

Strategic Design WK 1 The Sovereignty of God

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INTRO:

I'm Pastor Jordan. I'm the lead pastor of Rock of Grace and I also oversee the Kinsman Campus. I'm so thankful to be with you guys today here at our Cortland Campus! I want to just say how thankful I am for Pastor Dave and Michele! They are doing an awesome job pastoring here and teaching this body of believers the truth of God's word and it's always shared in love - the motive of the Father at all times - can we give Dave and Michele a hand? They're a gift to us!

This morning as we head into the weeks leading to Easter, we're going into a new series called Strategic Design – We are going to look at God's plan for his people before, during and post creation and how **in every situation in our life God has a strategy, a design, and a plan.**

1. God's plan has always been to redeem you His special creation.

LET'S PRAY and ask God to open our hearts.

God, we are so thankful for this house - that You have made a way for us to know You. I ask that you send your Holy Spirit and that you work through me in a special way today - move aside my ideas or thoughts or anything that isn't YOU and YOUR MESSAGE. Speak to us today we pray, in Jesus name AMEN.

There's something both humbly and comforting know that GOD is fully aware of everything - everything you've done, everything you will do AND everything that's happened to you. Most of had some

Fall of man - in other words "Original Sin" is a doctrine that is important for us at Rock of Grace to fully embrace. We ALL live in this fallen, broken world. All you have to do is turn on the news to see that. People hurt each other - then they get revenge and the cycle of pain unfortunately repeats itself UNTIL GOD steps in.

The people of Israel were being oppressed by the Romans. The religious leaders - the church leaders - had become hard hearted - no longer caring about the poor and hurting - the marginalized of society. So when Jesus preaches the sermon on the Mount to them - telling them that the Kingdom is for the broken, hurting, meek and tired and weary, they were kinda shocked. Like the video we saw a moment ago - it was truly revolutionary. A people in darkness had seen a great light - there was now HOPE for them AND there is HOPE FOR YOU!

There is nothing that you are going through that Jesus is unaware of – God is not sitting up in Heaven scratching his head pondering what to do. Jesus suffered in every way and was tempted in every way like us” scripture says.

That means Jesus knows what you’re going through.

Have you suffered betrayal? Jesus has too. Have you been lied about? Jesus has too? Have you suffered anxiety and worry? Jesus has too. He had so much anxiety before going to the cross that He sweat drops of blood - in anxiety for what was about to happen - YET He was fully surrendered to His Father.

Before there was a world and a universe for us to live on God had a plan. I don’t know about you but for me, that is reassuring! Before there was sin that had to be forgiven Jesus died. (We will talk about more of this on Easter) it’s going to blow your mind about how mindful and loving God the father really is toward us.

R.C. SPROUL said this: “If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God’s sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled.” This morning we are going to look at the Sovereignty of God. – How in every situation God is in control.

FUNNY > Have you ever felt out of control? Like the world was just spinning and you can’t do anything to stop it?

Like sometimes I wonder and I’ll ask God “Could you have stopped that?” Like the Matrix moment where she says “watch out for the lamp” and he says What lamp? As he spins and therefore knocks over the lamp! Lol Danielle hitting my car. At Cortland intersection by El Torero.

Danielle hitting someone’s car in our driveway last month.

She really is smart I promise. I just felt like throwing her under the bus ... since she’s... not here. So she can’t kill me. =)

I mean let’s be honest, we’ve all done dumb things. Even wrong things!

It’s it great that God is still sovereign and still good even despite how failing we are?!?! =)

2. Sovereignty can be defined as Gods right to exercise his ruling power over his creation.

Isaiah 46:8-11 clearly establishes Gods sovereignty – NASB - “Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

⁹ “Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’; ¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of [c]My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I **have planned it, surely** I will do it.

Isaiah 46:8-11 MSG version 8-11

“Think about this. Wrap your minds around it.

This is serious business, rebels. Take it to heart.

Remember your history, your long and rich history.

I am God, the only God you’ve had or ever will have—

incomparable, irreplaceable—From the very beginning

telling you what the ending will be, All along letting you in

on what is going to happen, Assuring you, ‘I’m in this for the long haul,

I’ll do exactly what I set out to do,’ Calling that eagle, Cyrus, out of the

east, from a far country the man I chose to help me.

I’ve said it, and I’ll most certainly do it. I’ve planned it, so it’s as good as done.

