

# He is!

*An Expository Exploration of the Attributes of God*

**Sermon 9:** He is in Control (Sovereign)

Genesis 50:12-21

March 1, 2020

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 46:3-11

**Opening Illustration:** What would you do? Imagine that your brothers:

- (1) Always resented you and treated you as different from them.
- (2) Turned on you and threw you into a pit.
- (3) Sold you into slavery and thereby caused the most difficult trials of your life.
  - a. Being thrown into jail even though you were innocent.
  - b. Being forgotten by an inmate that was supposed to get you out.
- (4) Deceitfully convinced your father that you were dead, to his great misery.

What would you do? I imagine that you are telling yourselves 1 of 2 things. Either you are telling yourself that you would never forgive them. No way. I would understand that. To refuse to forgive would be the natural, human response. On the other hand, though, you may be thinking, "I would like to think that I could find it in my heart to forgive them." That's the Christians answer...the beautiful, God-exalting, pride-destroying answer. Here's the question, though: How could you do that? What must you believe and how must you think in order to have the ability to extend forgiveness in a situation like this?

Some verses to consider:

**Psalms 115:3** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

**Job 42:2** I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

## I. Introduction/Review

### A. Review

### B. God is Sovereign

1. What is What does this mean?
  - a) Definition: God's sovereignty is His "rule and authority over all things." Millard Erickson
  - b) **Expanded definition:** God's absolute authority and power over everything in the Universe. It is the conviction that God allows everything for an ultimately good purpose, no matter how confusing, how frustrating, how trying those circumstances are.

**Quote:** Can we imagine the Lord God of Hosts having to request permission of anyone or to apply for anything to a higher body? To whom would God go for permission? Who is higher than the Highest? Who is mightier than the Almighty? Whose position antedates that of the Eternal? At whose throne would God kneel? Where is the great one to whom He must appeal?" Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy, page 109

## II. The Exposition of the Text

### A. A Particularly Emotional Reality. (vv. 12-14)

**ILL:** As a pastor, I get the blessing of seeing people at their best and at their worst. I think funerals and weddings can be the most stressful and emotional times in anyone's life. I have often seen family members who otherwise love each other, get on each other's nerves and go for each others' throats.

1. Funerals often bring to the surface the emotions that we have tried to repress.
2. This particular funeral served as a reminder to Joseph of what he had lost:
  - a) Years with his dad.
3. This situation could have easily degenerated into a trigger for Joseph's hurt and anger.

### B. A Particularly Confusing Repentance (vv. 15-18)

1. What were the brothers afraid of?
2. How did they seek to prevent this?
  - a) Notice that they used Joseph's love for his father. Did Jacob really say this? I doubt it. The brothers seem to be misleading Joseph.
3. They genuinely repented. vv. 17-18
  - a) Please forgive us.
  - b) We are your servants

**C. A Particularly Amazing Realization (vv. 19-21)**

1. What does Joseph say?
  - a) Do not be afraid.
  - b) Am I in the place of God?
  - c) You meant it for evil.
  - d) God meant it for good.

**Point:** Realize that the same Hebrew verb (נִשְׁחַח) is used in both of these statements. Joseph's brothers really intended what they did for evil, but God really intended what the brothers did for good. God was in control over everything that happened to Joseph. Because of this realization, Joseph could submit to God's providence in light of God's character.

2. What was the key to this attitude? How did Joseph get there?
  - a) He understood and embraced the sovereignty of God over all his circumstances.
    - (1) This took the focus off of his pain.
    - (2) This took the focus off of his brothers.
    - (3) This put the focus squarely on God.

**III. The Expansion of our Theme**

**A. God is in control over the good things.**

1. He is in control over your life.
  - a) **Psalm 139:16** Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them.
2. He is in control over your blessings
  - a) **James 1:17** Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.
3. He is in control over your salvation
  - a) **Acts 13:48** When the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.
  - b) **John 1:12-13** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**B. God is in control over the bad things.**

1. His purpose stood in the hardships of Joseph.
  - a) That is the whole point of our text this morning.
2. His purpose stood in the death of Christ.

**Point:** It is impossible to imagine a greater miscarriage of justice than what the Jewish leaders did to Jesus. Never in the history of the Universe has there been anyone this innocent punished to this extent. Yet, the Bible is very clear that God was in control of this. He was not at a loss. He was not scrambling to adjust. He was in absolute control.

- a) **Acts 2:23** this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.
- b) **Acts 4:27-28** "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

### C. God is in control over all things.

- a) God is in control of “random” events.
  - (1) A roll of the dice—**Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.
  - (2) A bird falling from the sky—**Matthew 10:29** “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.
- b) Our decisions
  - (1) **Proverbs 16:9** The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.
- c) Everything
  - (1) **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

**Possible Objection:** How does this work with human freedom and responsibility? How can God allow evil? Ultimately, we have to exercise faith here, no matter what theological system we tend to gravitate towards. We certainly can’t solve these issues in a sermon or even in a lifetime of sermons.

**Deuteronomy 29:29** “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

### IV. Conclusions—What does this call us to?

- A. Reverence
- B. Trust
- C. Submission
- D. Communion—The Lord’s Supper
  - 1. Communion is the celebration of God’s sovereignty.
    - a) His sovereignty in providing a sacrifice for us.
      - (1) **Isaiah 53:10** But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.