

God's Sovereignty

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[0 : 00] Oh, Heavenly Father, it is daunting to try and think about your greatness and your majesty and your glory! We're very conscious of not only the inadequacy of our minds to grasp this truth, but also the sinfulness of our hearts, which pushes against this kind of truth about your bigness and your greatness.

So, Lord, we pray this evening that you would especially help us, not only in sort of understanding the concepts here, but also joyfully submitting to your greatness and your majesty and your glory. Lord, we do recognize that you revealing your greatness to us, even though we can't grasp it or understand it fully, you do reveal it to us because you love us and you want us to know you.

And so we pray that we'd submit with joy as we read your word together this evening, as we think about it. In Jesus' name. Amen. Good evening. Come and join us.

Sit on the back row that we took away. Yeah, there you go. We've come this evening to chapter three of the Baptist Confession of Faith and to what it calls God's decrees.

[1 : 17] Let me give you a brief recap. It's been a couple of weeks. So these sessions, we've been looking at how the 1689 Baptist Confession outlines answers to questions that we're all still asking.

The 1689 Baptist Confession, if you've never heard of it, was an amended version of the Westminster Confession, which was written just down the road at Westminster Abbey in the Jerusalem Room, which apparently you're not allowed to go into. But anyway, you can go and ask if you like.

The Westminster Confession was written in the midst of the English Civil War when Parliament was fighting the crown. And it was quickly followed and largely copied and pasted by the Savoy Declaration, which was written by the Congregationalists.

And then the Baptist Confession, which was written by the Baptist. Now, the decrees of God in chapter three are all about God's sovereignty. That is God's power over all things.

This is the idea that God rules and reigns not only just over the good things in our world, but also over the bad things, the evil things in our world. That all things, everything without exception is accomplishing God's plan.

[2 : 27] So both good and wicked accomplish the purposes of God. Now, before we dive into what the Confession says, I want to read to you a string of Bible references.

My intention here is to overwhelm you, right? Not just in a kind of like, oh, my goodness, there's so much information. I can't take it all in, but it will do that. But also, I want you to see that this is that the writers of the Confession are trying to capture a theme that comes all the way through the scriptures, right?

They're not just kind of proof texting an idea off just a couple of verses. So I want to start at the beginning of the Bible. We're going to start in Genesis chapter 50. Genesis chapter 50, Joseph's brothers following the death of their father, Jacob, are worried that Joseph might now take the opportunity to pay them back for selling him into slavery.

And so Joseph replies to them. But Joseph said to them, don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Now, notice what he says. He doesn't say, you intended to harm me, but God allowed you to do it. He doesn't even say God knew what would happen.

[3 : 49] Rather, he says, in a parallel to them, you intended it for evil. God intended it for good. So although the brothers intended it, it was in their will to do it, their intentions, their will only ever accomplished what God's intention was.

Now, when you start to think about the implications of all that, it is incredible, isn't it? It means that in all of the intentions of the brothers' hearts in throwing Joseph down the well, in selling him into slavery, all of those intentions were submitting to, in some sense, unconsciously to the grand intentions of God to save his people.

And so he was involved even at that level of what was going on. Not just knowing, but intending to accomplish a purpose.

Exodus chapter 3, God speaking to Moses about how he's going to work in freeing the Israelites from Egypt. He says this, Notice this, that God's will shapes the disposition of the Egyptians towards the Israelites.

That the Egyptians aren't coerced against their will to give generously to the Israelites as they leave, but rather that the Egyptians willingly give their gold and silver to the Israelites as they leave, because God willed it.

[5 : 36] So God wills it, and they carry it out willingly. Their will turns out to be God's sovereign will. Jump forward a few books in the Bible to 1 Samuel chapter 19.

Here we have the nation of Israel under Saul, and David is the king in waiting. Everybody knows it. David is growing in popularity. They sing the song, don't they, that David's killed a lot more people than Saul.

Everyone is more excited about David than they are about Saul. Listen to what is said about Saul. Once more, war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.

But an evil spirit from the Lord came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, while David was playing the lyre.

Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. At night, David made good his escape. It's incredible, isn't it?

[6 : 35] God is not evil, right? God is holy. That is the witness of all the scriptures. But still, God is in control of Saul's evil intentions in such a way that it is described as he sends the evil spirit into Saul, which gives him the desire to kill David.

