

Man Proposes, God Disposes

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[0:00] Just about the way we live. We might often think about that. It's got things to say about my anger and my patience and my laziness and my hard work and my humility and my pride and my sexuality and my sexuality and all of these things.

Ways that we live. Things that should mark or should not mark us as believers, as followers of Christ. But the wisdom of Proverbs isn't only about the way we live as we walk through this world. There's more to it than that.

But the wisdom of Proverbs also teaches us something about the God of wisdom, not just the way to wisely walk, but the God who directs us in that way.

You can learn something of the attributes of God or at least some of them as you read through Proverbs. You can learn that he is wise, that he is to be feared and worshipped.

All sorts of things that we could learn about God, at least by implication, some things explicitly. And so our topic tonight certainly has implications for the way that we live.

[1:01] And I want to dig into some of those tonight. But I especially want to see something of God himself. So what is it? Which attribute of God? Have you ever heard the saying, the proverb, as it were?

We have proverbs that you won't find in Scripture. You ever heard something like a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush? Or so I'm not going to explain that one for you tonight. We have proverbs. We have sayings like that. Well, one of those sayings that has come down to us is, and somebody, I want somebody here to help me a little bit. I'll give you the first half and we'll see if somebody knows the second half.

All right. So man proposes. God disposes. All right. Man proposes. God disposes. Man makes his plans, but they don't always stand because God's plans might be different.

Well, it's striking. There's actually a number of biblical proverbs that sound a lot like that. That one is generally credited to a guy named Thomas Akempis. He lived back in the 14th century, 1400s, 15th century.

[2:10] And it pretty closely tracks with some of the proverbs that you'll find in God's proverbs, the book of wisdom that he's given us. So I've turned you to Proverbs 16. As we do these topically, we jump all around proverbs.

Don't feel like you need to turn to every one. There's quite a number of them tonight that happen to be in Proverbs 16. If you want to hang out there and find those ones as we go, that's fine. If you want to try to turn to all of them, that's fine, too.

But we'll start here. Proverbs 16, the very first verse, the plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

Do you hear in there? Man proposes, God disposes. Plans of heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue, that comes from God. Proverbs 19 and verse 21, many are of the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

Man proposes, God disposes. Proverbs 21, 31, the horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.

[3:16] So based on those few Proverbs that I've just read for you, who can be brave enough to call out what you think our attribute of God that we're going to consider tonight might be?

Sovereignty. Yeah, who's Steve back there? Yeah, the sovereignty of God. And friends, what I have to tell you tonight is not earth shattering.

It is actually if you've never been taught it before. But for you all, it won't be paradigm shifting. It will be truth that you know, truth that is familiar.

But I trust it will be truth that is comforting. I want us to see, among other things, the comfort of the sovereignty of God. When our plans have been so well laid. And God comes along and says, my plans are different than yours. And we don't understand. And it hurts. And it's difficult.

[4 : 22] I want us to see something of the comfort of the sovereignty of God tonight. The reality of the responsibility of man. Yes, but also the comfort of the sovereignty of God.

And so our two points tonight are our first plan well. Or we could, if we want to be a little more theological or something, that would be about this, the responsibility of man. Plan well. And the second rest in God's plan. And we need both. Scripture teaches us both. And I know you know that, but I hope you'll be encouraged to hear it again tonight.

So first of all, plan well. As you've just heard, some of the proverbs on the subject of God's sovereignty also make reference to the plans of men. That's where that expression, man proposes or plans, God disposes, comes in.

Because his plan may be different than ours. So we just read 16.1, 19.21, and 21.23. Here's another from chapter 16. If you're still there. Verse 9.

[5 : 24] The heart of man plans his way. But the Lord establishes his steps. So those proverbs in pointing us to God's perfect plan and his faultless execution of that plan.

Those don't mean that we should give up planning. Oh, God's got a plan. I guess I'll just wait and see what it is. It doesn't throw out the window our responsibility. The reality of Proverbs 27.1. Do not boast about tomorrow. For you do not know what a day may bring. That reality doesn't mean that we shouldn't plan for tomorrow. Just that we should not boast about it. Matthew Henry says, This does not forbid preparing for tomorrow, but presuming upon tomorrow.

