

Perhaps one of the most challenging truths that I've had to deal with as a believer – I've been a believer – I said this last week, I believe – I've been a believer most of my life. And so one of the challenging things that I've had to deal with is God's sovereignty, that God is in control of everything.

And so what this does when we have this understanding, it really is the crux of how I view suffering, how I view injustice, how I view calamity, how I view good or bad, and most of all how I view God, because if you don't believe that God is a sovereign God, I would argue that you do not believe that the Bible shows who he is.

Okay, the sovereign God is the God of the Bible. And what we believe at Integrity, we believe in the God of the Bible. We think that the God of the Bible is a big God, okay? Follow me there? He's a big God. The God that we often make up in our minds, the one who is subject to our emotions, the one who is subject to our experience, the one who is subject to our feelings, that is a very small God. So we don't worship the God that is subject to our emotions and feelings.

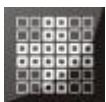
And so let's just say this for a moment. What if God was subject to our emotions and our feelings? What if God was subject only to the things that make sense to us? Then what would that make us? It would make us God, and it would make him a genie. And it would make him a servant who worships our thoughts and our ideas above his own.

And so we would say, and we would argue that the God of the Bible is going to challenge us in certain ways and take us places that, honestly, you and I just don't want to go, all right? And so I want you to walk away here this morning knowing that the God of the Bible is a big God. And the God of the Bible is a God of love. And the God of the Bible is one that we ought to worship, because we believe that he is holy and above all things. All right, you want to do that this morning? You guys ready for that? Good, that's one girl. She's ready for that.

And so what we're going to see is this God that is sovereign over all things. Here's what Scripture lays out. You have God who comes in the form of a man into human history. That's why we celebrate Christmas, by the way. The man is Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. And it says later on in John 1:18 that the Word became flesh, and he dwelt among us.

And so what you have is God who comes into human form in the form of a man. And he lives a perfect, sinless life. He empties himself of some of his divine attributes. You'll see this. We'll dive into this with Luke. So he empties himself of some of the divine attributes, but he also empties himself of some of his human attributes.

So what you have, you have a God who – for instance, let me just give you an example. His human attributes, there's time where Jesus – he is the God-man. He is fully God, fully man, 100% God, 100% man. What you see is there's some times that he is tired, right? Is that a human attribute, or is that a divine attribute? That's a human attribute. And you have sometimes that he's thirsty. You have that he walks everywhere that he goes. Okay, so he's not omnipresent like God is. He can't be everywhere at



once. He has to walk everywhere he goes. He has to take a boat. He has to take a donkey, right? This is a human attribute.

You have Jesus who's tempted, except for he's tempted and he doesn't sin. So he's tempted, and that's something that every man goes through, every woman goes through.

So at some points, he is human, and then other times he shows his divine attributes. He has the power to forgive sin. None of us have the power to forgive sin. Only God can do that. You have him who reads people's minds. Anybody in here mind readers? Mind readers? He's answering questions before someone can even – someone's thinking a question, and he answers it. How would you like to do that? How would you like to be in the presence of Jesus and he's like, "Yeah, I know what you're thinking. Yeah, Duke's going to win," right? And you know that's a lie. So here you have him able to perform miracles whenever he wants. He can control nature. Any nature controllers in here? No.

Okay, so here's the thing. Jesus comes, and he is fully God, fully man. And here's what you notice about Jesus. It wasn't Jesus' human attributes that people had a problem. It was Jesus' divine attributes that they had a problem with. People struggled with Jesus when he proclaimed to be God. So it wasn't this, "Oh, he's this great humanitarian, and he just did so many wonderful things for so many people. And now they just want to kill him for just no reason, and how mean people are."

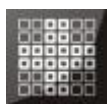
No, it's when he came into human history and said, "I and the Father are one." And then, he would speak as God would speak. And it was his divine presence that people struggled with. And so it's very important that we see this, because what we would see in the text, and what we're going to see here is that the people who doubted and struggled was when they really struggled with God face-to-face right in front of them. And they struggled with a God who is sovereign over all things.

