

God Is Government

Isaiah 33:22

*“For the LORD is our judge, the
LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD
is our king; he will save us.”*



THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MANKIND

PART TWENTY-TWO

As we come to the last writing on the subject of “Our Sovereignty” we need to focus on us as a people. We need to consider our earthly actions as they pertain to our eternal sovereignty in Christ living here on earth and in the heavenlies. It is in this visualization that we need to focus on how we view our own sovereignty. We will focus our attention on how we know that we are living under the sovereignty of God – The Fruits We Bear.

We are not always excited about our own sovereignty. There is a great deal of responsibility involved in this gift that God has given us. What are we supposed to do with it? The best thing we can do, the wisest and most beneficial thing we can do is to give it right back to God. We can say, “LORD, thank You. Here is my life. Take it. I want to be Yours. You alone know the end from the beginning. You alone know what is best for me.”

Chuck Smith used to tell a story about a school reunion he went to. When he was in school, he had a big crush on a girl there. He used to pray that if God would help her like him, he would do anything. It was the usual teenage prayer: “Bot, Lord. If You will do this thing for me” The girl had her own ideas, and it did not work out the way Chuck had prayed. Many years later, he attended a reunion where he met up with the woman he had had a crush on, and he realized she would not have been right for him. He was courteous as he spoke to her, but in his privacy he went to the Lord and said, “Thank You, Lord, for the prayers You did not answer.”

We all have prayers that God did not answer the way we wanted, and we do not know why. I suspect that list is substantial for many of us. Sometimes we have lost loved ones. Sometimes we have lost jobs, houses, and cars. There are prayers that the Lord in His wisdom chooses not to answer our way, and sometimes that has frustrated us or broken our hearts.

We are sovereign. We have our own wills, our desires, our ideas. We have the things we would do if we were in charge. However, the God of the Bible sees the end from the beginning, and we are wise to put our lives



completely in His hands and to say, as Jesus said in the Garden of Gethsemane, *“Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou will.”*

Jesus also calls us to be His disciples, to take up our cross daily to follow Him – and to count the cost before we do so.

“27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”

- Luke 14:27-28

This is a sobering verse, because it reminds us that to be Christ’s disciples we need to be willing to suffer as He asks us to. We must be willing to set aside our pride, our desires, our will to follow Him. Jesus also tells us in Matthew 11:29-30 to pick up His yoke, the yoke He gives us. There is immediate comfort because He also says that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. Yet, there is definitely a sense of personal responsibility here – in choosing to carry our cross – and in choosing to carry the heavy burdens Christ gives to us.

Living for Christ day-by-day can be difficult, and yet it is the greatest adventure in the world. We are in a brutal spiritual battle, but Jesus has already given us the victory. The sweat and tears are worth it. When Jesus died on that cross, it saved the entire world. When we submit to His purpose in our lives, He does amazing things in us – things we could never have even hoped for.

Bearing Fruit

We are in a dangerous place when we try to decide who is saved and who is not. God knows everyone who repents and follows Him in the end. However, there is something we can do. We can inspect people’s fruit. We are not even supposed to inspect the gifts of the Spirit. We are supposed to inspect the fruits of the Spirit.

“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

- Galatians 5:22-25

Am I really committed to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have I honestly handed Him the Lordship of my life? Am I abiding in Christ? Is there fruit of that in my life? It is good to do a self-check now and then. What about you? If you are not sure, then make Him the priority of your life right now. Ask Him to pay for your sins and fill you with His Holy Spirit. We know God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask because He loves to give us the good things we need.

Once we have done that, then what? We remember that Jesus Christ is our first love. We thank Him every day for His love, for His mercy, for His power to work in our lives to do His will. We trust in Him, and we give Him our lives every day. “Here, Lord. Here is my life. Do with it today what You will.”

I really believe that you and I can leave this room with the assurance of salvation. We do not have to fear that God will toss us away. However, we also have assurance because we give the whole-hearted, comprehensive commitment of our sovereignty into the hands of Jesus Christ. Each one of us needs to do that, and we need to do it every day.

When we do, guess what? He produces fruit in us. He points out the people in our lives that need our help. He helps us know when to say “No” to this person or group so we can focus over here on this person or group. He works in us with patience, kindness, gentleness, and love. When we are planted by the streams of water that are His Spirit, we will bear beautiful fruit.

The problem is not that Christians do not know what good fruit looks like. We just forget that God is the one who produces it in us. Too often, we stop focusing on Him and start focusing on the works themselves, and that is where we get into trouble. When we try to produce fruit without Him, depending on our own righteousness, we find that we produce nasty fruit that nobody wants to eat. We become harsh, self-righteous, and judgmental. We become hypocrites, falling into the very sins we have condemned others for doing. We can go to church every week and say all the tight things, but nobody wants to hear what we have to say because there is no love in our lives. It is only by walking hand-in-hand with Christ every day that we can grow to produce the sweet fruit of His Spirit.

We find in Matthew 25 a parable that brings this difference to light. The parable describes a future day when Jesus divides the sheep from the goats. Both the sheep and the goats call Jesus, “Lord,” but only the sheep are

given the kingdom, which Jesus declares was prepared “from the foundation of the world.” The difference between the sheep and the goats is quite simple. The sheep bore the fruit of God’s love:

“31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

- Matthew 25-31-46

The goats also call Jesus, “Lord.” However, the goats did not bear the fruit of God’s love. They did not have compassion or concern for others. We can surmise that the goats were too focused on themselves to care about the needs of others. They were talking the talk, but they were not walking with Christ. We cannot walk with Christ without getting infected by the love and concern He has for people.

“41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison,

and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

- Matthew 25-41-46

Our righteousness can never save us because we have a sin defect. Only the covenant made by Christ's blood can save us. However, those who are born again, who are “planted by the streams of water,” fed by the Holy Spirit – they will be like the tree in Psalm 1 that bears its fruit in season and whose leaf never withers. When we are born again fully committed to loving our Savior, He will produce fruit naturally through us. As we walk with Christ day-by-day, the Holy Spirit will do the work of slowly pruning off those unfruitful branches (areas in your life) in our hearts. He will start removing the broken, dead twigs. He will make us people who are truly a blessing to others.

Does that mean we will never sin again? It is very unlikely. We all have turned our eyes away from Jesus Christ at times, and like Peter walking toward Jesus on the water, we have looked at the “wind and the waves” and started to sink. However, Jesus is always right there to catch us when we are floundering and to help us walk safely back to the boat. Our Shepherd has no interest in letting us drown, no matter how bad we feel about ourselves. We simply need to cry out as Peter did, “Lord, save me!” Hopefully, though, our fruit tastes better every year that goes by as we get better at submitting to the Holy Spirit. We can have confidence that while we are abiding in Christ, we are absolutely secure. We are absolutely secure.

The trick is not to focus on the wind and the waves, or even our own particular struggles with sin. The trick is to focus on Christ and trust Him and His patient, constant love for us. When we keep our eyes on Jesus we not only walk on water, but we also find we start desiring the things He desires for us.