

## Monday, FEBRUARY 1, 2010

Every human heart rumbles in turmoil. On the one hand we each want total freedom to be, do, think and say whatever we desire. On the other hand we are constrained by expectations, culture appropriateness, rules and regulations...even our own fear of failure or shame. On the one hand, we want someone to protect us, provide for us, care for us...on the other hand we want the freedom to live life without help or constraint from anyone. This week we're Discovering that God Reigns. It's a fact and affects everything, everyone, everywhere at all times. This "rumble of the dis-contented heart" is found in every stage of life, but seems to find most outrageous expression in our teen years, right? This week, our teens help us look at ourselves...

*"The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad...righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne."* (Psalm 97:1,2) I invite you to ponder the Psalms 90-100 this week. Read/study them at your pace. Notice their pre-occupation with the majesty, sovereignty...the REIGN of God! Make some notes of what you see and sense the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about Him!

By God's Sovereign design, His Reign is not smothering, does not force us into servitude but rather enables humanity to live remarkably free, self-determining lives! In fact, much of God's Sovereignty focuses on providing an environment for safe, sustained, free living! Begin making a list of all God has done to provide a "freedom" environment in which you can live with little attention to sustaining that remarkable environment. Consider: predictable and carefully controlled atmospheric conditions provide gravity, breathable air, exact time, day/night, rain/sunshine, controlled temperatures...all required for life. We've learned we can't sustain life off this planet or at some of the harsh locations of this planet (deserts, both poles, high mountains, under water, etc).

It's important we understand God continually exercises His Sovereign authority over all He has created in order to provide humanity all we need to "live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:15,28); but it's all for God's glory! Consider Isaiah 40 and Colossians 1:15-17...ponder it deeply!

## Tuesday, FEBRUARY 2, 2010

Yesterday we celebrated God's Sovereign control over our universe which provides us a predictable and wonderful environment in which to live. Today, we need to consider the other side of the coin...a planet which sometimes seems out of control! Volcanoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, and many more "natural disasters" have massive destructive force and often kill many people. How does that fit with God's reign?

When God completed His creative work, the Bible says "God saw all that He had made and it was very good." (Gen. 1:31) Perfect in every way! We don't know how long it existed in that state, but then came Genesis chapter 3...Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve who were living in this remarkably perfect place and perfect relationship with God. Their decision to believe the serpent, reject God's guidelines, take of the tree He had forbidden them...was an open invitation to Satan and all His destructive evil. Our planet, the human race, our relationship with God and everything else God made wonderful was changed in that experience, and we live with the results of that disaster, everyday. God's justice response (Genesis 3:9-24) resulted in dramatic change for Adam, Eve, Satan and our planet.

Clearly there have been times when God has poured out judgment upon humanity through cataclysmic events...the global flood (Genesis 6); Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19); the earth's split (Numbers 16:31). Jesus predicted many "natural disasters" (Matt. 24:7). But consider please, Romans 8:18-23. Notice Paul's description of creation "waiting in eager expectation" and "groaning". Our planet is in "bondage to decay" (vs.21) which began when God "cursed" its perfection in Genesis 3 and evil took up residence here (1 John 5:19). The "glorious freedom" creation awaits is similar to what we have experienced with Christ...rescue from sins curse and promise of resurrected, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15). Rev. 21 speaks of a new heaven and earth. God will restore this planet! Do you see the comparison Paul makes between our broken, sin filled lives and our planet's decay...and our wonderful justification, sanctification and soon glorification in God's presence without sin...and a new earth? God's reign over planet earth includes hope for its renewal!

## Wednesday, FEBRUARY 3, 2010

Thus far we've focused on God's reign over creation while allowing the decaying affects of evil upon this planet He had created perfect. Today, let's look at God's reign over beings created in His image...humanity. Have you considered what God meant when He said "Let Us create man in Our image and likeness." (Gen. 1:26)? And how did Adam and Eve's rejection of God change the "image of God" in us? Genesis 3 has part of the answer, and the disaster of Genesis 4 shows the horrible demise of a good family when evil runs rampant.