And I think this is where we struggle. I think this is where we have challenges, when we are faced with a God who is Sovereign over all. So let's get into the text, Luke 8. Luke 8:19 here's what we have.

¹⁹ Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you."

Now, Jesus, he just finishes preaching this message where he's sharing parables to multitudes of people. And what it says he's doing here – and this is all Luke 8 – he is teaching in such a way that his disciples are understanding the mysteries of salvation and how God is going to save some, and there will be some who will not hear what God says and who will totally reject because their hearts are hardened to Christ.

And so what he does is he's speaking, and he's drawing in multitudes of people that are just anxious to hear what he has to say, maybe to argue it, maybe to reject it, maybe to accept it and delight in it, maybe just because he did miracles and they wanted to be healed. We're not exactly sure of all the different crowds that he drew, but we knew that he drew crowds.



So here you have Jesus. He has a mother, and he has brothers. Which by the way, just as a side note, we believe here at Integrity in the virgin birth. We believe that Jesus gave birth to Jesus – Mary gave birth to Jesus – bad theology there. Mary gave birth to Jesus as a virgin, meaning he did not have the curse of sin brought onto his birth. So he was able to live a perfect, sinless life through that because he wasn't born in the curse of sin.

We believe that, but we don't believe that Mary stayed a virgin forever. Catholics will believe that Mary stayed a virgin forever, that she was a perpetual virgin. Now, this is problematic because he's got brothers, right? Like, do we need to know where babies come from? Do we need to have that talk?

Okay, so he's got brothers. He's got a mother. And here you have him. They're trying to reach him. They're trying to figure out how they can bring him in. So we're not exactly sure why he does this, but like Mark's Gospel it tells a story where Jesus is appointing 12 disciples. And what they're trying to do is they're trying to get him to eat, because they're like, "You know, you've been working really hard."

Jesus wasn't this lazy peasant like we think he is, but Jesus was actually a really hard worker. And he was actually preaching and going and traveling a lot. So they're like, "You know, you should eat. You should eat." And what they do, and what you often see his brothers and sisters do, they challenge him to do things, but then he'll show some of his divine attributes meaning that he's only submissive to the Father.

So here's what they say in Mark's Gospel, Mark 3:21:

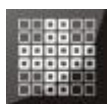
*And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying,
"He is out of his mind."*

And I want you to see this, because this is Jesus' brother and his mother trying to get Jesus to eat as he's speaking, as he's traveling. And they're saying, "You know what? He's not eating. He's out of his mind. He's crazy. He's crazy."

And so you see even his brothers. They don't even believe him. If you look in John's Gospel, his brothers are consistently seeing miracles happen right in front of their face. And they're confronted with the God who is sovereign over all, and they don't even believe him until Acts. Acts 1:14, when they began to see him, it says that when they began to see him, when they devoted themselves to prayer together, the woman Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

So then in Acts 1 is the first time we actually see his brothers believe him. That's after he died and resurrected. So while Jesus is on earth, his brothers had hardened hearts that God had hardened their hearts for a season until they would finally believe after he ascended to heaven, after he resurrected from the grave. Then they believed.

So what does that say about us? If his own brothers are struggling with the God who is sovereign over all, what does that say about us? Think we might have some trouble with Jesus, right?



And so here's what you see. Jesus is talking here, and his brothers say, "Okay, we've got to go get the crazy brother and go try to get him to eat, try to pull him away, so that he can get some rest. And let's just look at Jesus' response.

²¹But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

And so, by the way, Jesus receives this message in a very natural way, meaning that he does it in the form of a man, because like I said, he has the ability to read minds. So he's not like, "I think my mother and brothers want to see me." They actually come to him and tell him, so this is him receiving this as a man, but listen to how he responds. He says, "Listen, my mother and brother are those who love the Word of God and respond to it."

