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## KING JESUS

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### Part 31 of The Gospel of John

Pastor Mark Driscoll | John 18 | August 12, 2001

John 18, you ready? John 18 is tremendous; that's where we're gonna be. Setting for the Scripture today is Jesus has just completed his final instructions to his disciples. He has just prayed for them and for us, and now Jesus is going to be arrested, sentenced to die and then next week we will look at his crucifixion, his murder. The setting is, appropriately enough, a garden. The garden of Gethsemane, sort of an echo of where the first Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden and the race fell into sin and fell from God, and now Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane is beginning the process of redeeming and restoring and bringing us back into the right relationship with the Father. Our themes today are highly theological in nature. A few reasons for that: one, I think that in John 18 and 19, we see some of the clearest showing of Jesus' understanding of the person of God the Father.

And that gives him great rest and great comfort in the midst of trial and difficulty, and so we look at the Doctrines of Foreknowledge and Sovereignty. We're gonna do that because the Scriptures seem to indicate that that's the theme. In addition, I believe that mentally you're capable of this. We'll see, and, in addition, I believe that it's tremendously important because your understanding of God has tremendous practical implications for how you live your life, particularly how you react to trouble and to circumstances that are difficult. A misunderstanding of God leads to an inappropriate response to everything else in your life, and so today's theme is really understanding who God is, and that's paramount and foundational to everything else. The two doctrines I wanna stress today will be of foreknowledge and sovereignty.

Might not sound very sexy; to me, it's very sexy. Foreknowledge is simply this: that you and I exist and live in time, but that God is holy and other and different and God exists completely apart from time. Jesus says that he is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. So God exists apart from time. God is not bound or limited by time. However, God involves himself in time. God works in time and Jesus comes into time. All that to say, that, for God, what we consider as past, present, and future is, for God, one completed and total action. Everything for him is just completed, and so he sees everything in its totality. That is foreknowledge. Therefore, as we journey through our lives, we may be surprised at what we encounter or how the future goes, but God is not. God is not startled by anything.

God never has a day where he shakes his head and says, "Wow, never saw that coming. What a shock." In addition, by the Doctrine of Sovereignty, I simply mean this: that God is more powerful and rules over everything and everyone. You see this in Genesis. We're in the concluding chapter. Joseph's brothers intended to harm him and kill him, and John — Joseph, rather, tells them. He says, "What you meant for evil, God used for good." That's the Doctrine of Sovereignty. God takes human sin, human wickedness, human error, human misunderstanding, and even though he does not author any of that, God does not tempt anyone, nor is he tempted. God will sin are completely antithetical, but God still is big enough to take that and to bend it toward his good.

It's the same thing that the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans, that "God works out all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose." So the Doctrine of Sovereignty is this. It doesn't matter what happens. God ultimately bends that for his own use; that God is bigger than our errors and our sins and our mistakes and foolishness. That God bends everything for his glory and for our joy, and I want you to see that as we get into the text today. Look for these things. We'll start in John Chapter 18, Verse 1, and we're just gonna read all the way over to Chapter 19, Verse 16. We'll look at Jesus' arrest. We'll look at Peter's denial. We'll look at the false and illegal trials, and then the sentence of Jesus to death.

Chapter 18, Verse 1: "When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and across the Kidron Valley." Metaphorically, it's very interesting. Kidron means "darkness". Jesus is passing into his darkness. "On the other side, there was an olive grove," or a garden. "And he and his disciples went into it, and now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place because Jesus had often met there with his disciples, and so Judas came to the grove guiding a detachment of soldiers." That is 200 or so men. 200 men trained for war, "and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees," — those are the religious leaders in addition to the governmental military platoon.

"They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is that you want?' And — 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am he,' Jesus said, and Judas, the traitor, was standing there with them. When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they drew back and they fell to ground. Again, he asked them, 'Who is that you want?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' 'I told them that I am he — I told you, rather, that I am he,' Jesus answered. 'If you are looking for me, then let these men go.' This happens that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled. 'I have not lost one of those that you have given me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."

"Jesus commanded Peter, 'Put your sword away. Shall I not drink of the cup that the Father has given me?' Then the detachment of soldiers, with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high

priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who would advise the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people. Simon Peter and another disciple, — likely John, the beloved, who writes our book — “Were following Jesus because this disciple was known to the high priest. He went with Jesus into the high priest courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside the door. The other disciple who was known to the high priest came back and spoke to the young girl on duty there and brought Peter in. ‘You are not one of his disciples, are you?’ the girl at the door replied.”

