

The Lord Reigns

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Bible Verse: Psalm 93
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We have the privilege tonight of turning to Psalm 93 for our teaching this evening and I invite you to turn there as I'll read it to open our time together. Psalm 93,

1 The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. 2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. 3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty. 5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore.

Now over the past couple of weeks, we have been laying the groundwork to study this Psalm and several Psalms that follow, Psalms that celebrate God as King, and one of the things that we have gone over is the fact that Scripture refers to God as King, to Jesus as King and does it on many occasions, and so we see that this is an important metaphor for us to understand and to take into account. Last time we looked at some of the biblical perspective on what it meant to be a king back 3,000 years ago when the Psalms were being written, and we saw that they present the king as one having authority and one having majesty, and so when we come to this metaphor of God as King, as God as one who reigns, we realize that in the center of the thought there is the idea of authority and majesty and we certainly see that as we come to Psalm 93 here this evening.

As I pointed out a couple of weeks ago, Psalm 93 begins to build on one of the central verses in Psalm 92, if you'll go back just one Psalm to verse 8, Psalm 92:8, you see this statement that, "You, O LORD, are on high forever." God reigns. He is supreme. He is over all and now the Psalms are going to celebrate this theme with various different features as they unfold from Psalm 93 to Psalm 100. And one of the first things that I want you to see as we consider this Psalm is that it is theocentric and that's a fancy word for saying it is God-centered, and what I mean by that and what is so key about this and what is important for us to understand as we come to this text here this evening, is that this Psalm is a Psalm in which man is set aside. This is not a Psalm that is presenting petitions for the needs of the psalmist, it is not praying over enemies or over difficulties or anxieties or confessing sin, this is a Psalm where God is exclusively discussed, where

God is exclusively proclaimed, where he is set on high. It's not simply that God reigns, that's true, but in this Psalm one of the way that it is shown that God reigns is that the focus is preeminently and exclusively on him.

So you see the centrality of Yahweh in this Psalm by what it says and also by what it does not say. This is a Psalm that we approach and we leave ourselves, as it were, outside the door. We leave ourselves and we check our thoughts and our desires and our circumstances, we check those at the door and we enter into this holy realm of thought that exalts the sovereign majesty and the sovereign authority of God, and that's the mindset that this Psalm is designed to teach us and to inculcate into our thinking, and it is a wonderful way for us to contemplate things. This is a Psalm, in other words, let me state it in another way, this is a Psalm that is not addressed to the felt needs of man. This is not a Psalm that makes promises of health and wealth to anyone. This is not a Psalm that tries to find common ground by giving a testimony and, you know, let me invite you to God based on a testimony of how he has worked in my life. It's not like any of that. This Psalm sets man aside, it is theocentric, it is God-centered, and it presents God as sovereign King, as God, as the one ruling over the world that he has made. So we are and I'm belaboring the point, I realize that but I won't apologize for it, I'm belaboring the point so that we would see that we are to come, as it were, with a humble spirit, with a desire to praise and worship this King, and to leave ourselves behind and give him preeminence in our thought and affections as we follow the psalmist's thought through what he has presented for us here that we're going to study here this evening. So that's a great way to approach life, not only this Psalm but that's for another time.

The psalmist gives us three considerations, he gives us three things to focus on as we consider the reign of God, and first of all, let's just consider the reality of God's reign. That's our first point for this evening, the reality of God's reign, and this Psalm opens up with a trumpet call, you might say, I'm speaking metaphorically; it gives a trumpet blast to call attention to the sovereignty of God.

Look at Psalm 93:1.

1 The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.

The name for God here, Yahweh, is placed emphatically at the very start of the sentence. Look at it there, "The LORD reigns." It opens up and it immediately brings your attention to Yahweh, the all caps there indicating the proper name for God, Yahweh, as it is reflected in the Hebrew text. "The LORD reigns," in other words, it's so emphatic, the Lord and he alone reigns. The Lord and no one else is over all. It is the Lord, it is Yahweh and no other God at all who reigns in glory. It is he and it is he alone who is King. So we start and we see that there has already been an exclusivity that has been placed here. In this one verse, all competing world philosophies and all competing religions are excluded and refuted by this single statement here in Scripture, "The LORD and he alone reigns."

