

## “Where the Rubber Meets the Road:God’s Sovereignty”

Scripture: Psalm 139; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Graphics: tire, tire track, road, sovereignty, royalty

Big Truth: God’s mercy, sovereignty, and justice are all truths that impact our lives as followers of Jesus. Yet, we often either don’t understand these truths or live into them fully. God wants his truth to be our experience fully. That’s where the rubber meets the road and causes forward motion into a deeper life with Christ and his mission to make disciples. The people of PUMC are called to reflect God’s mercy, submit to God’s sovereignty, and enact God’s justice in the world.

Focus Phrase: God’s sovereignty in my life requires my submission, creates hope, and inspires worship.

### 1. Introduction

- A. **(tire) *Where the Rubber Meets the Road.***
- B. It’s the place - the moment, the circumstance - when and where things get real...get serious...something starts to happen. It’s not really about a rubber tire and a road, but it’s a phrase that we use that means, “It’s GO time.”
- C. We’re looking at three grand characteristics of God that impact and transform our everyday lives - where the rubber meets the road: **God’s MERCY, God’s SOVEREIGNTY, and God’s JUSTICE.** These are ultimate truths about God, independent of what we think or even whether we think they exist or not.
- D. Last week, I asked you to find **one opportunity** to be merciful to someone...to reflect God’s mercy (NOT getting what you deserve...) to someone else who didn’t deserve it. I pray that the Holy Spirit led you RIGHT into the life of someone else...and that you were merciful.
- E. Today, in part 2 of this series, we’ll look at God’s **Sovereignty**...and how we’re called to submit to God’s sovereignty in the world. And what difference that makes in our lives today.
- F. This week, we’ll read from Psalm 139, which gives us a glimpse of this grand truth about God. Then, we’ll go to the second chapter of Paul’s first letter to Timothy to see where that rubber meets Paul’s road, and then, ours.
- G. Let’s pray and then we can dive in...
- H. **PRAY! (Jesus, you are Lord...)**
- I. If you’re taking notes, write this down: **God’s sovereignty in my life requires my submission, creates hope, and inspires worship.**
- J. We’ll start in Psalm 139, so open your bibles with me:

### 2. Scripture

- A. **READ Psalm 139:1-18**

- i. This incredible poetry speaks of an **all-powerful** and **all-knowing God** who created all things by a word from His mouth. And not just that, but it tells of an **all-loving God** who forms us in our mothers' wombs and knows everything about us...every word, even before we say them.
- ii. God knows when we sit and when we lie down, says the psalmist. God knows us completely. And not just you and me, but every person who's ever lived. We can't hide from God. We can't flee from God. Wherever we go, says the poet, **God is there**, morning, noon, and night, high and low.
- iii. In a word, this begins to describe **God's sovereignty**.
- iv. The truth about God is that He IS sovereign. It's a spiritual given. It's expressed throughout scripture, both Old and New Testaments...
  - a. God is above all things and before all things. He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. (Revelation 21:6) He is immortal, and He is present everywhere so that everyone can know Him.
  - b. "...for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. (Colossians 1:16).
  - c. God knows all things past, present, and future. Romans 11:33 says, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"
  - d. Jeremiah 32:17 proclaims: "Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you."
  - e. Chip Ingraham said this about God's sovereignty, "That's what being sovereign means. It means being the ultimate source of all power, authority, and everything that exists. Only God can make those claims; therefore, it's God's sovereignty that makes Him superior to all other gods and makes Him, and Him alone, worthy of worship.
- v. **But what IS sovereignty?** Maybe we have a sense from life itself...
- vi. My [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com) DNA profile tells me I'm like 99% European and mostly from the British Isles. My great-grandmother was an immigrant from Great Britain. I remember her having pictures of Queen Elizabeth in her house. We've heard a lot about the death of Queen Elizabeth II this week at the age of 96. The head of the British Monarchy, now led by the Queen's son Charles, is often referred to as the **Sovereign of Great Britain**. She was - he is - the ruler over the country...the sovereign. That title is just one example of the meaning of word - to be the top ruler of a nation. Yet, what I love about Queen Elizabeth is that she proclaimed and practiced, that God

was HER ultimate sovereign and her given title as sovereign was only temporary. She is now NOT the sovereign...and she is WITH THE Sovereign (with a capital S).