The desire to kill David is not God's desire. That's a wicked desire, isn't it? But the desire that Saul has to kill David is not outside of God's control. In fact, he stands behind it.

It works in submission to his will and his purpose. King Ahab, the king of Israel, the bad king.

I would love to read you the whole story. But basically, this is what's going on. They're about to go into war together. The king of Israel is going to go with the king of Judah. And they seek out the prophets to see what the outcome is going to be.

And they all prophesy that it's going to be amazing and that King Ahab is going to win a victory. And then Micaiah continues. He says, One suggested this and another that.

[7 : 59] And finally, a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. By what means? The Lord asked. I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, he said.

You will succeed in enticing him, said the Lord. Go and do it. So now the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.

It carries on. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth Gilead. This is where they're going to have the great success because all the prophets have said they're going to be really successful.

But the prophets decreeing success is because of a deceiving spirit that the Lord has put in their mouths. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.

So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. Now the king of Aram had ordered his 32 chariot commanders, don't fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.

[9 : 02] When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought surely this is the king of Israel. So they turned to attack him. But when Jehoshaphat cried out, the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him.

But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, wheel around and get me out of the fighting.

I've been wounded. All day long, the battle raged and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot and that evening he died.

As the sun was setting, a cry spread through the army, every man to his town, every man to his land. So the king died and was brought to Samaria and they buried him there. They washed the chariot at the pool in Samaria where the prostitutes bathed and the dogs licked up his blood as the word of the Lord had declared.

Now, right, that's a longer passage and we don't have time to get into the detail of it. But just notice the depth of God's control. God puts the lying spirit into the lives of the prophets so that they entice him into battle.

[10:11] This is just like with Saul again, isn't it? It's exactly the same kind of language. And then he, God is so in charge that the apparently random firing of an arrow through the sky in the heat of battle, it lands in the only place possible for it to kill King Ahab.

Now think about what that means. It means that God's suffering control is over the flight of every arrow, the flight of every drone or every missile or every bullet, all landing in exact spot in which the Lord intends it to.

And it's not just that he's governing the physics of that, right? That might be one thing for us to believe, that God governs the physics of our world so that objects fly in certain directions.

He also rules over the desires of human hearts that are involved in the firing of those arrows as well. Now that's all Old Testament narrative stories.

I could have given you more, but the Old Testament stories of God's sovereign power are just a small sample of how the Bible deals with God's sovereignty. The prophets then come. And in lots of ways, the prophets are the preachers of the Old Testament.

[11:20] They take what's written, especially in the law and in the accounts of history and the revelation of God that they're receiving and they preach it to the people. And what do they say? Well, here's a couple of examples.

Isaiah 46. Remember the former things, those of long ago. I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me.

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say my purpose will stand and I will do all that I please. From the East, I summon a bird of prey, from a far off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.

What I have said, that I will bring about. What I have planned, that I will do. Exactly the same idea, isn't it? God's will governs and rules history.

He is God. There is none like him. He does what he pleases, even to the point of summoning birds of prey, foreign armies and leaders to come and accomplish what he has planned because what he has planned is what he will do using all means because all means are in his control.

[12:30] Now you jump forward to the New Testament, you find that Jesus speaks of God's authority in this same way to account for people's attitudes towards him. So now we've moved from sort of geopolitics, now into the areas of belief and unbelief and attitudes to Jesus.

Jesus, if you like, is the new Joseph. He is the new people of God. He is the new David. And so what we're seeing in God's sovereignty and control over their attitudes to those people is now seen in their attitudes to Jesus himself.

John chapter six, Notice that.

For people to come to Jesus, it has to be God's action first. He has to enable them. Coming to Jesus is impossible for them without the enabling of God.

God's will has to make the first move. God has to will it and enable it. Again, same idea. John chapter 10, Jesus answered, I did tell you, I did tell you I was the Messiah, but you did not believe.

[13:48] The works I do in my father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one shall snatch them out of my hand. The unbelief of the people is because they are not my sheep.

So they will not listen to his voice. Interestingly, what they respond, the Jews after this is, what do they say? We're not going to listen to him. That's what they say. Why listen to him? He's crazy.

Don't listen to him. But they don't listen because they are not his sheep and so they do not believe. The early church then in the book of Acts bring the same doctrine to the fore and they use it to explain the atonement, Jesus' death at the cross.