In other words, Again, when we talk about God's sovereignty, we're not denying man's responsibility. The reality, for example, that God sovereignly saves sinners does not remove the responsibility of sinners to come to Jesus in repentance and faith.

The sovereignty of God and salvation does not remove our obligation to evangelize and do missions and make the free offer of the gospel. We've considered the rich and the poor from Proverbs down in Warsaw.

[6 : 43] And the reality that God provides for and protects and looks out for the poor does not mean that we can ignore them. The reality that the Lord will provide.

We sing that. The promise assures us the Lord will provide. That reality does not remove our responsibility to work hard and to seek to provide for our families.

The faithfulness of God does not permit faithlessness on our part. And so when Proverbs says things like what we've read, it doesn't mean don't plan.

Proverbs teaches us the example of the ant in chapter 6. Go to the ant, O sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise. And what is one of the things to learn from the ant? Proverbs 6 and verse 8. She prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. She plans. She prepares. She gets ready. She anticipates what is to come. Proverbs 15, 22.

[7 : 40] Without counsel, plans fail. But with many advisors, they succeed. You want to make plans that will succeed? Have many advisors. It doesn't say don't make plans. It says make them well.

Do it with advice and counsel and help. And so plan well. Again, that first point tonight in talking about God's sovereignty is our responsibility to plan.

Our responsibility to have resources and to be adequately prepared for whatever occasion may arise. If you've got a job interview, you better go appropriately dressed for a job interview for the company that you are interviewing with.

And you better go ready with some answers to typical or maybe not typical interview questions. Do some research. Go and ready. Know the company that you're interviewing with. Know some things about them and their product and whatever else and the assets that you bring to that company. Be prepared. I know it's summer. So maybe you students are not thinking about school at all. But think about it with me for a minute. Is it good and right for you when you have a test to say, well, God's sovereign.

[8 : 45] I'm going to get the grade I'm going to get. No. Proverbs teaches us to plan well to study and to do our work so that we are ready for that exam when it comes.

When I come to preach, I can't just walk up here, decide what to preach and come up with a sermon on the spot. Some people are perhaps more gifted in that way, but it takes preparation.

I've got notes. We have to prepare. We have to plan. When it comes to paying the bills, you better not have blown your paycheck on frivolous things, expecting the sovereign intervention of God to pay the electric bill.

You have a plan for your money. That's what a budget is. It's a plan for your money. So, you know, this many dollars in this many dollars out and you make a plan to be a good steward of what God has given you. Listen, never, never use the sovereignty of God as an excuse to shirk your God given responsibility.

Just don't do it in any area of life. Scripture simply doesn't allow us to do that. It's a dangerous ditch on one side of this path of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility that we must walk so carefully.

[10:00] One ditch is to ignore man's responsibility, say God is sovereign and whatever happened will happen. Stay out of that ditch. And so when you think about your work, if you neglect your responsibility and latch on to God's promise to provide in an unhealthy way, then you might become slack or lazy or not work at all and you become apathetic and presumptuous.

It has implications for our prayer life. If we overemphasize God's sovereignty, we'll leave off praying altogether. If God's in control, he's going to do what he's going to do.

Why should I bother praying about it? Which, by the way, doing these things neglects the reality that God has ordained the means and not just the end to the means.

He's ordained the whole thing. The end and the way to get there and part of the way to get there for providing for your family is your work. That's part of his plan. Part of the way he accomplishes great things is through your prayers.

That's part of his plan. And that's part of what he is sovereign over. And so make it part of your daily plan to pray and beseech the sovereign God. Think about our parenting.

[11:10] If we neglect our responsibility, we will be inconsistent, unconcerned, unfaithful parents who fail to teach and discipline our children. Again, neglecting that reality that God uses means to accomplish his ends.

He uses parents for the good of their children. You say, oh, it's the purpose of the Lord will stand. That's what that guy preached from Proverbs. Man plans his way, but the purpose of the Lord will stand. So I'm not going to plan my way.

I guess we'll just have to see how our kids turn out. You're misinterpreting the Proverbs if you read them that way in the rest of Scripture. Evangelism.

Fail to focus on man's responsibility. We won't do it. Or make that free offer of the Gospel. Missions will sit back and fail to act. And sadly, many have gone in that direction. They don't evangelize.