Now he goes on and he talks about how this reign is manifested and look at it there as there is this repetition in the poetic language that he uses. "The LORD reigns," and "reigns," as we saw last time, means that he is over all like a monarch. He is like an earthly king over his realm except the realm of the Lord is the realm of all. He's the Lord over all and it says, "He is clothed with majesty." Notice the repetition. He is clothed with majesty, "The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved."

Now we're all here and we have clothes on, we have things that are attached to our being. The term "clothed" here is being used in a metaphorical way in this context of God as King, as God as the one who reigns, to say that he is clothed in majesty and strength is to use a metaphor. In biblical times, clothing was seen as an extension of the person because it was so intimately connected with him. It is attached immediately to his person. You know, even today we have the saying that sometimes is used, "the clothes make the man," so to speak, it's not that we agree with the theology of that sentiment but just simply recognizing that the way a man dresses says something about himself; his clothing projects something about what he is saying about himself. Well, here in this verse, it's making a wonderful statement. What is it that clothes the Lord? What is it that projects his majesty? What projects the majesty of God, what projects his authority are his great works.

Look at it there, he's clothed and girded himself with strength, and then it goes to a statement about natural revelation. It makes a statement that points you outward to look at the created order and it says, "the world is firmly established, it will not be moved." The nature of nature, the reality of the created order speaks to the majesty of the God who made it. God's great works clothe his reputation with majesty. He created the world, he has power over the world, he has power to subdue everything in the world to his control, and so to look out, to look up at the sky is to look at the nature and the order around us, is to see something of the way that God has clothed himself to project his majesty. In Psalm 19 it says the heavens are declaring the glory of God, Psalm 19:1, that's another way of saying that God has clothed himself with projected majesty by the created order that he has established. When you look at the order of creation and you look at the countless galaxies of galaxies, you realize that God has declared himself to be great by what he has made.

Now with that stated, the repetition here, look at it again with me, he is clothed with majesty, he is clothed with strength, he has girded himself with strength, this is the first of a series of repetitions that you'll see in this Psalm and the repetition is a poetic device. It builds suspense, you might say. It highlights key thoughts and it draws you in. When it says he is clothed with majesty, he is clothed again, he has girded himself with strength, it draws you in and it builds to a climax to help emphasize the point that he is making, and so this majesty is a reference to the dignity of God, the authority of God, the grandeur of God and the might of God.

One other aspect that I would draw out for you here in verse 1 is this, is that the Lord reigns is a comprehensive statement of reality. This is the fundamental cornerstone of all reality that God reigns, that God is sovereign over all, that he not only made the world but he rules over the world and everything that is within it. You can take that comprehensive statement of reality and work it out into whatever level of detail that you want. You want to talk about the nations of the world, God reigns over the nations. You want to talk about human kings and leaders, God is over them. Psalm 21:1 says that the heart of the king is like water in the hands of the Lord, he directs it wherever he wishes. God is sovereign over that. You want to talk about personal circumstances, even though that's not the focus of this Psalm, God is sovereign over our circumstances. You want to talk about the way that the wicked rise and prosper for a while, God is sovereign over them. He gives them room to manifest their wickedness just long enough to vindicate his judgment when he brings it upon them, a particularly pertinent point as the rest of the world is celebrating gay pride month here in June 2019. God's not celebrating that. God is reigning over it, tolerating it for a time for his purposes where he will one day show forth his holiness over against what has been raised up against him in his created order. So this is a grand statement of reality. Whatever you see in the world about you, God is on high, he is over it all. Whatever troubles your heart tonight, God is sovereign, God reigns over it. The Lord reigns in whatever realm you can think of, God is sovereignly over it all in majesty, strength, might and authority.