God is God, there is no one like Him – This communicates his uniqueness (there is no comparison there has never been anyone like him and their never will be anyone like him.

let me say it like this.. God is God and you are not. I am not. This is a really a CORE BELIEF you and I must have if we want life to go well and eternity to go well for us! What the unbeliever, the agnostic or atheist actually do is assert themselves as god - as knowing better than God. What the Christian does is realize that he or she is NOT God and we humble ourself before the ONE and ONLY GOD! We know there are things we don’t know. We BELIEVE in the One who does!

God said there ... **I have planned it**, so it’s as good as done. – His steadiness trustworthiness – If I say it I will do it you don’t ever have to question it –

It's hard for us to understand or fully grasp that God knew Adam would Eve would sin. If he's fully omniscient - knowing all things - then He must've known. But he wanted a LOVE relationship with us and a LOVE relationship must exist in the framework of free will. That free will gave mankind the opportunity to choose NOT to heed God's instructions.

Adam and Eve ultimately believe that THEY knew better and they THEY could be like God - that was the garden lie - that God was withholding something good from them and that they could know better.

If you're taking notes today, write this down - GOD knows best. One thing I say often is this - God not only knows what's best for you but He wants the best for you.

When Jesus comes on the scene, everyone in society is still thinking through the lense of law - action and consequence - repaying evil for evil - if someone is hurting, it's someone else's fault - let's find someone to blame!

3. Jesus Gods Son knows how you feel He's prophesied being the suffering servant.

Let's take a look at John chapter 9 - 9 As *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man *who had been* blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

– Jesus and his disciples are out and about walking and they come across this blind man (the bible says he has been blind since birth) In V2 The disciples ask Jesus who sinned this man or his parents. Jesus says neither that this man was blind so that the works of God could be seen in him. This verse messes with my equilibrium big time. I mean WHAT? He was born blind SO THAT he could be healed? Yup. If it's in there - it's in there - that's what the BIBLE says and the Bible is our supreme authority on all things.

God the Father KNEW that Jesus the son would be showing compassion and empathy AND HEALING POWER over sickness that day on that street for THAT man.

Sometimes the way God does things and the way we think things should be done are 2 different things. We have our way and God has his way.

Part of moving into spiritual maturity is growing comfortable with how God chooses to do things and trusting him in the process.

Look at JOB for a minute – God permits the enemy to test (torture) Job up to the point of death but not beyond it. The enemy takes everything from Job, all his money, possessions, land, he afflicts Job with boils and sickness, Jobs friends and wife essentially tell him to give up, to simply curse God and die. Job loses everything.

JOB- Cries out to God -He presents God with his present state (as if God is not aware of it)

This is what Jobs says in chapter 30 V 20-23

I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me;

I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me.

21 You have ^[a]become cruel to me;

With the strength of Your hand You persecute me.

22 You lift me up to the wind *and* make me ride *it*;

And You dissolve me in a storm.

23 For I know that You will bring me to death,

And to the house of meeting for all living.

8 Chapters later we get Gods response (I am only going to read you a portion of it but I encourage you to read the entire chapter on your own)

Job 38 -1-7 **38** Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind and said, ²“Who is this who darkens *the divine* plan

By words without knowledge?

3 Now ^[a]tighten the belt on your waist like a man,

And I shall ask you, and you inform Me!

4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell Me, if you ^[b]have understanding,

5 Who set its measurements? Since you know.

Or who stretched the measuring line over it?

6 On what were its bases sunk?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

7 When the morning stars sang together

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

J. VERNON MCGEE: “This is God’s universe, and God does things his way. You may have a better way, but you don’t have a universe.”

4 Chapters later Job realizes God is in control – From a place of surrender and submission all believers like Job must come to the realization that God is in control-

If God isn’t Good this is a scary thing, but b/c God is good this is something to celebrate. It takes the pressure off; it removes the weight of us trying to figure out and make something of this life ourselves.

42: 2-6 **42** Then Job answered the Lord and said, ²“I know that You can *do* all things,

And that no plan is impossible for You.

³‘Who is this who conceals advice without knowledge?’

Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I do not know.

⁴‘Please listen, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’

Spoiler Alert ... God returned to Job everything He lost – 2-fold (He doubled it)

My own story of pain ... *build a bridge*

What did God teach me in that - to TRUST in Him. His ways are better than my ways and when we go through something painful - even if it’s the result of someone else’s sin - someone has done or said something to hurt us - it’s an opportunity for us to trust God - to let God’s love and forgiveness fill our heart. We can align ourselves with what HE wants - we can respond instead of react.

I want to tell you about Icebergs: ICEBERGS:

In the frigid waters around Greenland are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you’d observe them carefully, you’d notice that sometimes the small pieces of ice move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean

currents. When we face trials and tragedies, it's helpful to see our lives as being subject to two forces—surface winds and ocean currents. The winds represent everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing. But operating simultaneously with these gusts of wind is another force that's even more powerful. It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of His unchanging love.