They don't do missions. They don't hold out the Gospel. Or they don't emphasize those things as the Scriptures do. God's going to save who He's going to save. Salvation itself.

[12:13] If you are here tonight and you have never come to Christ, you've never put your hope in the Savior, you maybe think it's interesting that your parents and these other people around here or your friends, your peers have done that.

Maybe you're not hostile toward it, but you're also not convinced. You're not sold. You haven't put your faith in Christ. Maybe you are hostile to it tonight. I can't know everyone's heart here.

Only God does. But if that describes you in any way that you haven't come to Christ, there's this great divide in all the people in the world, those who are in Christ and those who are not.

If you are one of those who is not, then I would urge you tonight to run to Christ. And we do that by crying out to Him with our words and saying, God, be merciful to me, this sinner.

And asking Him to apply the sin-bearing, sacrificial, atoning work of Christ to you. And to your seat. And sit in your seat and you can do that.

[13:17] And I would challenge you tonight to not sit back and say, everything I hear at that Grace Fellowship Church is God is sovereign over who is saved. He predestines. He elects.

I don't know if I'm one of those people or not. If I am, I'll be saved. And so I'm just going to sit and wait and see. No man comes to the Father unless God draws him. Waiting to be drawn.

You know what the same Jesus who said, no one comes to the Father but through me. No one comes unless God draws him. You know what that same Jesus said? He said, repent and believe.

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He doesn't give you any quarter to sit back and wait for God to call you. He calls you to run to Jesus.

Don't. Don't say God is sovereign. Don't let that be an excuse. And I don't care if you don't hear another, the rest of the sermon.

[14:13] I'm going to talk about God's plan and His sovereignty. And tune all that out. If you will sit there and, don't just tune it out. If you will sit there and I'll make a deal with you. You sit there and have dealings with God. And you run to Him in repentance and faith.

Right where you sit. And then come and talk to me after. Or come and talk to your pastor afterwards. Or somebody that you know or you trust. About what God might be doing in your heart. And how you want to cry out to Him.

And you're not sure. That's fine if you don't hear another word I say. Because your number one responsibility right now. And until you are safe in Christ. Is to get to Jesus. So friends. Proverbs isn't saying don't plan. Make sure that the horse is ready for the day of battle. It's urging us to acknowledge the Lord's plan. To submit our plans and will to His.

To recognize that just because we plan it doesn't mean it's necessarily going to come to pass. But in the meantime. Plan away. And plan well. Fulfill your God-given callings and responsibilities.

[15:16] Plan and work. But I think the main point of some of these proverbs is not to emphasize our planning. I don't want us to miss that. And I don't want us to misinterpret it. And that's why I spent that time that we did there.

But I don't think the main point is to emphasize our planning. But to point us to the reality of the sovereignty of God. Over all. His plan and purpose. And the reality that He brings it to pass. Perfectly. Now you might say you are talking out of both sides of your mouth. You're telling me that I should plan. And that I should submit to God's plan. And I tell you that I preach what the scripture says.

Even when I can't fully reconcile it in my own mind. And so point number two tonight. Rest in the Lord's plan. Again I want us especially to see the comfort of this reality of the sovereignty of God. But before we get to the comfort of it. Just consider the reality of it. That God is sovereign. He has the future in His hands. His purpose will stand.

[16:20] We said Proverbs 27.1 Do not boast about tomorrow. For you do not know what a day may bring. And the reason we don't boast about it. Is because we don't know what it will bring. Despite our best laid plans.

Because tomorrow. The future. Every day. Is in God's hands. So James says something very similar. Listen to here for you. The proverb is don't boast about tomorrow.

For you do not know what a day may bring. Now listen to James. New Testament. James 4.13-15 Come now you who say. Today or tomorrow we shall go. We will go into such and such a town. And spend a year there. And trade. And make a profit. Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. You hear it? Proverbs 27. You do not know what a day may bring.

James. You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? You might not be around tomorrow. For you are a mist that appears for a little time.

[17:18] And then. Vanishes. Instead you ought to say. If the Lord wills. We will live. And do this or that. You see God holds the future in his hands.

And he unfailingly brings it to pass. According to his good. Perfect. Plan. And counsel. It is his purpose. That will stand.