Now let's tease this out just a little bit further. As we saw last time, earthly kings had a way of projecting their own earthly majesty with their robes, with their crowns, with their multiplied servants, with their big buildings, with other matters that would show forth and project strength, give an appearance of strength, give a sense of might and majesty to what they do through their robes, through their crowns, through their parades, through their military marches, through their military conquest, all of these things projecting the strength of the one who is the sovereign monarch over that nation or that realm. Projecting strength. Now the reality of them, however, is that their strength was in some ways just an illusion because, after all, all of these kings lived for a while, they reigned for a while, and then they died, and their authority was projected but it was not real in the sense that it was not permanent, it was not lasting; authority was given to them for a time but then they passed from the scene and another man came up in their place. So their projected strength had a temporary earthly reality to it but in the end it was shown to be an empty boast because these men passed from the scene. They died like all flesh. And you can go to some of the prophets like in Isaiah or Ezekiel and see where it mocks kings as they descend into Hades and they are now with other kings who have died and passed away, and all of their earthly might and authority does them no good in the realm of the dead. Well, Yahweh's majesty is not like that. Yahweh's majesty is real. It is actual. It is transcendent. What he has done in nature displays his power in a way that no king ever could do. No king had the capacity to speak worlds into existence. No king, no earthly king had the power to control the orbit of planets around the sun. But Yahweh does. What he has done in nature displays his actual power. It's not the passing externals of material and jewels on a head, this is the actual power of creative might that is being displayed here.

Look at verse 1 with me again. "The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength," and then having built it up with that repetition, he goes to the climax. What is it that manifests the strength of God? It is, "the world is firmly established, that will not be moved." So majesty and strength, beloved, are essential to a proper view of God. Whatever else we say about the people of the world outside the walls of this room, let's bring it inside this room and realize that it is vital for your spiritual health, it is vital for proper worship, it is vital for a proper approach to life to have this great majesty and sovereign authority of God firmly established in your mind, to give him the worship that is due to a sovereign King who is over all of the universe. God's sovereignty elevates your worship because you're responding to him as he truly is. It is a sense of the sovereign majesty of God that makes men and women bold and courageous in the face of life, whether it's the personal challenges that come in life or when we see the hostility the world directed against Christian faith and the Scriptures and Christian people, and as Christians are martyred for their faith, in other parts of the world anyway, what gives them strength to stand against that is a firm conviction of the sovereign majesty of God, that God is over the circumstances that come to our lives and even when they are difficult, we rest and we find our strength and our comfort in this great sovereign authority of the living God. That's vital to your worldview, beloved. You young people, it's vital to the way that you're going to live life is where you come out on this and whether you have drunk deeply from this well in order to have it inform the way that you think and shape the way that you respond to everything. We can leave that there for now.

As he goes on in verse 2, therefore, he says this, he says,

2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.

A king's throne was the symbol of the seat of his authority, it was the seat of his sovereignty, and what it is saying about Yahweh here in verse 2 is that God's sovereign authority was established before time began. It's from of old. It's from ancient times going back. This isn't a new aspect to reality, it's not that God overcame things and he overcame foes and opponents and established his reign in that way. No, God has always been on high. He has always been sovereign over all. He has always been King. We cannot conceive of a time when God was not King because there has never been such a time, so much so that in a way that transcends the limits of human thought, we go back to the original point of creation and then we burst through the veil of time into eternity past and whatever that means and whatever that looks like, when you burst through the veil of the first moment of time into eternity past, you would find the same reality then that you have right now, Yahweh is sovereign over all, and you even begin to mix verb tenses to properly express it. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." In John 8:58, here as we're talking about the nature of God in this way, before time began, God is King. God is sovereign before time began. You say, "But that's grammatically illogical. Both verbs should be in the past tense." No, no, no, that's not the case. Before time began is a past tense reference but the sovereignty of God is such an enduring embedded reality of the nature of his essence that you use the present tense to express an abiding reality. He has always been sovereign King over all.