So the church pray, Acts chapter four, they say, indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant, Jesus, whom

you had anointed.

[14:51] They did. So they conspired against Jesus, right? They planned and they plotted. But they did, verse 28, what your power and will had decided beforehand would happen.

In other words, even in following their desires, even in their plotting and their scheming, they are only ever doing what God had already decided should happen. Again, it's the same idea, isn't it? Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel, even in their conspiring, are only ever accomplishing what God had decided would happen. Now, then the epistles, the apostles take this same doctrine, not only to explain our reactions to Jesus, not only to explain the atonement, not only to explain history, but also to explain personally how you and I experience salvation.

Ephesians chapter one, praise be to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Why? For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves.

[16:08] In other words, our belief finds its root, not in our hearts first, but in the eternal will of God who decided before the creation who would be saved.

Those are the ones predestined, not because of anything they had done, because they have, by definition, not done anything, not just because they were going to become Christians anyway, but because God decided.

The root of the action is in the will of God. He decides for reasons not given and for reasons only contained within himself, because at that point, nothing else existed.

So God's sovereign will over belief and unbelief, over our responses to Jesus, over the atonement, over the events of all of history. Those are just a quick run through some Bible passages.

Talk to the person next to you. What is striking or surprising about what we've read? What does it mean about God and what he is like? Have a think about those questions for a moment. We'll feedback, and then we'll come up with four conclusions.

[17:11] Go for it. Okay. Any, anyone want to feedback? Anything that was said in a Greek? Yes, come.

Come. You said something helpful about the section, the 1 Samuel verses, about the evil spirit from the Lord.

You said a line about something like how, although God, God and wickedness can't be together, I just, I thought that was helpful when you said it, but it's just a problem.

Okay. I'm not quite sure what I said. So, He's not making the evil, like, no. I think it's like, if you've called it, God's made that back.

Right. Yeah. God is in control of Saul's evil intentions in such a way that he is able to send the evil spirit into Saul so that he seeks to kill David.

[18:26] The desire to kill David is not God's, that's wicked, but the desire that Saul had to kill David is not outside of God's control. In fact, he stands behind it. Yeah, so, the Bible is really clear that God is not wicked, but he stands behind wickedness in such a way that he is not morally responsible for it, but it is not outside of his control.

And it's really important that we hold that. We don't know all of the details about how exactly that works. But if that is not true, you have a world in which God's purposes can be thwarted.

You and I might not be saved. Right? The church might not survive. The gates of hell might prevail. Yeah? But we're told they won't because God is so...

Yeah. Dane, did you have your hand up? Were you... No, no. That's right. Okay. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. And also, what's the point in praying if God can't answer the prayers?

Yes. What's the point in praying if God can't answer the prayers? Jim Packer, speaking, I think, to university students, I think in Cambridge, I don't know, probably in Cambridge, but it's always there, isn't it?

[19:37] Right? In the... It becomes a book called Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, and he says, I know you all already believe in God's sovereignty over belief and unbelief, and I can prove it to you.

You all pray for your friends and family to come to know Christ. And if God had no power or control, what would be the point in praying? Because you're better off stop wasting your time praying and go

and nag them to become a Christian because the solution lies in their heart, not in God's. Great. Let me conclude with the four things that the confessions sort of greet these together, and we can ask questions along the way through. The confessions essentially then say four things about God's decrees.

They take passages like the ones that we've looked at and others, and this is what they say. The number one thing, God is in charge of everything. The creed puts it like this. From all eternity, God decreed everything that occurs without reference to anything outside himself because there wasn't anything outside himself, right?

He did this by the perfectly wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably. Yet God did this in such a way that he is neither the author of sin nor has any fellowship with any in their sin. [21 : 07] This decree does not violate the will of the creature or take away the free working or contingency, dependency, on second causes.

On the contrary, these are established by God's decree. In this decree, God's wisdom is displayed in directing all things and his power and faithfulness are demonstrated in accomplishing his decree. Notice here that the confession wants to say that it is not God's sovereignty versus human freedom, right? Both of those exist at the same time and actually it is God's sovereignty itself, his power over all things, which provides the realm for human freedom.

Without God's sovereignty, you would have no freedom. Without God's power and control over all things, you would have no freedom or responsibility. So that's how it states it.