“Peter replied, ‘I am not.’” That’s his first betrayal. “It was cold in the servants and the officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them warming himself. Meanwhile the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ‘I have spoken openly to the world,’ Jesus replied. ‘I always taught in the synagogues or at the temple where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they knew what I had said.’” Real quickly, this is an illegal trial. The way the trial is supposed to be conducted is that first the eyewitnesses are interviewed and then the accused is lastly given an inquisition, and they are not to be asked anything that could incriminate them, and so this proceeding is against the law.

And so Jesus tells them to proceed by requesting for the testimony of the witnesses first, because he is trying to hold them to the law that they are supposed to be upholding but are now breaking. Verse 22: “When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face.” That, too, is illegal. “‘In this — is this the way you answer the high priest?’ he demanded. ‘If I said something wrong,’ Jesus replied, ‘Testify as to what is wrong, but if I spoke the truth, why do you strike me?’ Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas, the high priest. As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, ‘You are not one of his disciples, are you?’ He denied it, saying, ‘I am not.’” That is Peter’s second betrayal.

“One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him. ‘Didn’t I see you with him in the olive grove?’ Again, Peter denied it.” That’s his third betrayal, “And, at that moment, a rooster began to crow. Then the Jews led Jesus to Caiaphas to palace of the Roman Governor, to the Praetorium, and by now, it was early morning, probably between 3 and 6 a.m., and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness,” — great irony — “The Jews did not enter the palace. They wanted to be able to eat their Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, ‘What charges are bringing against this man?’ ‘If he were not a criminal,’ they replied, ‘We would not have handed him over to you.’ And Pilate said, ‘Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.’”

“‘But we have no right execute anyone,’ the Jews objected. ‘Only the Romans could put someone to death.’ This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘Is that your own idea?’ Jesus asked, ‘Or did others talk to you about me?’ ‘Am I a Jew?’ Pilate replied. ‘It was your people in your chief priest who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?’ Jesus said, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews, but now my Kingdom is from another place.’ ‘You are a King, then,’ said Pilate.”

“Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying that I am a King. In fact, for this reason, I was born and, for this reason, I came into the world to testify to the truth, and everyone on the side of truth listens to me.’ ‘What is truth?’ Pilate asked. With this, he went out against to the Jews and said, ‘I find no basis for the charge against him, but it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘No, not him. Give us Barabbas.’” Now, Barabbas had taken part in rebellion. Barabbas was a guilty man, a robber and possibly a murderer. Chapter 19: “Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.” Now, that is a beating, whereby they would take a whip, that at the end were fixed shards of either metal or glass or bone.

They would rip the flesh off the back of the prisoner, oftentimes exposing his organs. “The soldiers then twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head,” — a mockery — “And they clothed him in a purple robe,” — the color of a king’s robe — “And went up to him again and again, saying ‘Hail, King of the Jews,’ mocking him and they struck his face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, ‘Look, I am bringing him to you — out to you, and I find no basis for charged against him.’ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man.’ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, ‘Crucify, crucify.’ But Pilate answered, ‘You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.’”

“The Jews insisted, ‘We have a law, and, according to that law, he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God, or he claimed to be God.’ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. ‘Where do you come from?’ he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ‘Do you refuse to speak to me?’ Pilate said. ‘Don’t you realize that I have power either to free or to crucify you?’ And Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’ From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar, and anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.’”

“When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement,” which, in Aramaic, is called Gabbatha. “It was the day of preparation of Passover week, about the sixth hour. ‘Here is your King,’ Pilate said to the Jews, but they shouted, ‘Take him away. Take him away and crucify him.’ ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ Pilate asked, and in a great denial of God, ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ the chief priest answered, and, finally, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.” Here’s what I want you to see. Here’s the whole situation: Jesus’ arrest; series of false, illegal trials; his sentencing to death. What you see in this narrative is that everyone is trying to be like God. Everyone is trying to have foreknowledge — predict the future — and sovereignty — change it and bend it to accomplish their will.

Gazing into the future, the Romans believe that they foresee where this work of Jesus is going. What do they think is going to happen if they do not kill the Lord Jesus? The Romans are afraid that he will become a King; that he will rival Caesar, and that he will take down their government, and so they try and be sovereign and change the future by putting him to death. The Jews gaze into the future, and they’re anticipating that if Jesus is not put to death, what will he accomplish that will threaten them? What will he do? He will overthrow their entire religious structure. Earlier on, in John’s Gospel, they

had said, "Look, the whole world is beginning to follow this man." He goes from being a marginal teacher to a man who is collecting large crowds, performing miracles, teaching with authority, and now he is a threat to Jewish religion.