So God's reign was – watch this – God's reign was present before the beginning of time, God's reign extends throughout all of human time and history, God's reign will continue throughout all of future eternity, and all of that being expressed by the reality of the fundamental statement, "The LORD reigns. His throne was established from of old." Look at it there in verse 2, "You are from everlasting." And so because God reigns, he is unchanging, he is immutable, he is the same God today that he was before time began, his essence will be unchanged throughout all of eternity. He is the eternal, unchanging, immutable God, and as part of that manifestation of his essence, he reigns sovereignly over all. So when Scripture says the Lord reigns, it is making a sweeping declaration about the essence and existence of God.

Now watch one other thing here. It's amazing and I think it's one of the marks of the true inspiration of Scripture that there can be so much expressed in such an economy of words. This Psalm is only five verses long and we couldn't begin to exhaust its meaning if we taught on it for 50 hours. Follow the train of thought beginning at the end of verse 1, and I'm just going to read it and then point out one other aspect of this opening two verses to you. It says, "Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting." This Psalm has made a great march, it has marched from the world, the existence of the world, to God's throne, to God himself. It has started with the world that he made which is an expression of his sovereignty, and his sovereignty is a statement about the very nature of his essence, all wrapped up in just such a sweeping economy of words. Our world, our lives, our existence, our days, are subject to a majestic and authoritative King. Nations may rage against him, you'll forgive me for saying that I'm glad that we're preaching this in the middle of gay pride month, humanity may rise up in rebellion against God's created order but beloved, understand they rebel in vain. There is no lasting consequence to this explosion of perversion and immorality against the holy God of the universe. There is no lasting consequence because God reigns over it and he will ultimately vindicate his righteousness in the end. He delays in time to give some opportunity to repent, but when the fullness of time comes and God has had enough, he'll assert his sovereignty in a way that will be unmistakable. God's victory, beloved, is assured. It cannot possibly come out any other way because God reigns. He has sovereign authority and majesty over everything in the universe.

Now that is a statement about the reality of God's reign. Let's move on to a second point that this Psalm shows us, and it shows us his reign in nature. His reign in nature, and I may not have the opportunity this evening to fully develop the thought that I'm about to express but if you think about Psalm 19, which is a much more familiar Psalm, Psalm 19 in the first six verses opens up with a statement about God's revelation in nature, the heavens are declaring the glory of God, and then it moves into the second section beginning in verse 7 with a statement of God's special revelation in his word, the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, and on it goes. Well, you see something of the joining of those themes that is more familiar to us in Psalm 19 being expressed also in Psalm 93. After this statement of the sovereign nature of God in the first two verses, he goes and makes a statement about God's reign in nature.

Look at verses 3 and 4 with me. It says this, and you see the repetition again as I point this out to you,

3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty.

You see there that closing statement again, "The LORD on high is mighty," it is reasserting again the reign, the sovereign majesty, the sovereign authority of God, and the statement, this repetition about the floods lifting up their voice is building up to that climax in this section of the Psalm. What it is saying is simply this: that nature displays that God is omnipotent. His rule is absolute.

Now in this section, and I even heard this on a Christian teaching program just a few weeks ago, ironically teaching out of Psalm 93 making an interpretive point different from what I'm about to make, and that teacher, a fine man of God teaching, was echoing what other, some other commentators say about this passage which is this: some writers think that these two verses are picturing God triumphing over an existing chaos at the beginning of time, and they base that interpretation on supposed parallels to ancient pagan poetry where their gods step into chaos and establish their rule over the chaos of the waters and display themselves as being God over all, and the interpretation which some evangelical writers make is that Psalm 93 is drawing upon that pattern in ancient pagan poetry to make a similar point about God and it's asserting God's sovereignty over against the pagan idols that have been expressed in the past. Well, as much as I read that and as much as I listened to it, I never found that very persuasive; you know, to inject pagan gods here just seems to me to be utterly foreign to the context. I don't believe that Scripture is pointing us in that direction and it can be understood in a much simpler, a much clearer, a much plainer way as this: these surging waves of water reveal the power of God. If you have stood on a beach and simply stopped and listened to the repetitive roar of the ocean as its waves crash upon the sand, you have more than enough picture to be able to understand the point that the psalmist is making here. The waters pound with a fearsome force and they do it again and again and again, and it cannot be stopped humanly speaking.