The answer of the tongue is. From the Lord. Even the outcome of things that appear to be chance. Is in God's hands. You're in Proverbs 16. If you're still there. Look at the last verse of Proverbs 16. Verse 33. The lot is cast into the lap. But it's every decision. Is from the Lord. Now in some situations.

That was a legitimate way for Israel to discern the Lord's providence. In those days. And it seems that's what's in view here. You don't know the Lord's plan. The way to do it. The way to figure it out.

[18:16] Is the casting of lots. In certain situations. And so that's the point. If you want to know. In some situations. You go back and read some of the regulations about that. But that's how you could find out what the Lord's plan was.

But the point still stands. I think. That something that has the appearance of random chance. To us. We don't know what number is going to come up. When we roll the dice. We draw straws.

We don't know who's going to get the shortest straw. It's random. All of that. Is in God's hands. It's every decision is from the Lord.

Even our steps. The path that we walk. That we choose. That we decide. I'm going to go this way. I'm going to take this route to church today. Instead of this road. I'm going to walk down this side of the sidewalk.

Instead of this. The bigger steps that we take. The person that we marry. And the job that we pursue. And the place to live. And the church that we attend. And the people that we spend time with.

[19 : 13] And the way we spend our money. All of those things. Our steps come from the Lord. Listen to Proverbs 20. And verse 24. A man's steps are from the Lord. How then can man understand his way?

And not just our steps. We are. By and large. An ordinary lot of people. I don't think there's any royalty here. I don't think there's any. Presidents here.

Of countries. We are just. We are just us. Just folks. So. It's not just us. Just ordinary people. Whose steps are determined by the Lord.

It's the king. Proverbs 21. And verse 1. The king's heart. Is a stream of water. In the hand of the Lord. He turns it. Wherever he will. His heart is in God's hands.

And he directs it. Proverbs 19. 21. Many are the plans in the mind of a man. But it is the purpose of the Lord. That will stand. It's God's purpose or counsel.

[20 : 13] So. From all of these Proverbs. That we've read. Tonight. Just notice a couple of things. About the sovereignty of God. One is that God has a purpose. A plan.

A counsel. Theologically. The term that we would use. You'll find it in our confession of faith. Is his decree. God has a plan.

He has foreordained. All that will come to pass. He has planned it. He has set it out. As a plan. His counsel. The second thing to notice.

So God has a plan. So man plans. But it is the plan of the Lord. The counsel of the Lord. That will stand. So he has a plan. A counsel. Second thing about all of these verses. That we see is that it will stand.

His plan doesn't fail. See I can have a plan. I can have a really good plan. And man. One thing. One sick kid. Or one flat tire.

[21 : 09] Or one unexpected medical bill. Or whatever. Can blow my plan all to smithereens. And it's gone. That never happens with God's plan.

He has a plan. A purpose. And it always. Always. Wouldn't that be amazing. If all of our plans came to pass. Just perfectly. It would be amazing. But it probably wouldn't be good. We wouldn't learn as much.

And I think God has a reason. For disrupting our plans. But God's plans always come to pass. Without fail. He brings them to pass. And we call that God's providence. He is bringing to pass his plan.

He's working it out in history. So he has a plan. And it never fails. He has his decree. And his providence. And taken together. There's other aspects we could talk about.

But that is God's sovereignty. And that's not just built on the Proverbs. The rest of scripture affirms it as well. You all know this. Let me just remind you from a few passages. Psalm 33 verses 10 and 11.

[22 : 06] The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing. He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart to all generations.

There it is in the Psalms. How about the prophets? Isaiah 46. 8-11. Remember this and stand firm. Recall it to mind you transgressors. Remember the former things of old.

For I am God. And there is no other. I am God. And there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning. And from ancient times. Things not yet done.

Saying. My counsel shall stand. And. I will accomplish all my purpose.

Calling. And here's one of his purposes. Calling a bird of prey from the east. The man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken. And I will bring it to pass.

[23 : 01] I have purposed. And I will do it. Now if we talk like that. James has a word for us. Ooh. You say if the Lord wills.

We will do this or that. God says I have will. And I am doing it. Ephesians 1-11. In him. We have obtained an inheritance.