- vii. As we did last week, we can get some help from the Webster's definition of sovereign: *one possessing or held to possess supreme political power or sovereignty; one that exercises supreme authority within a limited sphere.*
- viii. For Queen or King, that limited sphere is the country in which she or he is appointed ruler. For God, however, as we read in Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 32 and especially Colossians 1, **God's sphere is not limited**...it is the physical universe and all the spiritual realm.
- ix. The best way I can think of to simply describe the essence of God's sovereignty is to say, "**God is in control.**" (repeat) And not only is God in control, but He is in control of all things...all people...all circumstances...and all outcomes...all time and all places.
- x. Now, does that mean that God controls all things? No. He has the POWER and AUTHORITY to control all things...but being IN CONTROL of everything and intervening in or controlling everything are two different things. That's an important part of God's sovereignty.
- xi. God is sovereign over all things - in control of all things - but God also has given us the free will to make decisions. We are called to do the right thing...to choose God's way in all things...to submit to Him as Lord.
- xii. To do that, as the psalmist closes with in Psalm 139:23-24, we're called to allow God to search us and change us - to align us with God's will because He is Sovereign over us.
- xiii. (on screen) Let's read Psalm 139:23-24 together (on screen): "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
- xiv. But where does the runner meet OUR road? How does the fact that God is sovereign and we are called to desire to submit ourselves to God's will impact our lives?
- xv. Remember, here's where we're heading: **God's sovereignty in my life requires my submission, creates hope, and inspires worship.**
- xvi. To get more practical...let's see how Paul described the outworking of God's sovereignty in the early Christian world to his younger friend Timothy. Turn with me to 1 Timothy 2:1-7. Be listening for words that point to God's sovereignty over all things and everyone...

## **B. READ 1 Timothy 2:1-7**

- i. Did you catch the words that Paul used to point to the sovereignty of the One True God?

- ii. In verses 1, 2, 4, and 6 he used the words ‘ALL’ and ‘EVERYONE’ several times to indicate the focus of God’s heart.
  - a. “Pray for EVERYONE...for kings and ALL who are in high positions...”
  - b. “This is right and acceptable in the sight of God, who desires EVERYONE to be saved.”
  - c. And then in verse 6: “...that Jesus gave himself as a ransom for ALL.”
- iii. God is sovereign, which means that God created, loves, and cares for ALL people in ALL places. That’s a given, based on who God is.
- iv. Now, does this mean that ALL WILL be saved? No. That’s universalism, which we, as Wesleyans, reject. All CAN be saved. God desires all TO be saved. And, because God is in control (our simple definition of sovereignty, remember) God has the POWER to save everyone.
- v. Yet, God also doesn’t FORCE people to be saved. He gave every person the free will to choose to submit themselves under His power and authority. And the WAY He did that was to offer the sacrifice of his one and only Son, Jesus, on a Roman cross, to pay a ransom (as Paul said in v. 6) for ALL.
- vi. God desires everyone to be saved and provided a WAY for everyone TO be saved. If they choose to receive the gift of God’s grace and mercy through Jesus, as we learned last week, then they WILL be saved.
- vii. Yet, God continues to love ALL creation and desire them to be saved.
- viii. Given all that, we, Paul wrote, have a part in helping God here and now in the lives of those around us. God is sovereign over all, but has given US the relationships with others to use for his desire for them to be saved.
- ix. Given that, Paul said, we should pray for everyone TO be saved. We should share our hope in Jesus with everyone so that they WANT to be saved. We are compelled to worship our sovereign God who has saved us, and invite others to worship as well.
- x. Our sovereign God is inviting US to be part of His plan to save everyone who comes to him by grace through faith in Jesus - the one mediator between a broken and sinful world and a holy and sovereign God.
- xi. But it all starts with submitting ourselves under the control of a sovereign God who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to show us His love for us.