Life at times is like these surface winds – they move us all around, they toss us, they put us in unexpected environments, at times it may even feel like they are blowing our lives so off course that we don't know how we are ever going to make it back.

That is the day to day of life – Sometimes life isn't fair, sometimes bad things happen to good people, sometimes people are going to hurt you, lie on you, misuse you etc. That is part of the fallen world we live in.

But there is a current that is much stronger than these winds that move you around and that is the as the story says the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes and the DEEP flow of his unchanging love.

-Everything God does is out of Love for US – (Never forget this) I one thing I say often probably been a point in a sermon at least a dozen times is that God's motive is always love.

I just want to tell someone this morning that "GODS GOT YOU" in fact GODS got you RIGHT WHERE HE WANTS YOU. I know it may not seem like it, I know it may not feel like I , I know there are times when you lay your head down on your pillow at night that you lay awake question what the HECK is going on, God where are you, how are you going to fix this situation.

FATHERING them and holding them in their pain

I have 5 kids (i know. It's a lot)

This last week, Lukas our foster son, had a allergic reaction. His tongue and neck was so swollen he couldn't breath well.

We rush him to the H and it was HORRIBLE watching him suffer. All i could do was watch him in his pain and comfort him and be there with him and love him - knowing that he will get through it.

Did you know that God the Father loves you SO MUCH all he wants to do is hold you when you're in pain. All he wants to do is comfort you. He's not causing the pain. He's with you IN the pain. Sure sometimes He heals you of physical pain. But often the pain is emotional pain if you will, please understand today that God isn't going to FORCE that person who's done you wrong to repent and reconcile with you. Pray that they do, yes. But the Father is WITH You in the midst of your pain. Crying with you. The book of Psalms says He bottles your tears.

This morning I want you to take REST in the fact that what you are facing is

- #1 Temporary -It will pass – The Bible says sorrow is for a night, but Joy comes in the morning.
- #2 God is in it – The Bible says I have never left you nor forsaken you I am always with you.
- #3 In the end you WIN – Through Christ we are victorious – the Book of Revelation tells us how God takes care of everything including the enemy. IN revelation 21 we discover a New Heaven and a New earth. In Jesus we always win B/c he always WINS.

God's plan has always been to redeem His special creation - mankind - but not in a way that we might expect.

We expect power when God desires to simply serve.

This strategic design of God's has always been in place!

Look at what James said in the council of Jerusalem in the book of Acts 15:12-18. He quoted a passage from the OT signaling that this was not some new idea - as if God suddenly had a change of heart and decided to include everyone. No God always wanted a people unto Himself - a family - He began that process with Abraham and what we know as the Hebrew Children - or the Jewish people. But then He included the Gentiles - the rest of the world - ALL who would call upon His name would be saved.

Before we read this - understand that Jesus was coming not only to restore Israel but to gather the Gentiles.

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13 When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. 14 Simon^[a] has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16

"After this I will return

and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild,

and I will restore it, 17 that the rest of mankind may seek the

Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name,

says the Lord, who does these things'^[b]—

18 things known from long ago.^[c]

This message of the Gospel - that a HOLY CREATOR GOD is not just Creator but **a Father who loves His children - loves them enough to send His only Son to pay for their sins** so they can be forgiven and restored - this Message is meant for ALL! Aren't you SO GLAD that God didn't write you off? Aren't you so glad that despite your cynicism or mistakes or pride or failures that God didn't say "well, you ALMOST made it in."

Nope. **GOD accepted you as you were and if you're guest with us today and if you don't know Jesus, I have good news for you - God accepts you as you are!**

4. While God has all the power He came to serve.

For Jesus ALREADY paid the punishment for your sins!

Theres' NOTHING you need to do to earn salvation and a life of peace with God.

We all want peace and only JESUS can give us that peace in our soul and in our mind.

Jesus came to restore you AND your neighbor AND your coworker to the Father but HOW did He come? In power, demanding to be worshiped? Did he take over with violence? Did He take over with cunning political gain? No.

Look at how Jesus came. As the prophet said LONG AGO _ He came humbly - writing into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey.

Passage about coming into Jerusalem >>>

I want to not only talk for a moment about why He came but HOW Jesus came.

Scripture says that He not only rode on a donkey (NOT A HORSE) but a BABY donkey. His feet may have been dangling on the ground - dragging along. Jesus was always choosing the humble way - teaching us what God is like. God is approachable.

Yes God is sovereign but God is also approachable! WOW!