Consider Romans 3:12-21. Do you see the result of Adam's sin on your life and mine...we are born with a sin nature and born condemned! However, Psalm 139, Jeremiah 1:5, Isaiah 46:3,4 also tell us God conceives us, designs and forms us, births us, and sustains our lives by His Sovereign involvement in our lives. We understand, of course, we don't create or sustain ourselves. While we nourish our bodies, God authors and sustains life...right? It's Acts 17:25,28 "*He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else...for in Him we live and move and have our being.*" So how do we balance God's Sovereignty, your free will and independence, the 'curse' of sin, and the influence of Satan's evil reign? It is very complex isn't it friends?

If God reigns Sovereign over your existence...then what about disease, accidents, deformities, and all manner of broken lives? If God entrusts to you total freedom to think, reason, choose, decide, act...yet if you and I live under the profound influence of rampant evil in our world (1 John 5:19), and a sin nature deep within us...but at the same time the Holy Spirit of God is convicting us of sin (John 16:8) and drawing us to God (John 6:44) how do these converging forces balance? Are we responsible for our actions, or does God's Sovereignty over-ride our freedom? What has God shown you to be His truth? Consider the story of Joseph, and his statement in Gen. 45:4-11; or the story of Job or Jonah. Consider the blind man in John 9:1-11. Why does Jesus say this man was born blind? Do you see this in Joni Erickson Tada's life? How does that fit with Romans 8:28? How can God be fully Sovereign and permit evil to flourish in our world and damage precious lives? Grasp Isaiah 46:8-13!

Thursday, FEBRUARY 4, 2010

Yesterday I challenged you to wrestle with God's Sovereignty over sinful humanity! I realize we couldn't possibly cover it all. Did you come to truth conclusions? Today, consider God's Reign over the angelic world. Before Genesis 1, God had created a kingdom of holy angels. Rebellion broke out (Ezekiel 28:12-17; Isaiah 14:12-15) and God threw out of heaven Satan and the angels under his influence (Luke 10:18). This evil kingdom of "fallen angels" has been in total opposition to God, God's purposes and God's people ever since...and will be until Jesus Christ finally executes His victorious judgment upon them (Revelation 20:10).

Understand Satan's very nature is deceit (John 8:44), and his tactics/schemes (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 11:14) are aimed at your mind by distorting truth, your heart by tempting you to turn from contentment in God, and your soul by drawing you to rebellion against God and His holiness.

Some of Satan's tactics are listed in several places as warnings to God's people...(Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Colossians 3:5-8). Also, Deuteronomy 18:9-13 is a strong caution against anything to do with the occult.

Now...what about God's reign over all this darkness? Consider Mark 1:21-27; 5:1-20; 9:14-27. What do you see about Jesus' authority over evil spirits who demonize people? Consider Matthew 4:1-11. What did Jesus use as His primary defense against Satan's attack? Consider Philippians 2:9-11 and Colossians 1:13-22 and 2:8-10, 15. What about the supremacy of Jesus Christ over Satan, the demons and dark kingdom? Do you see that your identity in Christ is your strength and no power is greater than Jesus? Do you see Jesus' identity as fully God and His full atonement death and victorious resurrection defeats Satan for all time? Do you understand Jesus' present role in heaven is countering the accusations of Satan as Jesus is our advocate, our High Priest and our Intercessor (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3; 4:14-16; 7:24,25; 9:24-27; 10:19-23; 12:1,2!)?

Finally, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to His living authority as the risen Christ now reigning in glory (1 Cor. 15:13,14,17-27; Eph. 1:19-23)...celebrate the reigning Christ!

Friday, FEBRUARY 5, 2010

Wow, what a week we've had in celebration of God's reign over creation, humanity, the angelic kingdoms and now today, over the future!

You'll recall God's oft quoted promise to His people Israel when they were living in judgment exile (Jeremiah 29:11-14). God did bring them back in a most remarkable way as Cyrus issued a decree not only encouraging their return but blessing them with finances to rebuild God's temple (Ezra 1)!

Speaking through Isaiah (Is. 46:11-13) God makes it clear He has an overall purpose and He will not allow that purpose to be thwarted! Through all generations, of course, that purpose is Isaiah 43:11,25; 45:22; and 2 Peter 3:9 "He is not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance." But that offer stands available to us only during our human lifetime. Once death separates soul/spirit from body, no second chance is available (Heb. 9:27).

