

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the “Cause of the Cross,” first-and-foremost,

THE HOLINESS OF GOD DEMANDED IT

The holiness of God requires that sin must be judged and payment be made. And the only way that is possible in behalf of the sinner is through Christ’s death at Calvary. Jesus is the only sacrifice that fully satisfies the just demands of Holy God for the punishment of sin. Jesus became our mercy seat when He gave His life and shed His blood on Calvary for our sins. That’s why Jesus can emphatically say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jhn. 14:6).

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD DETERMINED IT

From eternity past, before the foundation of the world, God formulated a plan whereby He would give His Son and His Son would give His life as the Supreme Sacrifice for the sins of the world.

This morning we will also consider that...

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD DIRECTED IT

When we speak of the sovereignty of God, it means that God is the supreme and independent Ruler of the universe. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Divine Superintendent over all creation.

Because He is all-powerful, nothing is too difficult for Him to do. Because He is all-knowing, nothing catches Him by surprise or ever goes unnoticed. Because He is all-wise, no matter how things may look in this fallen world, all of God’s acts are accomplished in perfect wisdom; first for His own glory, and then for the good of man. And because He exists apart from His creation, He is:

. . . Free to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference. . . No one and no thing can hinder Him or compel Him or stop Him. He is able to do as He pleases always, everywhere, forever. . . Can we imagine the Lord God of Hosts having to request permission of anyone or to apply for anything to a higher body? To whom would God go for permission? Who is higher than the Highest? Who is mightier than the Almighty? Whose position antedates that of the Eternal? At whose throne would God kneel? Where is the greater one to whom He must appeal? (A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge Of God*).

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
‘I am the First and I am the Last;
Besides Me there is not God.’” —Isa. 44:6

Perhaps the best-known display of God's divine sovereignty in the Old Testament, is that of Joseph, who was hated by his own brothers and sold into slavery. From a human perspective, it appeared as if hatred, jealousy, deceit, and betrayal had gotten the upper hand on Joseph *and* his family. But what did it look like from a divine perspective? What did a sovereign God accomplish, even through the hands of wicked and sinful men? Joseph himself gives us the answer, as he reveals himself to his brothers:

"I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God." (Gen. 45:4b-8a)

After their father's death, all of Joseph's brothers thought that Joseph would now seek revenge. But note his response to his brothers:

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." (Gen. 50:20)

When we come to the New Testament, we see the *greatest* display of God's divine sovereignty, even when Jesus was hated and rejected of men. We see His sovereignty as Jesus was betrayed and sold for thirty pieces of silver—the price of a common slave. And, we see it when Jesus was taken by wicked hands, led to Golgotha to be crucified, and put to death.

But let's please remember the words of Solomon:

There are many plans in a man's heart,
Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand. (Prov. 19:21)

From a human perspective, it appeared as if hatred, jealousy, deceit, betrayal, sin *and* Satan had gotten the upper hand on God and His Son. But how did it look from a divine perspective? What did a sovereign God accomplish, even through the hands of wicked and sinful men?

Man (What Man Did)

1. The cross shows us the extent of man's sinfulness and wickedness. Crucifixion is one of the most heinous and ghastly forms of death known to man.
2. The cross displays what man thinks of God; his hatred towards God; wanting to do away with God, "Crucify Him!"
3. The cross demonstrates the greatest injustice ever known to man. Crucifixion was almost always reserved for the lower class: thieves, thugs, deserters, murderers, political insurgents, and slaves. But when they crucified Jesus, they had crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8b). Pilate "found no fault in Him." He was "holy, harmless [innocent], undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26).
4. The cross displays man's worst.
5. The cross shows how man curses God: betrayed Him, blasphemed Him, mocked Him, hated Him, called Him every name in the book, spat on Him, beat and scourged Him beyond recognition, humiliated Him, despised Him, denied Him, falsely accused Him, unjustly arrested and sentenced Him, stripped Him, taunted Him, rejected Him, cursed Him, and finally crucified Him.
6. The cross shows us how fickle man is. On Palm Sunday the crowd cried, "Hosanna," which is an exclamation of adoration. On Palm Sunday they were ready to crown Him. But on Friday they cried, "Crucify Him!"

God (What God Accomplished)

1. The cross reveals the extent of the holiness and righteousness of God. God used it to fully satisfy and uphold his holiness and righteousness.
2. The cross shows us what God thinks of man; His love for man (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-5); desiring to save him. God reverses the picture, when all help for man fails, God steps in and by His grace, mercy, and love, redeems fallen man!
3. The cross demonstrates the greatest divine justice ever known to man (Rom. 3:26; 2 Cor. 5:21). For the believer, because of Christ's death, the judge that once sentenced us to death has now signed our pardon, sealed us by His Holy Spirit, and given us a brand-new position. He has carried out the adoption procedures, signed the papers, and now we are legally the children of God! We have gone from the status of a condemned criminal awaiting a terrible execution, to that of a child awaiting a fabulous inheritance!
4. The cross demonstrates God's best. God gave His best when He gave His Son. He is fully satisfied with Christ's atonement for man's sin. He is God's Lamb "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). Christ our "Passover [Lamb] was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). Salvation therefore, is in Christ and Christ alone.
5. The cross shows us God bearing man's curse for him (Gal. 3:10-13). The Law condemned us. As sinners, we are all under divine judgment and condemnation. But the Good News is that Christ bore our curse and condemnation on the cross for us! He bore the penalty for our sins: death! See Deut. 21:22-23. "[He] Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24).
6. The cross reveals how faithful God is. We see it when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, "Not my will, but Your will be done." He could have called for more than twelve legions of angels. A legion was comprised of 6,000. That's more than 72,000 angels! He freely and voluntarily laid down His life. Jesus told Pilate, "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world" (Jhn. 18:37). Jesus said, "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (Jhn. 10:17-18)

CONCLUSION

The same could be said by Jesus and of His crucifixion that was said by Joseph:

“But as for you, you [all of mankind] meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive”. (Gen. 50:20)

How many? “As many as receive Him” (Jhn. 1:12).

It’s no wonder Paul closed chapter 11 of Romans with such praise and adoration! He rejoices in God’s awesome and divine sovereign will:

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

“For who has known the mind of the LORD?
Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him
And it shall be repaid to him?”

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.
(Rom. 11:33-36)

If God accomplishes all things according to His divine will, then shouldn’t you be able to trust Him regarding your past, present, and future? Shouldn’t you be able to trust Him as Savior and Lord of your life? Because God is sovereign, He has given you the freedom to receive Christ or reject Him. But the terms and consequences are clear. If you repent of your sins and truly receive Him: forgiveness and heaven. If you reject Him: eternal judgment in hell.

And as believers, let’s remember, no matter how things may look in this fallen world, all of God’s acts are accomplished in perfect wisdom, first for His own glory, and then for the good of man.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,
to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28)