In addition, Peter gazes into the future and believes that he foresees where things are going. At first he perceives that possibly Jesus is going to be put to death, and so he tries to change the future by doing what? Taking a sword, and declaring war, which is foolish. If you're a furious man, usually your fury ends in folly. What you see with Peter is he and 11 other guys are going to take on 200 or so soldiers. That is not a great plan for saving Jesus, but that's Peter's plan. "Well, they're going to hurt Jesus. I'll pull my sword and defend him." No, you won't. You will die. Peter then perceives, later on, after Jesus is arrested and taken away, that if he is publicly found out to be a disciple of Jesus, what might happen to him?

Response: He could be crucified, too.

He could be crucified, too. He could be injured or harmed or opposed or even killed, and, so, for trying to foresee the future, he then tries to be sovereign over it and change the future by what? By denying Christ three times. Everyone here is trying to figure out what God is doing and where history is going and what is going to happen to Jesus. They're all trying to be sovereign and bend that toward their own purposes; toward their own agenda; toward what it is that they desire. What I want you to do is I want you to look with me through John's Gospel. I want you to see how and why the Lord Jesus is the only one in this account who maintains his head; who's relaxed and calm; who's at peace with this whole circumstance. I want you to know that it is because of his right understanding of God the Father.

It begins — if you will — flip back with me in John's Gospel to Chapter 6. I want you to look at the way that John tells this story. The way that John tells the story of the sentencing and crucifixion of Jesus is my favorite in all of the Bible. The reason is, is because he treats the Lord Jesus with great authority and with great respect. Starting in John Chapter 6, look at Verses 70 and 71; want you to see — I want you to see what Jesus about his fate. Chapter 6, Verses 70 and 71: "Then Jesus replied, 'Have I not chosen you, the 12,' — his disciples — 'Yet one of you is a devil.' He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though 1 of the 12, was later to betray him." First thing we find out: Jesus knew he was going to be betrayed.

He knew he would be betrayed by one of his close men, Judas Iscariot, and he knew that Judas was under the influence and ultimately would be possessed by Satan himself. So when Judas betrayed Jesus and handed him over to being murdered, Jesus Christ was not shocked. He was not surprised. He was not depressed. He did not need to go to therapy to wonder why Judas had walked away from the work. He knew it was coming. It did not catch him off-guard. Down in Chapter 7, Verse 6 — read this with me, as well. "Therefore, Jesus told them, 'The right time for me has not yet come.'" Jesus knew the timing of his death. He knew exactly when he would die. It was to be the season of Passover, which was to commemorate the shedding of blood and the protection of the children in Israel back in the book of Exodus.

It was all this appropriate time for him to die. John begins the book, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." He knew that his time to die was around Passover, and he says, "This is not yet my time." And John 17, Verse 1 — you don't have to flip there. You could trust me on this. It's in your notes. He says, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your son." Throughout the Gospel, Jesus says, "It's not time. It's not time." When it is time for him to be handed over and killed, he says, "Now the time has come." So Jesus knew he would be betrayed by Judas Iscariot, and he knew the precise time at which he would be put to death. Flip over, as well, to John Chapter 8, Verse 28. I want you to see what else the Lord Jesus knew.

John Chapter 8, Verse 28: "So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be,' — God — 'And that I do nothing on my but speak just what the Father has said.'" Jesus not only knew that he would be betrayed by Judas Iscariot. He knew that he would be killed by the Romans. See, the Jewish mode of execution was what? How would the Jews put him to death? Stoning. You see that throughout John's Gospel. They frequently pick up rocks and their intention is to stone him to death, but it says, on various occasions, that he slipped away, or that he escaped. Jesus says that "The son of man will be lifted up," that he will be crucified. That was the Roman mode of execution. So Jesus knew that he would be crucified by the Romans, that he would not be put to death by stoning by the Jews.

So he knew that Judas would betray him. He knew when he was to die, and he knew precisely how he was going to die, and who was going to put him to death. Over in Verse 44 of Chapter 8, there's something else here, as well. Chapter 8, verse 44: Jesus is speaking to the religious false teachers. He says, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was murder from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him, and when he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Jesus knew that he would be murdered. That he would be innocent. That he would be guilty of no sin and no crime; that they would have no basis for putting him to death.