There was a time in the past where I had opportunity, I was alone early in a morning on a beach and had opportunity to just kind of read Psalm 93 in the quiet solitude of that moment. Etched in my mind as the ocean waves are pounding along, picture the night sky still enveloping and the stars above, and in that moment of solitude and no one else at the ocean, and pound pound pound, you get a sense of what I believe the psalmist is saying here, the waters, the floods are lifting up their voice and with a fearsome authority they are declaring something, and it's more than the sound of the water, what they are declaring is the majesty and the sovereignty of the God who created them, the majesty of the God who created the waters, who set the tides into motion, the God who established the sands that stop their proud waves and say, "You will go this far and no further." This

is all a manifestation of the revelation of God in nature, those pounding waters on the pounding sand giving a display of what the sovereignty of God is like, that by the exercise of his fingers he can set that into place and rule over it. An ocean roar is great and what the psalmist is saying here, I believe, is that the God who made it is even greater, and as the waters intimidate you, as you see their vast power, then you are getting a token representation, you are getting a revelation in nature of the might and the omnipotent power of God, and beloved, that kind of majesty, that authority of God over nature and specifically the authority of God over the seas, over the waters, are designed to invoke in you a response of worship that is based on wonder and fear. You know, I mean, some of us, speaking to myself in particular, I mean, I can't fix a leaky faucet. God reigns over the vast oceans and it's no problem for him, and when you take this recognition that his authority over the waters are a revelation of who God is and you carry that into the New Testament, then you are given a testimony of who the Lord Jesus Christ is.

Look at the Gospel of Mark 4 with me. We'll look at a couple of familiar passages here. Mark 4, beginning in verse 35. It says this,

35 On that day, when evening came, [Jesus] said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. 37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

Here the Lord Jesus Christ manifesting his deity by his control over the seas, and the response that it evoked in his disciples who observed this is brought out by his question to them in verse 40.

40 ... He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

"Men, don't you recognize who I am? Don't you know who I am?" You should have known that this man who is asleep in the boat was God Incarnate, and because God is sovereign over the seas, there was no way that the sea was going to kill them while Jesus was in the boat. Their fear was totally unjustified.

In verse 41,

41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

By his voice, he controlled the sea. By his voice, he manifested his sovereign reign. He manifested what Scripture ascribed to Yahweh in Psalm 93, his sovereignty over the

waters. Christ manifested sovereignty over the waters and thereby manifested his own deity. He was by very nature God himself and their fear of the waves was transferred to fear of the one who had power over the waves. That's the point. The one who has power over the waves is one vast and infinite in power and glory, and if you're afraid of the waves, then multiply that by the fear that is owed to the one who is sovereign over those waves. That's how great he is. We just need to transcend our sense of God being our buddy and limiting it to that aspect of his filial love for his own; we need to have a proper sense of the fear of God if we are going to have a fully informed and robust faith in him.

One other passage in the Gospels that came to mind in my preparation here. Luke 5. We'll read an extensive section of Scripture here as Christ manifested his sovereign authority, watch this, over the sea and over all that is in the sea. Chapter 5, verse 1 of the Gospel of Luke.

1 Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; 2 and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. 3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. 4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets."

Notice that Jesus is about to manifest his miraculous power in a way that would authenticate the teaching that he had just completed. It was an exclamation point on the instruction that he had given to the crowds.

Verse 6,

6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; 7 so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

Now look at the response here in verse 8

8 But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." 11 When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

The manifestation of the power of Christ over the sea and all that was in it provoked this conviction of sin and the sense of fear in Peter as he said, "Lord, I am not worthy to be in Your presence. You need to go away. Don't you realize who I am? I'm a sinful man and You are holy. You should be separate and apart from one like me." And in mercy, Christ spoke words of grace to him, "Peter, don't fear. I've called you. From now on, you'll be in My service catching men and not fish."

My point as we turn back to Psalm 93 in these two Gospel passages is, one, is that when you recognize what the Old Testament says about God's authority over the sea and then you see Christ displaying authority over the sea, you realize that he is displaying his glory. He is displaying his deity. No one reigns over the seas but Yahweh. Christ reigns over the sea, he is equal to Yahweh, he is Yahweh in human flesh. So in verse 4 of Psalm 93, "More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty."

