. We will reap what we sow.
5. **God's sovereignty means that God's way is trustworthy** (9:14). God may not treat us all the same, but He will not treat us in a wrong way (James 1:13-14)

We can either stand on the rock (Jesus), trusting Him, knowing we can't make it on our own, or stumble over Him (9:30-33, Isaiah 28:16). Those who trust in Him will never be put to shame.

SERMON STUDY GUIDE

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is the first birthday party that you recall, be it yours or another's? What made it memorable?
2. When you disagree with someone in authority do you find it easier to submit or rebel (be honest)? Why?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 9:14-18 and 2 Peter 3:9

3. The incident between Pharaoh and the Israelites could be considered unfair. Does God play favorites in this event? Why or why not? How do you reconcile this event with 2 Peter 3:9?

Read Romans 9:19-33

4. In this passage find instances where God displays His sovereignty, His mercy and grace, our freedom to choose, and final consequences of choosing or rejecting God.

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. God uses people to reveal His power and glory (Romans 9:17) eg. Pharaoh in Exodus and Paul on the road to Damascus. What God-honoring changes do you need to make to allow God to display His power and glory through you?
6. "God's sovereignty means that God's way is trustworthy" – Pastor Henry. For you what does it look like to rest in the sovereignty of God?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

God gives each of us a choice to follow or not to follow Him. The consequences of our choices will either soften or harden our hearts. Consider your recent choices. Have they moved you closer to God or farther from Him? Have they pursued the righteousness that Jesus has demonstrated? Write out Romans 9:17 with your name in place of Pharaoh's. Post it where you can read it every day this week to remind yourself of God working in you.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 9:14 - 24, 30 - 33

¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. ¹⁷ For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

¹⁹ One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" ²⁰ But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" ²¹ Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

²² What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— ²⁴ even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Israel's Unbelief

³⁰ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall,
and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame."

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

This week's writers: Gene Gibbs, David McMillin, Karen Gibbs, Jem Ong, Jared Harrison and Jorel Quemuel