So what he does. He's not disrespecting his mother. He's not disrespecting his brothers in any way. Actually, you see it even on the cross where Jesus is crucified, he provides a place for his mother to live. She was likely a widow at the time of his death. And so Jesus is providing for her a place that she might live.

So Jesus does not disrespect his mom. He doesn't disrespect his brothers. He didn't disrespect his father when Jesus had him as an earthly father. But what you see here is Jesus is showing this distinction between a physical family and a spiritual family. You get that? He's showing this major distinction here of, "Yes, you are my brother, my earthly brother, but there are brothers and there are fathers and there are mothers and there are sisters that I would call because they love God and they respond to God."

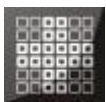
Now, just like all of us, the Bible says that we're adopted by the Father. And just like all of us, we are brothers and sisters if we are adopted by our Father, by the one true Father, the God. Isn't that great? We can all sit here brothers and sisters, listen and hear, and worship together, take communion together, give together. That's a privilege that God gives us that we can be a part of a spiritual family.

And so what you see throughout the Gospels is Jesus is saying this, because what Jesus has is this zeroed in affection for God the Father. Jesus' desire above all things is to obey his Father. Okay, you guys got that? Okay, John 17:4, this is his high priestly prayer.

⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

And so his family is listening to this and saying, "Listen, why doesn't this guy eat? This doesn't make sense to me. Why doesn't he take rest? This doesn't make sense to me." And the reason why Jesus is saying these bold words to his mom and his brothers is because his affection is not to please them, is not to obey them necessarily, but his affection above all things is to obey the commands of the Father that he might be glorified above all on earth.

So his zeroed-in affection is only for the Father. That's his mission. That's his mission. By the way, he went to the cross for you and me, not just to save you and me, but he did it to obey and glorify the



Father. So the story is not really about us even. It's not even about us. It's about Jesus the son lives to glorify his Father. That's the Gospel. And we become benefactors of that, because through that we're saved. Isn't that great? That's good news, right? That's good news.

And so here you have Jesus. He is confusing to his brothers and his mom. And so you say – this is what I see often. We struggle with God, and we say, "Well, I don't understand this about God, so it must not be true." You ever hear that? "Well, this doesn't make sense to me, so I totally reject this about God." You ever hear people say that?

So his brothers didn't even understand him. Listen, his brothers didn't even understand him. So can it be possible that God does things that you and I wouldn't do? Is that possible? Can we admit that maybe God being the creator over all things, being sovereign over all things, that maybe, just maybe, his plans are bigger than ours? Can we say that?

Okay, so what you have here is Jesus who has his brothers, his mom – they don't understand him. They don't get him. But his plan is bigger, because he's looking at the affections and the praise and the glory of his Father. That's most important. That's primary to him, and so they benefit from that. Do they not benefit from that?

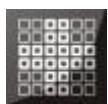
And so maybe God's ways are not our ways, and that's a really good thing. And so what we're going to find here later in the text is some challenging things, but they're good things, because we're seeing a God who's in control and that we're not. Okay, Verse 22:

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.

Now, this is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is traveling across it. We know that this is the Sea of Galilee, because it's mentioned in two other Gospels. And so this is a several-mile-long sea, and it was just a few miles wide. So it was a pretty easy trek across to get across. And what we know about it is it was just like a tunnel for really bad storms to happen. Many people lost their lives going across the Sea of Galilee, because it was so random often that when people were traveling across it just out of nowhere, "Here's a thunderstorm. We just got to deal with it," right?

So what you have here is Jesus who is on this boat with these fishermen. These are professional fishermen, okay? Now, this is like *Deadliest Catch*. Jesus is all of the sudden on the board of *Deadliest Catch*.