Even in the fall of man we see the workings of Gods plan- We see that Jesus was always the remedy for man's sin problem that Jesus wasn't a reaction to man's surprise sinning in the Garden but rather Jesus was a proactive move to eradicate sin before there was a world for man to sin in.

You and I now carry this message of the Gospel! This GOOD NEWS that God the Father wants EVERYONE in His family! It's not just for the "good people" or those born in the right neighborhood. A relationship with Father God is for EVERYONE and JESUS makes that possible!

Sinners Saved - - - > Ambassadors for Jesus

We kinda have a problem in American Christianity. We have a consumer mindset. We can accidentally teach or imply this in our churches if we're not careful. Jesus had many walk away from Him after He made it clear that following Him isn't always easy - that it often requires sacrifice.

But Jesus offers us something the world can't offer - a hope BEYOND this world. A crown that far outweighs ANYTHING you could ever receive here. Remember Jesus wants forever.

You and I - we need to truly understand WHO WE ARE are as sons and daughters of a heavenly Father. We're in the FAMILY of God! AND then we need to understand our ROLE now on the earth. If God's only desire was to save you and make you His child, he would have beamed you to heaven the minute you got saved. But no, He has a purpose for you - a calling to share the Father's love and this Gospel until Jesus comes back! He wants everyone adopted into His family. Let me put it like this.

We teach them the following ...

I AM...

When I repent of my sin and admit my need for God, when I ask Jesus to be my Savior I am BORN AGAIN a NEW PERSON, right?

I am one with Christ.

I am an adopted child

I am a forgiven sinner

I am in God's grip

I am a liberated slave!

I am being renewed in a process of daily sanctification by God's Spirit

But sometimes as Pastors and ministry leaders we stop there. And we shouldn't! One thing I love about Pastor Dave's preaching is that He challenges you and invites you to now SHARE the Good News and be a light to the world around you. That next step in our renewal? It's this...

I am God's image on the earth! I am an ambassador for Christ Jesus! I am a picture of Jesus to the broken and hurting.

We need to realize that Isaiah 61 isn't just a Messianic prophecy - describing what Jesus would do all by himself.

When Jesus came out of the desert being tempted by Satan for 40 days, He went to see John the Baptist, His cousin. John baptized Him and that's when we see the Trinity in full color - the Father says "This is my son in whom I'm well pleased" the Holy Spirit came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove. So we see Father Spirit and Son - all three converged in a supernatural moment to signal TODAY was a new day - JESUS was starting His ministry!

He walked straight to the Synagogue and read from Isaiah quoting "This is the year of the Lord's favor.. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news. To bring freedom to the captives and healing to those who are oppressed..." after he quotes this passage He says "TODAY this is fulfilled!" MIC DROP! What many Christians don't realize then is that in Mt 28 & John 14-17 when Jesus tells them that ALL AUTHORITY the Father gave me - I now give YOU - preach the good news - heal the sick, cast out demons, forgive sins... He was saying YOU are anointed to preach Good News. He was talking to fishermen! Accountants! Carpenters! Beggars!

Jesus restores us THEN SETS US ON MISSION.

My question for you today is ... are you on mission? Are you aware of God's Sovereignty and His desire to save ALL PEOPLE?

When Jesus preached his first "sermon" the Sermon on the Mount the video captured that moment well when we opened today - Jesus inviting ALL people - the meek, the broken, the hurting to not only be restored - mind soul and body - but then to become missional - to become part of HIS story - to be messengers!

Paul said in God's Word that it is CHRIST who lives IN ME
What God wants us to remember today is that **now I am anointed to bring good news to the broken!** I am anointed to bring liberty to the captive! I am anointed to tell people the good news and SHOW people the good news by loving them in their brokenness and coming alongside them in their mess.

Altar Call: SALVATION CALL ARE YOU BROKEN? Are you like that crowd that Jesus preached to that day standing on that mountainside? Are you fed up with what the world has to offer? Are you tired of striving and feeling like you're getting no where? Are you stressed out and - maybe you even have plenty of money BUT you don't know why you are STILL arguing with your spouse - stressed out of the future and frustrated with the present.

Jesus offers you something you can't get anywhere else - PEACE - PEACE with God.

HOPE for HEAVEN.

Will you trust Him this morning.

BOW YOUR HEADS PLEASE AS WE PRAY.

DO YOU WANT TO REPENT OF YOUR SIN AND ASK GOD TO BE YOUR FATHER?

Second Call: Do you want God to open your eyes to see who needs Jesus? Let's become ambassadors for Christ! Let's let the message of the GOSPEL be the message of our lives! Let's tell people about Jesus!