Having been predestined according to the purpose of him. Who works all things. According to the counsel of his will. See. See there it is. He's working things. That's his providence. According to the counsel of his will.

There's his plan. His decree. Bringing it all to pass. According to his plan. Everything worked out unfailingly. By God. According to the plan and counsel and will of God in heaven.

And nothing. Nothing can thwart his purpose. If Jim Fisher was here tonight. I might have him quote this verse. And some of you have heard it from him before. Job 42 in verse 2.

[23 : 58] I know that you can do all things. And that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. Hear that? No purpose of yours can be thwarted.

From the falling of a bird. Jesus says. Even that doesn't happen apart from your heavenly father. From the falling of a bird. To the heart of the king. To your steps. And everything in between.

It is coming to pass as he planned. It is happening that way. Because. He is bringing it to pass. As he has planned. He plans it. And he executes it.

Without fail. Without fault. Now I am. Fond of saying that. Doctrine. Matters. What we believe.

We could stop here. And we say. God is sovereign. Go home. But doctrine. Always should have. Fruit. In the lives of those that believe.

[24 : 56] And hold to. And understand that doctrine. Should always. Influence. It is the way that we live. It should. It should affect us. There are implications.

That flow out. Of the way we live. And so. While I said tonight. These proverbs. Are something about. Who God is. They. They also tell us something. About the way that. We should live.

In light of who God is. And so. What are some implications. For us. Of the sovereign. Rule. Of God. Well. Remember what I called. The heading. Our second point.

The first point. Is plan well. The second. Is rest. In God's plan. So that gives you. A big hint. About one of the implications. Is that we can rest. In the hands of the sovereign God.

But let's. Let's hold that one. For a little bit. First of all. Don't fight him. We don't always know. God's plan. God's. God's. All of God's will.

[25 : 49] Is not revealed to us. We don't know. What he's going to do. In each of our lives. And tomorrow. But. Much. God has revealed to us. We have it here. In his word. And so.

As God has revealed himself. In his way. For us to walk in. In his word. Remember this. Proverbs 21. In verse 30. No wisdom. No understanding.

No counsel. Can avail. Against the Lord. Lord. Literally. That verse. Says something like. There is no wisdom. There is no understanding. There is no counsel.

Over. Against the Lord. So the point here is. Don't. Fight. God. And his plan. Don't rebel. Against his plan. Don't say.

I know. That God says this. But. I think I know better. I think I'm going to go. This way. Instead of the way. That God has called me to go.

[26 : 44] In his word. I think that. My wisdom. On this. Is wiser than. God's wisdom. Now it just sounds foolish. To say that. But when we disobey God.

When we go our own way. That's what we're saying. And Proverbs. Sorry. We've done Proverbs 1 through 9. At home. At church. And. One of the things.

That we've seen. Is the mark of the fool. Is that he. He only listens to himself. He's so proud. That he's full of himself. That he doesn't think. He needs wisdom. He's wise in his own eyes.

And that's the nature of. And what I want you to hear tonight. Is seeing the sovereignty of God. Don't fight against his plan. Where God says in his word. This is the way. Walk in it. Don't go another way.

Your counsel. Your plan doesn't hold a candle to God's. And you are wise. Only in so far as you reflect his wisdom. Not reject it. So in a world that says.

[27 : 39] My way or the highway. We must be a people that acknowledge. That to go our way. Against God's way. Is utter folly. Proverbs 16.25. We're hearing. Proverbs 16. Says. There's a way that seems right to a man.

But its end is the way of death. Don't fight against God. Don't go your way. Follow his way. As he's laid it out. In scripture. And again. We don't. God doesn't reveal everything about our lives to us. We don't always know.

But as he has revealed himself to us. In his word. Don't fight against him. Isaiah 40. Or excuse me. 14.27. For the Lord of hosts has purposed.

Who will annul it? His hand is stretched out. And who will turn it back? You can't fight against God. And when his plan will stand. Instead. We commit our plans to him. And trust him. In Proverbs 16. Again. In verse 3. Commit your work to the Lord. And your plans will be established. Right? So one thing is. Don't fight God. In his sovereignty. Second. Don't take the glory.

[28 : 37] And be proud. When your plans succeed. Right? You do plan something. And it comes off exactly as you planned. That happens every now and then too.

