

Huddle

*Ordered—Sovereign and Provident
July 14, 2013*

Who or what has had the biggest influence upon your life?

This week, we start a new series titled "Ordered", where we will look at how are lives are ordered by God. We kick off by looking at how God is sovereign or provident.

What comes to your mind when people say God is sovereign or provident?

Nils Bohr said "God does not play dice with the Universe." In his argument with Albert Einstein, who believed everything is 100% predictable given sufficient understanding of the data, Bohr replied "Stop telling God what to do, Albert".

If you could tell God what to do in one area of your life, what would it be and why?

Psalm 33:4-14 For the word of the Lord is right, And all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance. The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works. NKJV

Which parts of this Psalm stand out most powerfully?

Sometimes we forget God is not random! The human probabilities are pretty much "impossibilities", but remember, nothing is too hard for God, and "all things are possible for them who believe"!

"To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible." **A. W. Pink**, *The Sovereignty of God*, chapter 1

We are born for purpose, for missions, for assignment. We have a reason for being! Our steps have been ordained by the Almighty Creator of the universe!

Definition: Sovereignty means God, as the ruler of the Universe, has the right to do whatever He wants. Further, He is in complete control over everything that happens.

Psalm 115:3 *Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. (NIV)*

What feelings are stirred up when you hear this definition of God's sovereignty?

Let's Get Real!

How does your understanding of God's sovereignty impact your desire to interact with Him every day?

"The Sovereignty of God is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works not just some things but all things according to the counsel of His own will (see Eph. 1:11). His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted (see Isa. 46:11); nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things, but that He does so, always and without exception. In other words, God is not merely sovereign de jure (in principle), but sovereign de facto (in practice). God acts in accordance with the laws and principles that He has established in the world. The laws of nature are nothing more than man's description of how we perceive God at work in the world. They neither have inherent power nor do they work by themselves. This is the essence of God's sovereignty; His absolute independence to do as He pleases and His absolute control over the actions of all His creatures. No creature, person, or empire can either thwart His will or act outside the bounds of His will." **Jerry Bridges**, *Trusting God*, 1988, p. 36.

What does divine providence mean to you?

Pastor Phil has often said "we don't live by luck, chance, happenstance, coincidence, haphazardness, or randomness. We live by providence." This means Man is not free to choose and act independently from God's will and plan; he chooses and acts in accordance with them. In His sovereignty, God controls man's choices and actions (Gen 45:5; Deut 8:18; Prov 21:1). God's actions, however, do not violate the reality of human choice or negate man's responsibility as a moral being. God permits sinful acts to occur, but He does not cause man to sin (Gen 45:5; Rom 9:22). He often overrules evil for good (Gen 50:20; Acts 3:13).

When has God overridden the evil in your heart, decisions, or actions to still bring about His good?

Our past defeats, victories, blessings, and blunders have led us to the very place we are today. It is not by chance.

Walk it Out

What has God providentially ordered for you this week? Are you ready to agree with His will?