### **3. Application**

- A. For you, where does the sovereignty of God (the rubber) meet the road of your life?

- B. When we talk in grand terms about God, I think we sometimes miss what the psalmist in 139 claims - that God hems you in, behind and before...that God lays his hand upon you.
- C. Yes, God is power and authority. Yes, God is Creator and Provider. Yes, God is Sovereign. But in His sovereignty, God reaches down...into your life right now...to not only offer you, today, redemption through Jesus Christ, but an invitation to hope in Him and worship Him.
- D. God's in the One in control, not you. I can't think of a more powerful motivation and invitation to orient your entire life to His will and His control. The reality is, no matter what you try, you will not still be in control. Control is something God HAS, but it's not something that He will force in your life.
- E. Given that, here's where the rubber meets the road:
- i. First is to **choose to submit to God's will - all of it.**
    - a. Honestly, this one's difficult for me and I suspect for you as well.
    - b. You and I are so prone to want to find our own way in this life that we find ourselves not bowing before the sovereign, in-control God.
    - c. I watched this week as the casket containing the Queen was driven down the road in London where she will be laid in state for a few days. As the casket drove by, people bowed their heads in reverence and respect.
    - d. Peasants in the 16th century would bow before kings and queens, in reverence and fear, that if they didn't, they'd be killed.
    - e. Unlike those earthly rulers, God is infinitely more powerful and holy and loving. Yet, so why do we often forget to bow in holy fear before our sovereign God...and choose to, instead bow before idols and queens?
    - f. The posture you take before your Sovereign is an important indication of your attitude towards Him.
    - g. You and I are called to bow our lives before God, submitting every thought, every word and every deed to His authority and will.
      - i) Submission means being willing to reject the sin in our lives and finally be freed from its grip.
      - ii) Submission means praying for mercy and grace and forgiveness with a repentant heart that desires to please a holy God.
      - iii) Submission means aligning your thoughts and deeds with God - being sanctified - taking on the image of Jesus.
    - h. And, here's the GOOD NEWS! God is FOR you in this! He doesn't force you to bow...he invites you and expects you to bow. Romans 8:28 says, "...in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

- i. As you submit your life under the sovereign rule of God, God works for good in your life. And that brings springs of hope!
- ii. Find hope in God's control of all things**
  - a. Some might label me a control freak. Fair enough. But, I also know that my sense of control is a paper mache house. It's not REALLY control.
  - b. I'm thankful for that, because if your hope is in you, or your hope is in me, then your hope is fleeting.
  - c. Because we have a sovereign God who is not only powerful, but loving, nothing in this world can defeat us, ultimately.
  - d. Knowing that you and I are not ultimately in control is like, "WHEW! I was screwing it all up, anyway!"
  - e. Our hope is in Him...and not our earthly rulers or ourselves.
  - f. And that hope causes us to worship...
- iii. Worship Him because of his power and authority.**
  - a. We worship many things, church. None of them is worthy, but the God who sent his Son to die on the cross for your sin.
  - b. We worship God because He is worthy. We worship God because He is for us and not against us. We worship God because if we don't, we end up worshiping other gods...idols. We have a God who is the only One worthy of worship.
  - c. Our sovereign God, who is in control of all things, invites you and expects you to worship Him...and Him alone.
- F. God's sovereignty in my life requires my submission, creates hope, and inspires worship.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. You're worshipping today, here in this room or at home...so the rubber IS meeting the road. I pray that hope is welling up in you, despite all the things that may be out of your control.
- B. This week, spend time bowing before the Lord. Pray the prayer in Psalm 139 every day - search me and know my heart...test me and know my thoughts... see if there is any wicked way in me...and lead me in the way everlasting.
- C. Then, rise each day in hope and give God thanks for his sovereignty.
- D. God IS in control...sovereign...submit to Him today.
- E. PRAY!**