Also, this "window of God's grace" will last only until God draws time as we know it to a close and brings every human being who has ever lived to a day of reckoning! Yes, there will be a time in history when history stands in accountability before God. Consider 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27; and Revelation 20:11-15. What do you see? Your name is irreversibly scribed into the "book of life" at the time of your redemption and adoption into God's family (Rom. 8:14-17). Sins of the redeemed are under the blood of Christ and separated from us (Psalm 103:12; Is. 43:25; Heb. 8:12; 10:10, 19-23; 2 Cor. 5:21), thus as Christians stand before Jesus Christ it is a moment of celebration of His justification of us, we stand forgiven and loved, absolutely certain of our eternity with Him.

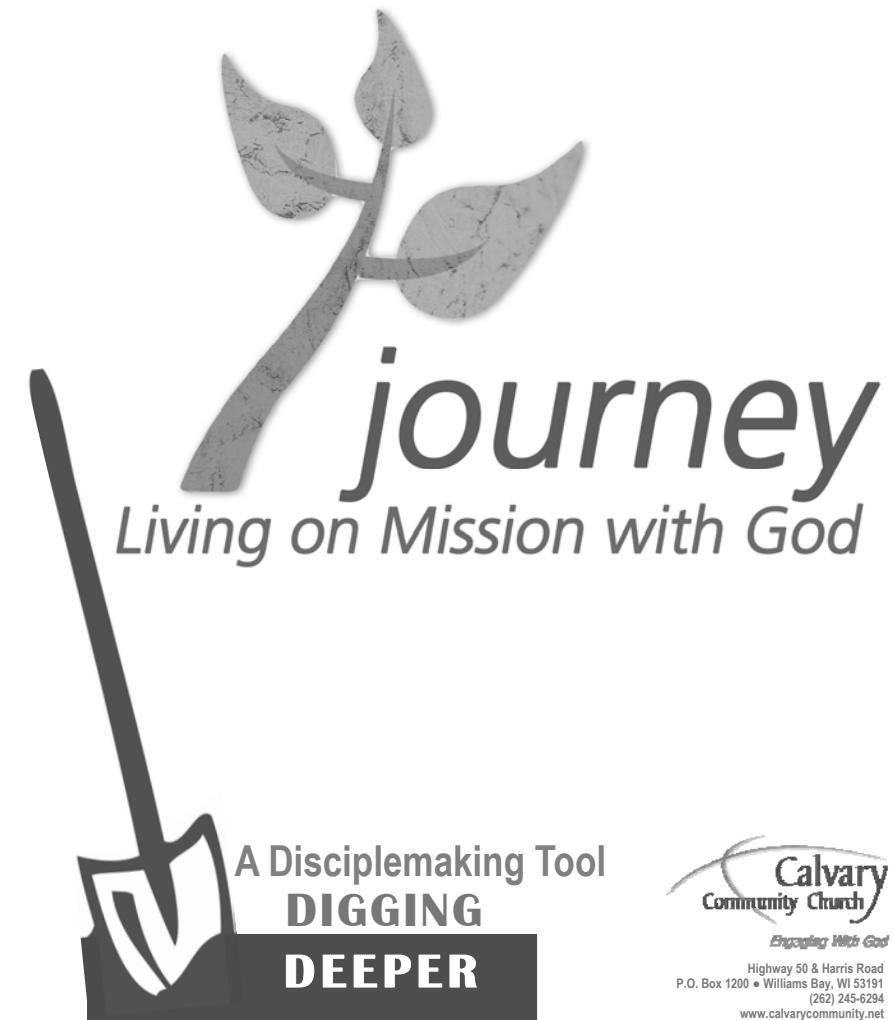
Others...those who have not trusted in God's full atonement offer of salvation, those who have not repented of sin and turned to Jesus Christ, those who have trusted in themselves or anything else...will find themselves turned away into an eternity apart from God. More than that, into an eternity of pain and suffering! (Rev. 20:15; Rom. 2:5-7). If you have any doubt about your eternal destiny, I and others at Calvary welcome the chance to help you. Contact us, let us help you know Jesus!



Pastor Doug Anderson


FEBRUARY 1 - 5, 2010

## Discovering God Reigns



*journey*  
Living on Mission with God

A Disciplemaking Tool  
**DIGGING**  
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