Now that brings us to a third and final point where the parallel to Psalm 19 holds up again. We have seen the reality of God's reign, we've seen the reign of God in nature as it is expressed in the seas, not the heavens, as it is in Psalm 19, but the psalmist concludes this Psalm by asserting God's reign in his word. Point 3: the reign in Scripture. The reign in Scripture. You see, beloved, God's sovereignty, God's reign, God's authority, God's majesty is also displayed in his word. It is true and it is faithful.

Now look at verse 5 here with me. In this abrupt transition, he says in verse 5,

5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed;

It's a reference to the word of God. It's a reference to his revelation in Scripture and when you pull together the full context of this Psalm, what it's saying is this: in the first four verses he has extolled the manifest reign of God in nature, the created world is a revelation of the sovereign reign of God and God's reign establishes the stability and order of the world. Verse 1, the world is firmly established. Why is it firmly established? Because God reigns. In the visible realm, his invisible sovereignty is displayed.

Now because God reigns not only over the visible realm but he also reigns over all things invisible, remember it's a comprehensive statement of reality, the Lord reigns, visible and invisible, what he's saying is this, is that God's reign – oh, this is so precious for those of you who love the word of God – God, because God reigns and he reigns in the invisible realm as well, that has meaning for how we understand his word. God's reign in the invisible realm guarantees that his word is dependable and true in all that it says. It is a perfectly true word. His word is established and immovable in the same way that the created world and the created order is established and immovable. His testimonies are fully confirmed. They stand. They will not be overturned. Man will not overturn the reign of God in his world, man will not overturn the reign of God in his word either. There is a unique veracity in everything that Scripture says, in everything that Scripture promises, in all of its warnings and in all of its commands. There is a divine truthfulness and there is a

divine immutability to God's word that is a further display of his reign. Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not pass away."

If you'll look over at Psalm 19, this will set us up for the conclusion here. Psalm 19:1,

1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God,

God's reign in nature.

Psalm 19:7,

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

There is a divine impeccability to his word. There are no flaws in it. It is more perfect than the most flawless diamond. God's word is utterly majestic. It is high. It is lofty. It is true. It will be not overturned. It will not be proven false at any point. There will never be a greater revelation than the 66 books of the Bible that we now have. That's how great and how wonderful God's word is, and in very brief concise language, the Psalmist in Psalm 93 points to God's word, having established his sovereignty over all, "The LORD reigns," comprehensive statement of reality, the Lord reigns over the seas, the Lord's sovereign majestic authority the utter truthfulness of his testimonies, of his word, of his written revelation. They are fully confirmed. They will never be overturned. His word can be trusted, in other words. The word of God can be trusted because God is sovereign over all and it was God who gave us his word through the human writers of Scripture.

Now then, I could have made a fourth point here but I chose not to, having made that fundamental statement about the word of God, he says this at the end of verse 5. Look at it with me. He says,

5 ... Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore.

"Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore." Beloved, what he's saying here again is in such brief compact language, is he's laying for the way that all of creation should consider the loftiness of God and it is a response of holiness, and the flow of thought is this, very simple, very clear, very obvious to follow, and yet it's so simple that a six year old could follow the logic of what is being said here, and yet it is so vast in its implications that the highest theologians could not exhaust the significance of what is said here. "Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore," and the idea is this: since this God, this sovereign, majestic, authoritative God over nature and over his word, since this God reigns in authority in unchallenged supremacy, it is fitting that we would respond to him and be set apart for him, which is what holiness means, that we would be set apart for him in our affections and in our life. The proper fitting response to the

majesty of this God is to be set apart for him. His glory compels it. His glory deserves it. There is no justification whatsoever for anyone who has been exposed to the revelation of this God to say, "I'll live for my own self. I'll live for my own glory." His sovereignty over all evokes a recognition that that means, "He is sovereign over me as well. He is my Creator. He is my Maker. He is my Sustainer. One day He will be my Judge and, therefore, all I can do is devote myself to Him in humble faith and obedience." That's the fitting response for man to set himself apart to this God in his affections and in his life.