The point is that God rules over big things, small things, hidden things, invisible things. He decrees, declares, decides what will happen, not by seeking somebody else, but in himself.

[22 : 19] And notice again, this is what we were talking about with Daisy, he is not the author of sin, he is not morally responsible for it, he is not being wicked, but neither is he forcing or violating the will of the creature.

So people do what they want, the archer wanted to fire the arrow, the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, Joseph's brothers wanted to sell him into slavery, but still the Lord decrees those things to accomplish his purposes.

Now the point of this is that we would see his wisdom, God is the author of the story, works all things to accomplish his decrees. Now one of the ways that theologians have sort of tried to square the circle, is that what you're saying?

Or whatever, about this, is to talk about the two wills of God, not in opposition to one another, but sort of over one another. So they talk about God's sovereign will and God's moral will.

Okay, so God has a sovereign will over all things which cannot be thwarted or defeated. So let's think about the cross. It is in God's eternal plan from before the foundation of the world that God the Son would take on human flesh and die on a cross for the sins of his people, right?

[23 : 33] That is in God's sovereign overall plan that cannot be thwarted or changed. And yet in his moral will, right, in terms of what God wants and desires for people, what is moral and good, having murderous intent towards the divine Son in human flesh is about as wicked as you can get, right?

There isn't really anything as immoral as that, right? That is the height of immorality. So you've got the cross being both in his sovereign will but against his moral will.

And lots of things work out like that, don't they? So that God can sovereignly decide that something against his moral will will happen whilst he is not morally responsible for it in order to accomplish his purposes in glory.

And that's exactly how it works with the cross, isn't it? People are held responsible for the wickedness of killing the Son and yet in their wickedness they accomplish God's sovereign plan and purpose.

You might want to say all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Secondly, this is more than knowing what will happen.

[24 : 48] I think, say, we were talking in the group at the back there a moment ago just that the question that comes to mind is why? Why? Why? Like why? Why choose some people and not all people?

And we don't know the answers to these questions, don't we? So sometimes what we try and do is accommodate God's sovereignty to something that we can understand. So we might want to say, oh well God, because he's sort of outside of time and because he is bigger and greater than anyone or anything else, he can sort of see what will happen in human freedom and he can sort of

retrospectively decide that and foresee it.

But the creed is very, or the confession is very careful to say that that is not the case. It's more than Jesus just knew who would believe in him and so settled on choosing them.

It's rather that God's intentions in those things are being achieved. So chapter three, part two, the confession says, God knows everything that could happen under any given conditions.

However, his decree of anything is not based on foreseeing it in the future or foreseeing that it would occur under such conditions. In other words, he's not just like a really good chess player who can see like ten moves ahead or whatever and then just outmaneuvers everybody to accomplish what he wants.

[26 : 06] Rather, actually, his will is what decides what will happen. God stands over history. He is the author of history. Now, that's really important, isn't it?

Because it means that he is not a passenger of fate or human freedom who just happens to know where things might go and just is a better player of history than you or I.

The Bible never talks about God like that. God intends Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery, which means that he steered even Joseph's arrogance and his brother's hatred of his arrogance. He provided the well for them at just the right opportunity. He made sure, didn't he, that Reuben didn't have a chance to rescue him so that he would get sold into slavery. Number three, this decree includes salvation.

This is probably the most difficult part of all this. It's one thing, isn't it, to realize that God decrees events. It's another thing to see and admit that he governs belief and unbelief too. But again, that's what we found in the scriptures.

[27 : 09] Jesus says it, no one can come to me unless the Father enables it. You do not believe in me because you're not my sheep. And so the confession says, by God's decree and for the demonstration of his glory, some men and angels, men using as in humanity, are predestined or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of his glorious grace, echoing Ephesians 1.

Others are left to live in their sin, leading to their just condemnation to the praise of his glorious grace. Part five, those men and women who are predestined to life were chosen by God before the foundation of the world according to his eternal and unchangeable purpose in the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will.

He chose them in Christ for eternal glory purely as a result of his free grace and love without anything else about them serving as a condition or cause moving him to do so.

Now it's really important that you read this carefully. The confession is really clear to separate belief and unbelief and how God stands behind both those things.

So notice what he says in chapter 3, part 3. Notice he says, God's decree and for the demonstration of his glory, some men and angels are predestined or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of his glorious grace.