Feels good. We enjoy that. Don't. Don't walk out of it. You can be happy with that. Thankful for it. Be pleased. But give God the glory for it. Remember the horse is prepared for the day of battle.

But victory belongs to me and my horse. And my great battle plan. That's not what it says. Victory belongs to the Lord. But I can still take some of the glory for myself.

Because. Because. Good planning. That's not what it says either. If God has gifted you. And enabled you to do that. He gets the praise for it. If we understand.

The sovereignty of God is intimately related. To what the rest of Proverbs teaches about pride and humility. If we truly understand that everything that we have had.

[29 : 31] Including our planning ability. And our ability to bring it to pass. Everything that we have. What do you have that you did not receive? Nothing. It's all a gift.

Who gets the glory? God. God does. And then. When things don't go as we planned or desired. We bow before him. And acknowledge that victory wasn't God's plan for us that day.

And whatever thing that we had planned. The history of Israel is full of examples of times when they were prepared for battle. And they lost. Or when they were hopelessly outnumbered.

Overwhelmingly the underdogs. And they won. Why? Because victory belongs to the Lord. And it happens according to his plan. So may we have the humility to acknowledge and give him the glory.

And to bow before him when we don't understand. When things don't go according to plan. And that's the hardest part, isn't it? The hardest thing about God's sovereignty.

[30 : 37] When the rubber meets the road. Or one of the hardest. Is when things don't go according to plan. And it means pain and suffering and hurt. And sorrow in our lives.

I dare say that every person. Even the youngest here. Have had some pain. And sorrow. And suffering in your life. And some of you have had exceedingly great.

Pain. And sorrow. And suffering. And trials. What then? What do we make of the sovereignty of God then?

That's the great problem of many who refuse to come to faith in Christ. Call it the problem of evil. If God is sovereign.

Why is there suffering? And if God is good. Then why in his sovereignty doesn't he bring all good things to pass? The peace that we're missing.

[31 : 34] When we only talk about the sovereignty of God. And the goodness of God. That we have to bring to the picture. There is the wisdom of God. And the reality that his ways are not our ways.

And his thoughts not ours. And his ways are as much higher as our ways. Higher than our ways. As the heavens are above the earth. And I know that these realities don't necessarily take the pain away.

But I think they're the only thing that give us hope. In the midst of pain. And so the other implication. Don't fight against God's plan. Don't take the glory for yourself.

And then when it hurts. Don't fear. When you don't understand God's plan for you. Rest in his plan. I believe is one of the things that these Proverbs teach us.

See Proverbs 20 and verse 24. A man's steps are from the Lord. How then can man understand his way? We won't always get it. Why this road Lord? And that's especially true when our steps take us through these trials of life.

[32 : 42] But God is sovereign in those as well. And so some of the most well-known verses in Proverbs that many of you could recite. Call us to this. Proverbs 3, 5, and 6.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And do not lean on your own understanding. You see how it's our understanding that makes us question God. When we lean on our understanding, that's when we get in a real load of trouble.

Of worry and fear and doubt. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

The only way you can do that is if you are firmly rooted in the reality of the sovereignty of God. And recognize that reality.

As long as we deny it, we won't be at peace. We won't be able to trust him. As long as we're trusting him, we can be at peace.

[33 : 40] Even when we don't understand our way. We can only understand it as we trust the Lord. Because our way is in his hands. And he is directing it according to his plan.

That means we may well not understand it. Because again, his ways are higher than ours. So through this, don't forget the peace of the mercy and goodness and grace of God.

When you are walking through those trials and you don't understand, you turn up all of those passages about the goodness of God. And don't turn them up to question them. Wrestle through that before God.

Say, Lord, I don't feel like you love me. He knows already. He knows how you feel. Tell him. Talk to him about it. But bring those passages to him. Say, you are good, Lord. And I know that you're sovereign.

Which must mean that your thoughts at this moment are not my thoughts. And so I'm going to have to trust in the Lord with all my heart. I have nowhere else to go. And when we remember the mercy and goodness and grace of God, the fact that he directs our steps, will be deeply satisfying good news.

[34 : 50] God's ways are past finding out. But as long as we are in his hands, we don't need to be afraid, even when we can't figure out what's happening. Matthew Henry again.

