

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY – PART 6: WHY PRAY? WHY EVANGELISE?

Do some thinking while we wait to begin...

Why do you pray? Give (at least) three reasons...

Now read Luke 11:1-13. According to this passage why should we pray?

INTRODUCTION: WHY DO WE PRAY... IF GOD IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING?

1. GOD IS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL

Isa 14:24-27, The LORD of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, ²⁵ that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot; and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder." ²⁶ This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. ²⁷ For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?

Matthew 10:29-30 "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

2. WE ARE RESPONSIBLE AND SIGNIFICANT

James 4:2 “You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

1 John 1:9 – confess sins and he forgives you

Luke 11 – ask, seek... find

Exodus 32

QUESTION:

HOW ARE BOTH THESE STATEMENTS TRUE?

Remember: COMPATIBILISM...

1. God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in Scripture to reduce human responsibility.
2. Human beings are responsible creatures – that is, they choose, they believe, they disobey, they respond, and there is moral significance in their choices; but human responsibility never functions in Scripture to diminish God’s sovereignty or to make God absolutely contingent.

(D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, p148.)

E.g. Acts 4:27-38. Who killed Jesus?

The terrible danger of EITHER/OR → distorting God: impotent... or indifferent

3. THE SOVEREIGN GOD WHO GRACIOUSLY WILLS OUR PRAYERS TO BRING ABOUT HIS WILL.

In charge of ends... AND of means

Philippians 2:12-13 - ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

But WHY choose to work in response to our prayers?
See Luke 11

APPLICATION: SO HOW SHOULD WE PRAY IN PRACTICE?

E.g. Daniel 9

E.g. Ephesians 1:15-23

E.g. Ephesians 1:15-19

E.g. John 15:16

PERSONAL MEDITATION & PRAYER

In the light of what we've learned today jot down...

- Something you've learned today that you want to tell yourself the next time you find it hard to pray

- What you'd like to say to God – perhaps thanksgiving or confession or supplication

POSTSCRIPT: WHAT ABOUT EVANGELISM AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD?

Book recommendation:

J.I. Packer, "Evangelism and the sovereignty of God."

*Hopefully we can see how the same principles we illustrated above apply.
Look up these references...*

1. God will save those he has chosen

John 6:37-39, Ephesians 1:3-14, Romans 8:28-33, 9:15-21, Philippians 1:6,
Esther 4:14

2. People must hear of, and believe in Jesus to be saved – we must evangelise

Romans 10:9-15, Luke 13:5, Lohn 3:16, 5:24, Acts 2:38, 10-11, 16:31,

NOT Either/Or

Either an impotent God who gives us a devastating responsibility

OR

An uninterested God who ignores us

BUT Both/And

So...

3. The sovereign God who wills our evangelism to bring those He has chosen to believe in Jesus

Acts 10-11, 13:48, 16:14, 18:9-11, Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Timothy 2:8-10