That the only way they could put him to death was through lies, and so they would lie about Him, and they would put him to death through murder, which was an unjust killing. So you start to get this portrait. Jesus knew about his death, the timing of his death, the betrayal of his death, and the fact that he would be innocent, though put to death. In addition — flip with me over to Chapter 11 — excuse me, Chapter 10, Verses 14 through 18; Chapter 10. Want you to see what else the Lord Jesus knew.

Jesus says — John 10:14 — "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this pen. I must bring them, also. They too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my accord. I have authority to lay it down, and authority to take it up again. This command I receive from my Father." Jesus says, "I will not be defeated or crushed or beaten. I will lay down my life willfully and gladly." In addition to that, he makes a promise that not only does he know that he will die when he determines when he will die, but that, in addition to that, he will rise from death.

He uses the language of "Taking up his life again." So Jesus knows that he's going to die of his own volition, and Jesus knows that he is also going to resurrect from death and bring himself back. Chapter 11, Verses 25 and 26. I want you to see what else the Lord Jesus knew prior to his death. "Jesus

said to her, — he says to Martha — ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’” Jesus claims that he is the resurrection. He promises that not only will he resurrect, but that all resurrection is inextricably connected to his. Paul uses the language in 1 Corinthians 15, that he is the first fruits.

That he rose first and that if we love and believe in him, then we shall rise as he has, and so Jesus knows that he will die, but he also knows that he will resurrect from death and that he will give us life and resurrection if we have faith in him. Chapter 13 and 14 — Chapter 13, Verse 38 — I’m almost done. John 13:38: “Then Jesus answered, ‘Will you really lay down your life for me?’” He’s speaking to Peter. “I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” Jesus knew that Peter was going to betray him. We just looked into John 18, how Peter did exactly what Jesus predicted. He denied him three times and then Jesus said, “And a rooster will crow, that will remind you of my words and my promise that you would betray me.” You say, “Well, what is it? Did Jesus make Peter deny him?”

No, Jesus had foreknowledge of the future, and he just knew that Peter would. Chapter 14, Verses 1 through 4: “Jesus comforts his disciples. He says, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would not have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place that I am going.’” Jesus tells him that he is going to resurrect from death. He’s going to leave this Earth. That he’s going to return to the Father. He uses the metaphor of heaven, as God is our Father and God has an enormous house and Jesus is going there before us to prepare a place, and that he will return to gather us and to take us home to be with the Father.

Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to him. He knew he would be betrayed by a friend. He knew he’d be put to death. He knew he would die through lies and murder. He knew that Peter would betray him and deny him three times. He knew that he could only die through the laying down of his own life. He knew that he, though, would take up his life again. He knew that he would be the resurrection; that he would give us resurrection; that he would return to the Father; and that he would come again to take us to be with him. His foreknowledge was complete and total. Nothing in this whole narrative catches the Lord Jesus by surprise. He knows. He knows what the Father has intended for him. Last thing I want you to do, go back with me over John 18. John 18, Verses 1 through Chapter 19, Verse 16.

What I want you to see — I want you to see two things. I want you to see the foreknowledge of Jesus, and I want you to see the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus. This is important. If you don’t understand how God works and who God is, when you hit moments like John 18 and 19, you will lose faith. You will be discouraged. You will — your heart will be troubled, but Jesus understands the Father, understands the Father’s plan, and we see the Lord Jesus, in Chapters 18 and 19, at the fast-approaching moment of his darkest day. There can be no darker moment for Jesus than being betrayed by one of the men that he had fed, loved, housed, encouraged for three years. There could be no darker moment than being denied by Peter, who was the leader of leaders and the head of the apostles.

There could be no darker day than to be wrongly accused as a sinner, to have the crowds of people that he created shouting for his murder. The religion that he was raised as a part of, and the Scriptures that he had known so well, some of those same teachers that had taught him the Scriptures, betraying him and seeking his murder. There could be no darker day than the whole Roman government that only had authority that was delegated from him, using that authority to put him to death, but, in this dark moment, I want you to see how John portrays the Lord Jesus: not as a victim; not as a coward; not as a failure; not as having been defeated and crushed, and overcome; but he uses the language of a King, and I want you to see your King. Chapter 18, Verse 4: “Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out.”