Which by the way, how does that show still stay on? Like, it's the same show. Like, I feel like it's *Zoolander*. It's the same look. It really is the same show over and over again, but it's amazing. I'm still captivated by this show. And it's like this guy's gonna get his arm caught in this thing, and they've got the crab, and then the ship's – it's just amazing. Like, we still are captivated by this thing. It's like six years ago when that thing came?



Anyway, so Jesus is on this ship, and it's saying that the storm is so bad that the water – it's actually a boat. The water is coming in this boat, and it's a small boat. This ain't like *Deadliest Catch* in the scale of the ship. It's a boat. And so Jesus in the midst of this storm falls asleep.

And some people are trying to figure that out, by the way. They're like, "Okay, Jesus fell asleep, because he didn't have sin, and so he didn't have the anxiety that we have." So he had this inner peace that we can't understand. That's possible. That's very possible. It could be possible that he was just really tired, because he was working really hard, and so he just fell asleep because of that. It could be possible that his ways are not our ways, and we just don't understand why Jesus would sleep during a storm, which I would say it's Number 3.

And so you have Jesus. He's sleeping, and then what happens next is very strange, because these disciples are very confused about what's happening here. Verse 24:

²⁴And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was calm. ²⁵He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

Other Gospels say that Jesus stood up, and he said, "Peace, be still," and everything was still. And so you have these veterans at sea who were suddenly amazed because the creator gets up and commands the creation to be still. So suddenly, these guys are shocked at what's taking place here. Countless times in the New Testament, you see Jesus pictured as the one whom the universe was created. Like, Colossians 1, he holds what? All things together. He holds all things together.

And so you have this Christ who is over nature, over all things. And he says to them, "Where is your faith? Nature doesn't catch me by surprise. Don't you know that I'm the creator of all things? Don't you know that this does not surprise me that I could sleep during this because I'm actually in control of it? Don't you know that? Don't you realize that?"

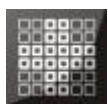
And so if we think for a moment, if God is in control of nature, that means every single hurricane that has been hit in North Carolina was done by the direct hands of Christ. Do we believe that he holds all things together? Do we believe that?

Okay, what about every single beautiful sunrise and sunset that we see? He holds all things together. Nothing happens without – okay, Isaiah 45:7:

*⁷I form light and create darkness,
I make well-being and create calamity,
I am the LORD, who does –*

What does he do? Some of the things?

– all these things.



He does all of the things. So the good things that happen, God. The challenging things for us to wrap our minds around, the hurricanes, the tsunamis, the earthquakes: God. God.

Okay, anytime you see a natural disaster happen, you see an earthquake happen, you see a tsunami happen, villages are wiped out. You have horrible things that take place. Buildings are crushed. People die. Every time it's either Larry King or Pierce Morgan. You see that guy who gets up, and he's like, "Where is God in this? Where is God? Why would a loving God" – that's how it starts – "do X, Y, and Z?"

In other words, "God does not make sense to me, because I would not do that." Of course, when we say that, we're probably wrong, because we would. "I would not do that, and so I cannot conceive that God to be true, because I would not do that. That's something that I would not do." That's a challenge.

But no one ever gets on Pierce Morgan or Larry King and says, "You know what? God is so good, because I live in a beach community and he has never hit it with a tsunami. God is so gracious. You know what? Most places in the world are never affected by an earthquake. Isn't God great by holding all things together so that the world can continue?" No one ever gets up and says, "You know what? I have never lost a tree in my back yard. Praise the Lord, Pierce Morgan." Right? No one ever does that. It's always when it doesn't make sense to us is when we respond and say it should. It's always that.

And so here's the thing. God is in control of nature. God is in control of humanity and calamity and things that we can't wrap our minds around. So we've just got to praise him. We've just got to praise him and remember that he is in control and sovereign over all things. Hey, listen, again, this is the God of the Bible. You can get ticked at me if you want. This is the God of the Bible. Okay, do we worship the God of the Bible this morning? All right, we do. All right.