Look at 1 Peter 1, just after the book of James, which is just after Hebrews. 1 Peter 1. This is a theme of Scripture. There is a call to holiness that the holy sovereignty of God brings forth in verse 13 of 1 Peter 1,

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

God's holiness evokes and calls for a response of a devotion of holiness and his people. It could be no other way.

Then in the passage that Andrew read earlier, verse 17,

17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work,

Beloved, this is a New Testament passage saying these words that I'm about to read, this is after the coming redemptive work of Christ. Verse 17,

conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

These passages that we've seen tonight have a shaping formative effect on all of our affections. This sovereign reign of God produces in us a sense of majesty and fear and reverence and worship. The holiness of God evokes a like sense of being set apart. God is set apart, he is holy and majestic, we should be set apart to him. And then when we see the precious blood of Christ being stated that this Christ who is God in human flesh laid down his life to redeem us from our sinful lives, our sinful thoughts, our sinful words, our sinful deeds, that he laid down that precious life in order to redeem us out of all of it, we see the grand sweep of it all, and there is this loving response of a sense of reverence and worship and fear and devotion, a laying down of our lives before this great God. The holiness of God, therefore, undergirds our own pursuit of holiness. It sets the standard. It

defines the motivation and all of this attracts us to something that is higher and better than we are in ourselves. The holiness of God, the word of God calls us out of our mediocrity, calls us out of our sin, calls us to Christ to submissively place our utter faith in him as the proper response to what he has revealed himself to be: sovereign in the world, sovereign in his word, sovereign at the cross, sovereign in his call for sinners to repent and put their faith in him alone for salvation, and we find all of this summed up in our Lord Jesus Christ because it was through Christ that God created the world and all that is in it. It was in Christ that the word became flesh. It was Christ who spoke peace to the seas. It's Christ who speaks peace to the troubled human heart. Psalm 23, Scripture says, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want." At the end it says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." In John 10, Jesus took those words and said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

So in this vast revelation of God, we see it culminated and the climax of his revelation being in the person of Christ who now calls us to himself to love him, to trust him, that he would be our righteousness, we would trust him for mercy that we do not deserve, we would trust him alone for a righteousness that is not ours as our sole standing before this holy sovereign God. And beloved, the promise of Scripture for us is this, is that those who trust Christ like that, the sovereign power of God means that he will keep you, that he will allow nothing to separate you from him, ultimately all of this wonderful statement of Scripture tells us this, that in Christ we are forever secure because the one who sovereignly saved us will sovereignly keep us, and in that we rest and respond in worship.

Let's pray together.

Lord, what can we say? What can we say? We honor You according to Your sovereign majesty. We affirm that we believe what Scripture says. You are the Lord and You reign and You have made yourself known in the written word and in the Incarnate Word in our Lord Jesus Christ. We bow before You in recognition of Your great majesty, of Your great authority. We bow before You and we accept and acknowledge the gift of grace that You have provided for us in Christ. We ask You to keep us knowing that You will, knowing that that is Your purpose. And Father, You who are sovereign even over human hearts, we ask You to exercise that sovereign power and draw to Your Son those who are with us who do not yet know Christ, who have not yet bowed the knee, who have not repented of sin, who have not put their faith in Him. Father, we realize that men's hearts are very stubborn. We are living in a month where such stubbornness is celebrated by the world around us. We reject it all, and as we reject it, we affirm and recognize and submit to the fact that You are sovereign even over that. You are sovereign over sinners and we ask you to bring many to Yourself. Thank You for your patience with our sin, with the rebellion of man that evokes Your righteous wrath. Thank You that You're patient, giving time for Your elect not to perish but to come to faith in Christ. We pray that by Your sovereign power You would bring that result to pass and that we would see it manifest in our midst tonight and in the days to come, sinners repenting under the influence of the

sovereign Holy Spirit and thus manifesting the wonderful truth that the Lord reigns. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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