John says, “You know Jesus knew everything that was going to happen. His foreknowledge was complete and total.” Down in Verse 6: “Then Jesus said, ‘I am he,’ and they, the crowd of warriors, drew back and fell to the ground.” I love that. They come before Jesus. Jesus lets a little bit of his glory sneak out and the warriors, armed to the teeth; fall down nearly dead, boom. There goes the whole army. The issue is: well, did Jesus fail? Was he overcome? Was he a weak pacifist that just took his licking like a good — no, no. With a word, he could send the warriors to their back. Jesus maintained full and complete authority, and, here, I think he just gives a little taste of what could have been possible should he not have desired to lay down his life. If Jesus wanted to pick a fight, he most certainly could’ve won that fight.

Verse 8: “‘I told you that I am he,’ Jesus answered. ‘If you are looking for me, then let these men go.’” He looks at the warriors, the religious and the governmental leaders, and he tells them what to do. Now, he’s being arrested, and he tells them what to do. “These are my men. You don’t touch them. You don’t harm them. You got me? That’s the rule.” That’s pretty strong authority for a man that’s going to be put to death. Verse 11: “Jesus commanded Peter, ‘Put your sword away.’” Tells Peter what to do. “Shall I not drink of the cup that the Father has given me?” See, throughout the Old Testament, throughout the Scriptures that’s in your notes, the cup of God always refers to receiving the will of God. Sometimes God gives us a frowning cup of suffering or trial or strife. Sometimes God gives us a smiling cup of joy or happiness or blessing.

And Jesus says, “This is the cup that the Father has given me. He’s given me the cup of suffering. He’s given me this cup of death and betrayal and darkness,” and he tells Peter, “We are not going to change the future. We are not going to override the will of God. I’m going to drink of the cup that the Father has given me.” In addition, Chapter 18, Verse 32: Jesus’ standing before Pilate. We are told this happens so that the words Jesus had spoken, indicating the kind of death he was going to die, would be fulfilled. Everything Jesus predicted, God and his sovereignty worked out the affairs of his betrayal and his arrest and his trials, to fully accomplish the Word of God.

Verse 36: “Jesus said, ‘My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest from the Jews, but now my Kingdom is from another place.’ ‘You are King, then,’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying that I am a King. In fact, for this reason, I was born and, for this reason, I came into the world.’” Jesus, at this point, is bound, arrested, soon to be sentenced to death. He says, “I’m a King.” Verse — Chapter 19, Verse 11, the final one. “Jesus answered, ‘You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.’” Jesus says, “None

of what is going to happen or is happening is possible except by the authority of God." What you see is, in God's sovereignty, he does permit us to do things. God is here not making people murder Jesus.

He is not making them sin, but even the authority that they have to make sinful decisions is granted to them by God and is under his hand. Do you see how the stage is set? The Romans wanna know the future and bring it to pass as they wish it were. The Jews try and anticipate the future and want to bring it to pass as their desires dictate. Peter wants to take the future in his own hands, and then he's more worried about his own skin, and Jesus makes it abundantly clear that he is in charge, in control and in authority; the reason being that Jesus knew about the sovereignty of the Father. Jesus knew that he wasn't in this place or in this time by accident. Jesus knew that this was not a failure on God's behalf. Jesus rested in the fact that even though the cup was bitter, he was to drink of it.

Do you think that anything in the Lord Jesus' mind at this moment in his life is perceived by him to be an accident? There's no chance here. This is all predicted by God, shown, revealed and brought to pass by the sovereign hand of a foreknowing God. Do you think that God knows your future? Do you think that God has any control over it? We'll get very practical with this doctrine. Do you think that God foresaw you being here, now, in your present circumstance? Absolutely. Do you think that God has any power to take even the sin, error, mistakes or pain that you've suffered and bend that toward his will? He does. Practically, your understanding and right perception of God in this way does what for you? What does that do for you? What does this accomplish? What's that?

Response: You have hope.

You have hope. You have hope, because you know that the circumstances you find yourself in are not the final word. The final word is always God's. Jesus could not be in a darker place; betrayed, sentenced to death; a crown of thorns, three- to four -inches deep pressed into his head. Flogged across his back, his organs exposed, bleeding profusely. Carrying a heavy laden wooden cross to his own murder, where the same people that he is going to forgive are crying for his death. Peter, his leader of leaders has abandoned him. Judas has betrayed him with a kiss. Could it be a darker moment? But Jesus doesn't freak out. He doesn't have a nervous breakdown. He doesn't need to get medication; doesn't need to go to therapy. Jesus Christ knows that the Father is not done, and so he is able to see through this.