So Jesus says the same thing that I will say to me and I will say to us this morning. Where is your faith? Do you believe that I am sovereign and creator over all? Okay, all right, good, no one's left yet. Verse 26:

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes –

Which by the way is just shameful in this culture for you to be stripped of your garments.

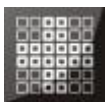
– and he had not lived in his house but among the tombs.

So he was isolated away from everybody else, this demon possessed man.

²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

He recognizes him right away, doesn't he?

I beg you, do not torment me." ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and



shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. ³¹And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³²Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them –

What's the word?

– permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

A few things here. Here you have this man who's demon possessed by many demons. He's tormented. He's naked. He's out in the tombs. He's completely isolated from everyone else. No one wants anything to do with this man. Jesus comes up and challenges. And he begins, not to speak to the man, but to the demons that possess him.

Now, if you're a believer in Christ, you cannot be possessed by demons, okay? "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world," right? So you have this man who is possessed by multitudes of demons, and Jesus confronts the demons in this man. The first thing, he asks, "Hey, what's your name?" They respond to Jesus. They don't have to, but they do because he's Jesus, okay? They have to respond, because it's God confronting them.

Three things that you see, there's three times that they beg Jesus, okay? Demons are begging Jesus. Okay, demons are begging Jesus. They're saying, "Please, don't torment me. Oh, Jesus, don't throw me into the abyss. Jesus, please let me enter into these pigs. That would be way better than what you could do to me." Okay, does that comfort you at all to know that Jesus has this authority over demons? It's comforting to me. So Jesus is standing here, and they reveal their names, and they recognize that he is the God of the most high. They realize that right away.

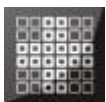
Matthew's Gospel gives us even more clarity of this story, because I think –let me just show you Matthew 8:29. This is how the demons respond to Jesus.

²⁹And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us –

Listen to this.

– before the time?"

It's very interesting here, "Before the time." I'll break this one down. I don't normally do Greek stuff, because I don't want to sound like that guy that's every other word is Greek or whatever just for the sake of it. But I will share this, because I think it's important. There's two words for time. One is chronos, which means, like, "Change your time back one hour so that you can get an extra hour of sleep." That's what that words mean, okay? So that's time like we know it today. Like, it's gonna be



12:00 soon, and we've got to go home and eat and football's starting. That's time that we know right in front of us.

There's another word for time. It's kairos, and it's really a specific time in which God, the God of the universe, comes into human history and he changes everything. And it's a specific time that's laid out that there's only a few times that this happens in the whole Bible, like the Exodus when you've got Moses who gets the 10 Commandments, like the crucifixion, like Paul says the fullness of time has come. He's talking about the time in which Christ would come, be killed, buried, and resurrect.

So these are only a few times, and the interesting thing is the demons use this word. They don't use the word like change your clocks back time. They use the word like, "Is this the time?" meaning "Is this when our time is done? Is this when our destiny is sealed to be tormented from our open rebellion against you?"

And listen, the demons realize that the God of the universe holds in his hand the time when they will stop doing evil. The demons realize that. That's good to know, right? They're not out just roaming around doing whatever they want. No, it's all in the sovereign hand of a powerful, big, wonderful God who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It's all in his hand. And it says here that they asked for permission. It doesn't say, "Well, we do whatever we want. We're demons." No, they say, "Please, won't you send us into the swine."

Okay, so here we have them asking him for permission. Now, how does that frame the way that we see God and Satan or God and demons? Let me just show you a couple different – we'll have to go into other texts this morning. Let me just show you Job 1. All right, this is a very popular text, and what I'm about to say is going to make some of you very uncomfortable about how you view Satan and how you view demons and how you view God, all right? So just be ready. Job 1:6:

⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

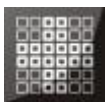
By the way, this is a very good text to prove that Satan can't be everywhere at once.