He says, What a comfort does this speak to all God's people, that all God's purposes, which we are sure are right and good, shall be accomplished in due time.

He makes no mistakes. His purposes are right and good. We're sure of that, so we can be sure that he will bring them to pass for our good.

He's sovereign, and he's good, and he's wise. And so take comfort in the sovereignty of God, brothers and sisters. Instead of fear, trust, like Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, Psalm 20, and verse 7.

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. The sovereignty of God should be a most comforting reality for us, even when we don't understand it.

[35 : 48] And Proverbs says that's the nature of it. A man steps her from the Lord. How then can man understand his way? You won't understand. You're not promised that. But you are promised that it will be for your good, child of God.

Now, as there was a dangerous ditch in ignoring man's responsibility, there's also a dangerous ditch in ignoring God's sovereign control.

So we said earlier, never use the sovereignty of God as an excuse to shirk your responsibility. So now we say, never use the responsibility of man. I've got all these things I have to do.

I have to work. I have to trust the Lord. I have to raise my children. I have to evangelize. I've got all this responsibility. Never use the responsibility of man as an excuse or a justification for fear and doubt and worry or pride because you've neglected the comforting and humbling reality of the sovereignty of God.

So take some of what we said earlier and flip it on its head. If we neglect God's sovereignty, we might tend towards being workaholics. If we think about our work, taking all the credit to ourselves for the way we so provide for our families, where we might completely burn out in our work because we're so stressed at the responsibility that's too great.

[37 : 07] And then you get pride and anxiety. On the other side, you get presumption and laziness. Over on this side, you get pride and anxiety. There's a middle course where you can have peace in your workplace if you hold those two together.

If we overemphasize man's responsibility, when we think about prayer, we begin to depend on our prayers instead of the God to whom we pray. In our parenting, neglecting God's sovereignty will lead to hand-wringing, desperate, perhaps overbearing, controlling, manipulative, fearful parents. So you see how rightly understanding both our responsibility and God's sovereignty guards us from having overly burdened, guilty parents on the one hand and apathetic, lazy parents on the other hand.

In evangelism, if we fail to focus on God's sovereignty, we might resort to pressure tactics or manipulation. An all-consuming focus on our strategy is our only hope forgetting that it's the God who has all authority that is with us in that good work all the way to the end of the age.

We might forget that we are, as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, to be resting in God's hands. But somebody that forgets man's responsibility might look at someone suffering and say, what are you so worried about?

[38 : 27] God's sorrow will be okay. That person is forgetting your responsibility to comfort and to encourage and to remind them of God's goodness in the midst of suffering. Even there, there's a middle road for us to walk.

Not despair, but not just flippant either when we face suffering or when others that we love are facing suffering. In the truth of God's words, there's such peace.

Are you resting in God's plan, purpose, and providence? Victory belongs to the Lord. And so, brothers and sisters in Christ, put your finances and your children and your health and your future and your marriage and your work and your friendships and other relationships and your eternal well-being.

take those things and put them in God's hands and leave them there. Don't forget everything we said in the first point.

But trust in the Lord. Rest in the good, wise, perfect, sovereignty, both the plan and providence of our good and wise God.

[39 : 58] Let me remind you of just one of the things that God sovereignly brought to pass. This is how Peter put it on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Wicked men killed Jesus. And they're fully responsible for that act. Wicked men killed Jesus according to the perfect, definite plan of God.

Let me say it like this. The death of Christ was part of the perfect plan of God for our salvation. So if you're one of those people that left me back in point one when I said you don't have to listen to the rest and you've been having dealings with God, come back for a minute.

The way that you can be saved, the reason that there's someone to trust in is because God in His perfect plan ordained that His Son, His perfect Son, would die for the sins of His people.

[41 : 13] That's why you have somebody to run to. Someone to trust in. Have you done that? Have you trusted in Him again? If not, do it now. And if you have, praise Him. If God sovereignly brought that, the death of His Son, if God sovereignly brought that to pass for such great good, can He not so work in your darkest of circumstances, He can.

Let's pray. Father, we pray that You would give us grace to entrust ourselves into Your mighty, sovereign, good, wise hands.

We pray that You would save sinners tonight and that You would lift up and encourage saints and that You would get all the praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.