He's able to see the conclusion where he will resurrect, and conquer our enemies of Satan, sin and death. Where he will return to the Father; where he will complete the total plan of God's good Gospel; where he will see the Father again, face-to-face, and that he will come again to get us and to redeem those children that he loves, and to bring them home to the house that he has prepared for them. There's hope. Even though this cup is bitter, it will be replaced with a cup that is very sweet. What else does this do for you? This right understanding of God? Like Jesus, you will learn to yield yourself to the will of the Father.

That does not mean that we are passive determinists, who throw our hands in the air, but what it does mean is that if you are in a place that is difficult, you need to yield yourself to it and get through it, so that resurrection and life can come, but you have to yield yourself to the sovereign will of God. What else does this do? What does this accomplish for you? Yes.

Response: Joys of knowing that God loves us so much that he would, you know, do this.

Absolute love of God; the only thing that constrains Jesus is not the ropes of the Roman soldiers, but it is his love for his children. That's what constrains him. God loves us, absolutely, and God is bigger than our sin and bigger than our error and bigger than our mistakes. He's bigger than us. He's bigger than all of us. He's bigger than everything, and he loves us, and, so, somehow, he will bend all of this to glorify himself and give us joy. We are dearly loved by a God, who is tremendously mighty, and that joy and that hope and that love enables us to see how lives in right perspective. Oftentimes, life seems very big and God seems very small and trouble seems very near and God seems very far. If there was ever a moment for anyone to have felt that, that should have been the Lord Jesus, but for him, God is near. The Father is near to him.

In addition to that, the problem is small. What does this do for you?

Response: Freedom.

There is freedom there. There is freedom to not know the future. We live in a world that is addicted with predicting tomorrow. Jesus says, "Don't worry about tomorrow." We don't know exactly what is going to happen tomorrow. We can offer conjecture and speculation, but the deal is this: only God knows, and we need not know the future. We just need know God, and God knows the future. There is freedom in that. We do not have to have foreknowledge to live. All we need is faith. We don't need to know everything. We just need to trust God in the circumstances that we find ourselves in. In addition, there is freedom from attempting to be sovereign. I don't need work everything out. I don't need to fix everything. I don't need to bring out everything to perfection.

I am not going to make the right decision, the right way, at the right time, with the right motives for the right end. I will sin. I will make a mistake. I will be like Peter and fully anticipate that I'm doing exactly God wants, and, in retrospect, realizing that I have completely missed the will of God. Some of you have been taught terrible thinking, that is that you need to know the will of God and then do it perfect, and if you don't, then you've ruined your whole life. No, God is bigger than you, and God will take that and still bend it out for what he wanted. You cannot overcome God. Can you slow the process? Make it more painful on yourself? Certainly, we've all done that, but, ultimately, the final word is always God's. What else does this do for you?

Response: Teaches us how to pray.

It teaches you how to pray. Teaches you how to trust God and come to God with sincere requests and with humility. Seeking that not only would your prayers move the head of God but that they would change your heart and bring it to a place of trusting him. What does this do? There's nothing to be afraid of. There's nothing to be afraid of. That's what Paul says that "Perfect love casts out fear." Does God not have perfect love for us? He most certainly does. It should cast out our fear. What does this do for you?

Response: It makes me realize the magnitude of the sacrifice that he did.

Makes you realize how far and deep the love of God goes. We'll get to next week and we'll look at the crucifixion of Christ. You realize that this is all the Work of God through his Son, absolutely. That's how God gets his will done. That's how he bends everything is through the cross. Do you understand this? The most popular teaching that is emerging in evangelicalism today is a theology that says that God does not have foreknowledge and God is not sovereign. I was talking to some various theologians that teach and publish on this matter, and I said, "Well, why in the world would you teach that?" They said, "Because it gives people comfort. So that when bad things happen, they don't wonder where God is. They can just assume that God didn't know it was going to happen and God couldn't do anything about it."

I said, "Oh, well, that — that'll help them sleep much better." Well, that's great. So now, time is God and it rules over God and God is limited and bound by time and human error. No. Upwards of 25 percent of your Bible at the time of its writing was prophetic in nature. God telling you what was going to happen in the future, because he knew it. I asked that to the friend of mine that teaches this theology. I said, "Well, what do you do with prophecy?" He says, "Well, that is a problem." Yeah, it is a problem. That is a huge problem for you. For me, it's no problem. I can sleep good. I can trust God.