And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?"

Who introduced this topic? God.

There is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.¹¹But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

Okay, so Satan knows that God has the authority to do this on his own. Look what happens.



¹²And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

And then if you read Job, if you read the rest of Job, it goes really bad. It goes really, really bad, because God's like, "You can't kill him, but you can take everything else." God gave Satan permission. Now, who's the first cause here? Who introduced this subject? God. Hey, listen, this isn't me. This is the Bible, right? We believe in the Bible. Okay, all right.

Now, let me show you this other passage. This is going to be challenging again. Job 42:10. This is after Job had really wrestled with God. You see some of the best prayers in Job where Job is struggling, and he's crying out, "God, you took this from me. I'm frustrated at you. I'm angry at you." And then he comes back, and he's like, "I love you. You're wonderful," right? And this is the very end of his life, and this is what God does for Job.

¹⁰And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. ¹¹Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all –

Listen to this.

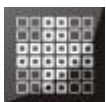
– the evil that the LORD had brought upon him.

Who brought this upon him? Who brought this suffering upon our boy Job? God. Okay, here's another text, 2 Corinthians 12:5-9. Paul is speaking here, and he says:

⁵On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

All right, does anybody remember being in a Sunday school class where there was a kid in there that said, "You know what? I would really like for Christmas this year a demon to torment me," because this is what God has given him. He's like, "Listen, I'm a prideful jerk, and here's the thing that God did for me to keep me from being proud. He sent a messenger of Satan to torment me so that I wouldn't be proud." Is that hard for anybody? Does that mess up your idea of what demons are that they're just kind of running around doing whatever they want?

No, they ask for permission from the Sovereign God who is in control of all things. If God is not in control of all things, he is not in control of anything, by the way. He's sovereign over all things – Satan,



demons, death, over all. He conquered the penalty of Satan, demons, and death when he resurrected from the grave. So we can rejoice in that, and we have to trust him.

And so here we have a God who is holy. He's sovereign. He's above all things. The sovereign God is the God of the Bible. You have Satan who is in open rebellion. He's the father of lies. He is a true adversary, and we should know that he is a true foe. He is out to distort the Gospel, and he is out to lie to you. He wants you to believe that he is your father when he is the father of lies. There's only one true father, the one who sent his one and only son to die on the cross on our behalf.

So then you have God who doesn't tempt anyone to evil. That's what James 1:13 says that he doesn't tempt us to evil. And then you have Satan who's pictured as like 1 Peter 5:8. It says:

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

By the way, I'm going to just show this because it's important. God is a lion. Satan is like a lion. He's a lion of Judah. I do not like that song that our God is not dead; he's actually alive roaring "like" a lion. That's Satan. That's Satan. I don't want to sing songs about Satan. I want to sing songs about God, all right?

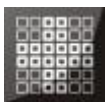
God is a lion. Satan is a counterfeit. He's like a lion. And he's roaming around, yes, but it's all under the permission and the sovereign hand of God. Let me just tell you a story that I think will help clarify a great deal of this.

You've got our boy Joseph in the Old Testament. Joseph was this man who his dad loved him. He had multiple brothers, but his father favored him above all the other brothers. He gave him a jacket, and it was rainbow colored. And for some reason, that was cool then. All right, I don't know why, but it was cool then. And jackets were really hard to come by in those days, so he wore this jacket proudly. All right, not in that way, but he wore it, all right? He wore it happily.

And he loved this thing, and he was that guy like all year-round he's like, "Did you guys see my new jacket?" It's like midsummer, and they're like, "Oh, here he is again wearing this jacket." And they hated him for it. They hated him because his father loved him. And then you have this – it's really interesting what happens, because he gets this dream. And he tells his brothers about this dream, which I don't know if that was a good idea. But he's like, "Hey, listen, I had this dream that all of you bowed down to me and worshipped me. It was just this great dream."