[28 : 36] Others are left to live in their sin. The confession is surprised by the grace of God to sinners, not the condemnation of sinners.

Right? Left to our own devices, we would all be lost and condemned. That's the point, isn't it? The wonder of the confession, the wonder of the scriptures, the wonder of Ephesians 1 is that God in his kindness chooses to save any because nobody deserves it.

There is no condition in humanity which deserves the salvation that we receive in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing in us that would deserve the love that Christ has shown in coming and dying on the cross.

So there can't be a reason in us. And so he stands behind belief and unbelief in slightly different ways, doesn't he? He graciously and for reasons only known and understood by himself, he loves and saves some and others are left to live in their sin leading to their just condemnation to the praise of his glorious grace.

Now I realize that it is difficult. The asymmetry between them is important to hold on to but it doesn't answer all of our questions. But really I think we're supposed to be in awe and wonder that God for some reason known only to himself has chosen to love us.

[30 : 00] As he describes in the Old Testament when he's trying to explain why he loves Israel, he says, I loved you because the next phrase, I loved you because I loved you.

That's his answer. I loved you because I loved you. You want to know a reason for my love? It's because of my love. The cause is within God himself.

Now just think about what that means, right? Just think how that works, right? Just think that God stands behind then in his sovereign power all things that brought you to faith in Jesus Christ.

Now I can't remember everyone's testimony. I was trying to think of someone's testimony here but I'm going to pick Ray and you can correct me, Ray, where I'm wrong, right? So the Lord sovereignly decided that Ray would be born on Salisbury Road above the laundrette, right?

And that in his teenage years he would encounter the gospel and be drawn into friendships with other believers. And so it's not an accident that those people were in his life at that time.

[31 : 12] You know, the conversations that were had that encouraged Ray to start thinking about the gospel, they were not accidents, right? The Lord did that.

Now why would the Lord do that? Well because in time eternity before Ray even existed, the Lord chose to love him and save him and as he sovereignly rules over all things, organises all of that for the purpose of eventually Ray freely responding to the call of the gospel in his life.

And if you're a Christian this evening, God's done all of that for you. I had the privilege of being raised by Christian parents who prayed for me and shared the gospel with me.

Oh yeah, well that just means that you're conditioned to believe. You've never really kind of had chance to freely respond to the gospel. What if God is so sovereign that his intention to save me involved placing me in the particular family that he placed me in whereby I would hear the gospel in the way that I did in order for me to be saved?

You know, the flyer that was left on the car windscreen, the person that gave the gospel to you as you were walking out the tube station, you know, the Christian friend who just wouldn't give up inviting you to church, none of that was an accident.

[32 : 38] None of that was an accident. The Lord stands behind it all working in order to accomplish his purpose in eternity. Incredible, isn't it? Incredible truth. Okay.

Just as God has appointed the elect to glory, so he has, by the eternal and completely free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means. It's how the confession puts it. I don't know whether I put that on your handout.

He's foreordained all the means. Isn't just that he says this is the end, but he goes, this is how we're going to get there as well. Finally, number four, and this is really important.

We're going to end here. Oh gosh, it's nearly 7.30. We need to treat this doctrine with great care.

Yeah, this is really important. I think our struggles with the doctrine of God's sovereignty are probably not so much to do with the logic of it or the absence of Bible material on it.

There's so much Bible material on it and actually, the logic of it in terms of the bigness of God makes absolute sense, doesn't it, of the God that we worship. The problem that we have with it is that it's badly used or abused by Christians who wrongly apply the doctrine or contradict other things that the Bible also says which we'll come to in weeks to come.

[33 : 46] So the Confession says this in its final section on the decrees of God. It says this, the doctrine of the high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care so that those heeding the will of God revealed in his word and obeying him may be assured of their eternal election by the certainty of their effectual calling.

In this way, the doctrine will give reasons for praise, reverence and admiration of God as well as humility, diligence and rich comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel.

Here's the point, the Bible's teaching on God's sovereignty and his predestination of those who would believe is not written, one, to answer all the questions you might have, it's not. Two, it's not written to contradict human freedom and responsibility because the Bible teaches that too.

Three, it's not written to prevent you from sharing the gospel with people or praying for people, it's exactly the opposite. Instead, it's written because God wants you to know that you are saved because he loves you.