I can know that God is loving and good and sits on his throne even when I find myself in seasons like the Lord Jesus, where I feel like I am dying, and everyone who was supposed to be of help has betrayed or abandoned me, and things are not the way that they should be. I know that that is just a season that I'm passing through, and that the final word will be God's sovereign, loving grace. I can rest in that. I saw it most beautifully in my wife. I've told you this story before, but we just found out we're gonna have our third child, a boy. He's gonna be here somewhere around Christmas. We have two kinds of children. We have church planters and church planters' wives. This one's gonna be a church planter. He'll be here around Christmas, and, before this, my wife miscarried, and she was a few months into the pregnancy. And she miscarried.

We totally were not anticipating that, and I remember laying in bed with my bride one night, and I looked at her. I was devastated. I had a really hard time with this. I love being a father. I love having my children, and I was very excited with the first and second child. For some reason, on the third, I was really excited. I was like at an all-time high, and, so, when we went in and there was no heartbeat and she lost that child, I was devastated. It was very hard for me. I didn't question God. I didn't curse God. It was just a sorrow. It was like Jesus standing before Lazaretto's grave shedding his tears and I remember laying in bed, and I asked my wife. I said, "Honey," I said, "I think I'm taking this harder than you are, and I wasn't anticipating that." I said, "Why is that?"

She said, "Mark, God is good, and God is on his throne, and God will reveal to us at some point why things happened this way, but I'm not going to doubt him now." And I just completely fell in love with my wife all over again. Thank God I don't have a wife who lays there and curses God and wonders and tries to know the future and why did God do this and try to predict how this was all going to go or try and be sovereign and fight God and make things different — no. She trusts God. She trusts the same God who has given her many cups of joy has now given her a cup of sorrow; that the God who has smiled upon her is now frowning. That does not mean that he does not love her. That does not mean that he has abandoned her. That does not mean that he does not care about her, and that does not mean that this will not be bent out for his good. We just see in part.

That's all. Do you see where this changes you? Can you even imagine if Jesus did not have a correct understanding of God the Father, what he would've done? He would've reacted like Peter and taken a sword in his hand, or he would have acted like Peter and denied the Father, but he didn't, and I love how John portrays Jesus. There's a title in this section of John 18 and 19 that is given to the Lord Jesus, and he is a what? He is a King. Do not miss that. He is a King. If there's anything that I'm sick of, it is a weak, neutered, effeminate, worthless God who does nothing but cry with us. What we need is a King. We need somebody who has authority. We need somebody who can change things. We need somebody who can give orders. We need somebody who knows what the heck that he is doing. That's Jesus.

We have a King, and you look at it and you say, "Well this doesn't look like a King: beard plucked out; crown of thorns in his head; purple robe for mockery; ruling from a cross; spat upon; hated, despised; his very few committed disciples abandoned him. One hands him over to be murdered. The other is supposed to be the leader of the leaders denies him three times, to a little girl? He's scared of a teenage girl? What kind of King is that?" That's the beauty and the irony of John's Gospel. That's the beauty and the irony of God. Nothing is as it appears. What you see is a complete shadow. Jesus is a King. He is ruling and reigning. He is in sovereign authority. He does know the future, and he will bring it all bent to his will. Does that encourage you at all? I can live with this. I can live in this. This is the God that I need, desperately.

The Romans, they thought, "You know, what we need is a good government." The Jews, they thought, "You know what we need is a really good religion to make people look holy." What Peter thought is, "Well, I just will take care of this all by myself." And it's amazing that as things change, nothing changes. We live in that world, don't we? World's filled with Satan, sin, and death, darkness, chaos, lies. Some people say, "Well, a bigger government would fix it, or a religion that deals with morality to make people good. That would fix it." Some people say, "No, I'll just lead my own crusade and take my sword in my own hand." Christ, Christ alone. Christ crucified. Christ dead. Christ buried. Christ resurrected. Christ ascended. Christ returning again. Christ our King. That's what we need, and, by God's grace, that what we have.

And so you find yourself in that same world that Jesus lived in. I do know what cup God has given you to drink of. You may not be pretty. You may

not be rich. You may not be smart. You may not be successful. Things may not go the way that your sovereignty is crying. It may not, but you should drink your cup. You should drink your cup like Jesus drank his cup. When he gives you cups of joy, you see the smiling love of God upon you, drink those cups, too, and trust that God is not done. That the final word is always God's and that the final word is always love and grace and you never know what God is doing. No one in John 18 has any clue what is happening except for Jesus. Our lives are no different. Any attempt at foreknowledge or sovereignty is folly.

