

Sovereignty of God - Pt.2 - God's Sovereignty in ALL things

Review the 2 main conundrum: these answers are not perfect, there is mystery...

1. Is God the primary cause of all things, and would this make Him the author of evil?
 - If God is the creator of all, He is the first cause of all because all comes from Him (He pushes the first domino, knowing where they all lead).
 - Meaning implicit in the design of creation was the ability to fall, an allowance for the desires to fall (where did that desire come from within the created order?), and the variables to create the fall (Satan...who also is a created being with these propensities, and the same could be said of his fall)
 - Illust. – if I make a car with the capability to break down isn't it a design problem?
 - Rom 9:18-22 = seems to suggest rebellion from God by design (He even set up the dominos)
 - Our answer: He is clearly NOT the doer of evil, BUT HE IS SOVEREIGN OVER IT! (and therefore Sovereign over its outcomes - death, suffering, brokenness)
 - Because He is sovereign over it - He has the power to redeem it!
 - YOU CANNOT REDEEM SOMETHING YOU AREN'T SOVEREIGN OVER!
2. Given the problem of evil and suffering, can God be all-knowing, all-powerful, and still be all-loving/good?
 - Illustration of a child walking into traffic: someone has 1) knowledge of it, and 2) the power to stop it – if they don't was it their will to let the accident happen?
 - What does this say about God as all-good (loving)?
 - Our answer is: If we did it, it would be evil – BECAUSE we do not have the power to bring redemption to it and work it into a larger plan for glory (love)!!
 - The empty tomb is glory of God over all sin & suffering. Without the cross - there is no empty tomb

Again, there is something learned through this fallen/broken existence, that teaches us something about the nature of God.

- If His nature is sacrificial love, there must be something to sacrifice for (which implies the existence of imperfection that needs resolution)
- In sacrifice, selflessness and the greatest lessons of love are learned.

This inevitably leads us to a doctrine of God's sovereignty in and over ALL things:

Romans 8:28-31 - Everything finds its purpose in this progression (progressive revelation from creation, through the fall, to redemption)

- ALL things work for good to those who love the Lord
 - Everything will resolve in a way that glorifies God (only God is good, and so they work for Him who is good)
 - B/C He is sovereign over all things, He has the power to redeem all things
- AND have been called according to His purpose

- Mutual relationship – people called out by God and love God
 - “Love God” (present tense),
 - “have been called” (past tense)
 - God’s calling on our lives is the primary cause of our love for Him
- Who does the calling? God.
 - Why does He call some and not all? I don’t know.
 - BUT...it is our job to love Him in return. Let’s start with gratitude.
- His purposes are for redemption.
- FOR...(theological statement coming) those He foreknew
 - Foreknowledge is not merely knowledge in the Greek word. It also means “choose ahead of time”. Remember: if He has pre-knowledge of AND sets into motion what leads to it, can it be beyond his will?
 - Jeremiah 1:5 – where does freewill fall here? His “foreknowledge” is not just awareness of what Jeremiah would do of his own freewill, but an intrinsic enactment of God’s will
 - Why this plan for Jeremiah and not for another? As soon as God chooses one beyond freewill, the “fairness doctrine” is immediately opened up. If He chose Jeremiah to remain faithful, beyond human freewill, then He did NOT choose (enact) the same for others in this rebellious period of Israel
 - Something about the omnipotence and omniscience of God working together must lead us to trust that He is just.
 - There are reasons for why God acts sovereignly – WHETHER WE SEE IT AS JUST OR NOT! His ways are not our ways - Isaiah 55:8.
- He also predestined
 - Destiny NOT JUST foreknown, but pre-ordained (Acts 13:48)
 - Like Pharaoh, Judas was foreknown to betray Christ, and Satan was allowed to enter His heart in such a way.
 - Could Judas, or Pharaoh have acted differently?
 - God’s purposes cannot be thwarted
 - Proverbs 16:4, Gen 50:20 – all for the glory of God
- To be conformed to the image of His Son, the first among brothers
 - So whatever you face in life is going to be used by God to bring into the likeness of Christ – CHRIST AS FIRSTBORN! (we will revisit this!!)
 - Our trials are seen through the eyes of the suffering servant
 - Paul speaks of growing in Christ through suffering (Rom 5:3, 8:17, 2 Cor 1:4-5, Phil 3:10)
 - Theology of suffering includes growing into Christ
 - Again, something about the presence of evil allows for the contrast of good to be known. Light in the darkness. Sacrificial love=nature of God.

- Our temptations become a chance to overcome in the desert (like Christ)
- Predestined – Called – Justified – Glorified = Our path to union with Christ
 - Note how the calling is a result of the predestined plans of God, not because of our own merit or will
 - Called, justified, glorified (how God got us to image of Son-the process)
 - Glorified, then, informs what "work for good" of verse 28 means = image of Son completed
 - Remember glory: revelation (Theophany=visible manifestation) of the divine nature
 - Our glorification: revealing the nature of Christ in us (image of the Son)

From predestination (sovereignty) to glory (redemption, revelation) will become the paradigm for our study of election and suffering the next two weeks

Summary

- Are we still responsible for our actions = Yes, but there is mystery here
- We believe in destiny, but not fatalism. Fatalism implies we have no role, or effect, in the outcome of our life.
 - Path you take leads you to your destiny
- All this leads to righteousness for us and the divine nature of Christ (glorification). However there is mystery in the process!
- Do the ends justify the means? Only if we trust that God knows what He is doing!

So, finally, what is our job in light of this?

- Eph 2:10 – we must walk in them
- Gal 5:24-25 – crucify the sinful nature & walk by the Spirit
- Col 3:1-6 – fix your eyes on things above, be focused on the things of God

These speak of the great mysteries of faith and God's sovereign hand. As we see Jesus ministering to people, he calls them to take steps of faith, calls them be accountable for their actions, calls them to make every moment of decisive significance

- Predestination is not the cause for laziness and lack of responsibility
- Predestination IS the call to step out in faith, knowing that you are walking confidently in God's plan and purposes.

Assignment:

1. Read Job 15-28