Ultimately, he is holding you, you are not holding him and he wants you to know that because if you think your Christian life is you holding on to God, you will not make it.

[35 : 08] Only if you understand and only if it's true, which it is, that God holds on to us will we make it to glory because if you know anything about yourself, you should know that your grip on God is way too weak to last through life's trials and purposes.

But God has a hold on you, says the confession, says God's words, and history is accomplishing his purpose. He will finish what he has started in your life. He's not just working it out on the fly. Whoa, didn't realize that would happen. Goodness me, I didn't realize that their children would be wayward or difficult. I didn't realize that their parents would not approve of their new faith in Jesus Christ.

He's not shocked by any of those things, is he? But he's working all things out for the purpose of his glory, that you can trust him and praise him and give him all the glory.

I've finished there. Any questions as we wrap it up? Yes. So, like, how does this inform our daily lives?

[36 : 17] I understand how, like, completely understand how predestination is comforting to us and is something that we can fall back on. But, like, in our daily lives, how does this impact?

Like, does God, if I miss a bus, God's sovereignty is that? If I choose what, and the vitamin S, does God's sovereignty end up? How does that live through the daily life besides salvation?

Yes. If God is sovereign over all things, how does that affect daily life? So, it shouldn't paralyze you into not making any decisions, right?

Because God gives you responsibility to make decisions and to move forwards and to do things.

You know, you can't go into M&S; and just say, I'm just going to stand here until God writes in the sky what I'm, you all right?

Yeah. So, you are to go and move forward and make those decisions. But you are to understand that underlying all of those things is God's sovereign purposes that can never be thwarted.

[37 : 15] So, if you take those two wills, I seek to live my life in obedience to God's moral will. But it is not my ability to live according to his moral will that will determine ultimately the ends.

That is in God's sovereign purposes, isn't it? So, even when I sin, I don't worry that God's purposes and glory are going to be thwarted by that because even those things are in his control.

So, it brings great comfort to me and it relieves a lot of anxiety and stress. So, like you say, yeah, the bus that you missed, that's in God's plan and purpose, isn't it?

You may, that doesn't mean that it will become obvious why that happened, does it? You may never know, but you do know that that is in God's sovereign hands. You know, when you worry and you panic, you basically have to say to yourself, don't you, you know, Lola, Steve, whatever, do you really genuinely believe in the bigness of God?

Or do you suddenly think that God is now out of control and that all of these things have happened because he's just kind of lost it? Oh, no, I don't believe that. Oh, right, okay.

[38 : 26] It will all be all right then. Everything will be okay. I don't, in terms of doctrines, like the kind of cash value of that in my day-to-day life is massive, absolutely massive.

Yeah. Any other questions? So where is our responsibility in the whole scheme of things? Right, where is our responsibility in the whole scheme of things?

We will come to that, right? So we do have responsibility and we are held responsible for our obedience or disobedience to God's moral will. Absolutely right. That, that responsibility is, is not in opposition to God's sovereign will and purpose.

It is secured by his sovereign will and purpose. But you're still, you and I are still held morally responsible for what we do. You know, so, you know, Galatians 6, don't, you know, don't be deceived.

God cannot be mocked. You reap what you sow, right? So there is a, a direct relationship between what we do and the lives that we receive. But even that is in God's sovereign plan and purpose.

[39 : 34] Ultimately, you have to say, don't you Clifford, that you don't understand, I don't understand, exactly how, what the Bible says about my responsibility and God's sovereignty can be married together. I don't understand that.

I do know that the Bible teaches both and I can't kick this one out in order to keep this one and I can't kick that one out to keep this one. I have to hold the two in tension with one another because the Bible says both.

Well, my good intention exists. Yeah. Yes. I can't resolve it for you ultimately. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Great. Let me pray. I know we've run over time but that was all in God's plan. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, what a wonderful joy it is to know that we leave this room tonight absolutely inside your will and your sovereign purposes that nothing that will happen to us will come as a surprise to you or outside of your intentions for us.

Thank you that we can know that what you've started in our hearts, you will finish. There is a day when we will stand transformed into Christlikeness, living with you for all eternity in a world remade by your power for your glory forever and ever.

[40 : 52] We long for that day and we know we will be there because you are holding us, not us holding you. And all things in our lives, little and big, are working together for your good purposes.

So we pray that we'd trust that and we'd enjoy that this week. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.