But God loves us and God knows and God cares and God works out all things for the good of those who love him. Do you love him? That's all we need to know. At this point, we respond. Your first response will take — be to take a few millennia and unpack this. You're gonna have to think about this for a few thousand years before it actually begins to make a bit of sense. We will respond with singing and celebration and remembering and celebrating Jesus, our King. Who doesn't look like it, but he's victorious. We will celebrate by drinking the cups that he has given us to drink. We will celebrate with communion, which is remembering Jesus' body and blood, shed for the sins of his children.

That we repent of our sin; recognize that, like Peter, we are the problem, not this solution, and that what is desperately needed is Jesus to be our King and rule and reign over us. If you're a Christian, we invite you to partake of communion. In addition, we'll partake of an offering. That offering — I'll explain this to you. It's part of our worship. It is participating in the Work of Christ, and, in addition, it is meant for those who know God. So if you're not a Christian or you're a first-time visitor, don't give. It's just good to have you, sincerely, but I'll tell you a story. I wanna thank you for something, too. Last week I introduced a 20-year-old church planter to you. Justin, he's down in Amarillo, Texas. He called me this week. We had a great conversation.

Let me tell you what God did with Justin. A week ago, when Justin showed up to Seattle, he had three weeks left on his building, didn't know where he was going to go. Didn't have any money, and was a little bit frantic trying to figure out what in the world God was doing; kind of ties in with our whole theme today. He found a building just before he left that came available for \$280,000.00. I told you about it last week. Had a sanctuary that could seat — it was a health club that you could convert. Had a main room that could seat maybe 2 or 250, and had 8,000 square feet, about 45 or 50 parking places. They were going to sell it to him for \$280,000.00, which was a good deal. He was told by another gentlemen in the church planting network that I oversee with some of the other pastors, that if he raised \$30,000.00, that church would kick in, in addition to that.

A friend of his gave him \$10,000.00. His church gave him \$6,000.00. He came to Mars Hill last week, and we took a special offering, and you guys gave him just about \$14,000.00. Okay, so thank you. Thank you. That was great. It's like, you know, the beginning of John's Gospel where the little boy says, "Well, here's my fishes and loaves, do whatever you can," and Jesus multiplies that, and so you guys him almost 14 grand, in addition to our general offering. So last week, for us, was almost a \$25,000.00 week between the general and special offering. Thank you, and he thanks you. What happened then is he had \$30,000.00. So then a gentlemen at another church said, "Well, if he's got his 30, I'll give him 50." So, this kid goes in one week from being flat broke and homeless to having \$80,000.00 in his pocket.

I told him, "You're on a streak. You need to ask a woman out on a date." You know, he's single. He should roll those dice, and so then what happens is he returns home last week after we got time with him, and that day, a building comes available on the market in his target area that seats 400, not 200, parks 150, not 50. Is a brand new parking lot and is a building that is about 800 — 500 to 800 square foot bigger than the one he was looking at and it's a church, so it doesn't need any upgrading or renovation. He goes to meet with the pastor. The pastor says, "I'll sell it to you for a \$175,000.00, instead of the 280. So he will put 50,000 down, 30,000 to renovate the building, and he's on a no-interest loan. Here's what I'm saying. You never know what God is doing, and you may be in a place where you say, "I don't wanna drink that cup."

Drink it, and after that, you'll get another cup, and you keep drinking the cups that God has given you, and God knows the future. God has authority over the future, and God loves you, and so trust him. I tell you Justin's story to thank you and also to show that God is alive and active, and that he does not change.

So, Father God, we love you. We thank you for Jesus' Words. Lord Jesus, thank you so much for being our God, and being our King, and being victorious over Satan, sin and death, for being big enough to bend our foolishness and our errors; to your glory and to our joy. Lord God, we thank you that you are a holy God; that you are different; that you are different than us. You are different than ever other concept of God, that you are the living god and you are the loving God, and you are the God who knows the future and rules and reigns over it.

We thank you that we are your children, and that you love us and hold us in your hand. Lord God, please teach us faith. Please teach us to trust you. Please teach us to drink whatever cup that you have put before us and to do so with gladness and joy. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you love us. That you died for our sins and have risen from death and are coming again to take us home to be at that place that you are preparing for us, even as we speak to you. Lord God, we love you and we thank you, in Christ's' good name, Amen.