And they just did not like that. And they said, "We're going to go put him in a hole somewhere so we don't have to deal with him." So they do that, and they realize, "Listen, let's just make up a story. We'll sell him into slavery. We'll take that ugly rainbow jacket and dip it in blood. And we'll say he got killed. He got murdered. He's gone. We don't have to deal with him."

And so they do that. They create this whole deal. And then Joseph, the rest of his life just looks painful. He's sold into slavery. He ends up being in Potiphar's household. Potiphar is this great leader, and his



wife thinks that he's hot and so she tries to come onto him. She strips him naked. He's running out of the house naked, and that never looks good. And so she says that he took advantage of her. And he gets thrown in prison from all of this that happens.

And then you have him in prison. He's been ratted out. It's only because God's given him favor that he's being persecuted really. And he's in prison, and he gets out of prison because he's this man of just exuberant character. And he ends up being, because he has this ability to interpret dreams, that the Pharaohs just love him. And they put him over all in charge of Egypt and who's going to get fed.

And so like ten years go by, and he is in charge over all these things. And then the Scriptures tell us – and this is Genesis 40-50, roughly. The Scriptures tell us that his brothers go to get fed, and he's in charge of who gets fed and who doesn't. And they freak out, because they recognize him, and they're like, "Oh, that's Joseph." And they're afraid of him, and Joseph just missed his dad's funeral. His dad just died. "Tell me my father's still alive," and they don't want to tell him.

So they're afraid of him, but his response, to me it captures how we view evil and God's sovereignty. Here's what Joseph says to his brothers, Genesis 50:20.

²⁰*As for you, you meant evil against me –*

Listen to this.

– but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

So in other words, "You thought what you were doing was divisive and sinful, and it was. But God used that to complete and fulfill his purposes." My friends, Satan, demons, suffering, natural disasters, God is over to complete his purposes. Satan is a pawn in the plan of redemption that God has in place, and he does this. It doesn't make sense to us, but what man intends for evil, God intends for good.

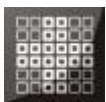
God's ways are not our ways. It doesn't make sense to us. So often we try to wrap our minds around it, but we know this. As believers in Christ, we must worship the God of the Bible who is the God who is sovereign over all. And we must rest in the promises that through Jesus, through the cross of Christ, Romans 8:28 to be true where he says:

²⁸*And we know that for those who love God all things –*

Do we believe that? All things. Suffering, temptation, natural disasters, sunrise, sunset, financial gain, financial prosperity, whatever that we get, food, starvation, whatever it is all things work together for what?

– for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

And so I want us to be like this man who Jesus heals in Luke 8, and he sends out these demons into the swine who jump off the cliff. I want us to be like this man, because I want you just to see this man's response. Because you see these herdsmen, as soon as this happens they fear because they see this



holy, perfect God in front of them, the one who's sovereign over all. And this is how they respond. They say:

³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

So I want us to step back. And even in our suffering, and even in our difficulty, and even in our temptation, and even when we have that same sin or that same struggle, that we would sit back and say, "You know what? I'm going to declare how much God has done for me. You know what? I'm going to be one of faith that says I am going to go home and declare all that he's done for me." You don't want to be in that boat where you're wondering why Jesus is doing what he's doing where he says, "Where is your faith?" You want to leave remembering what Christ has done for us.

So how do you respond this morning to a God who is sovereign over all? Do we believe that it's for our good if we really believe in him? And do we in that thank him for where he might have us right now in our suffering and our challenges?

God has proven his love for us because he sent his one and only son to die on the bloody cross for us, to live the life that we should have lived, die the death that we should have died. And he conquers Satan, sin, and death by his resurrection. So we praise him for that. And so my challenge this morning is that we would trust and believe the God who is sovereign over all and that we would return home and declare how much he's done for us. Because when he died on the cross, he said, "It is finished." Let's pray.

