

Acts 4:23-31 – “Who’s the Boss?”

- 1) Today’s Attribute – “the **Sovereignty** of God” - reminds us that God is in control of all things
- 2) One thing that makes this a difficult attribute to understand is the presence of evil
 - a) This was the central issue in the first book of the Bible to be written – the book of Job
 - i) If God is in control of all things, why does He allow bad things to happen to those He Himself says are righteous?
 - ii) When bad things happen, if God is in control, does this mean He has no compassion? (Mark 4:38)
 - b) The book of Job makes no excuses for God and doesn’t not explain the ‘why’ – it simply asserts the truth of two seeming opposites
 - i) God IS in control of all things
 - ii) Sometimes, bad things happen even to ‘good’ people, yet God never abandons them, so ...
 - iii) The love of God is not contradicted by suffering but is demonstrated in the midst of suffering
- 3) What all IS God Sovereign (in control) over?
 - a) Psalm 50:10: **Creation**
 - b) Isaiah 41:22, John 13:19, Revelation 1:8: **Time**
 - c) Amos 4:7, Zechariah 10:1, Matthew 5:45: **Weather**
 - d) Deuteronomy 3:8, Isaiah 40:15, Acts 17:26: **Nations**
 - e) Job 2:10, Ecclesiastes 7:14, Isaiah 45:7: **Prosperity and Disaster**
 - f) Matthew 11:25-27; John 6:44, 65, 15:16; Romans 9:21; Ephesians 2:4-10; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 2:9: **Salvation**
 - g) Matthew 11:27, Mark 10:27, John 1:3, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 11:12, Ephesians 1:11: **All things**
- 4) 2 Kings 19:15-19, Nehemiah 9:6, Isaiah 51:12, Jeremiah 10:10-12 and 32:17, Acts 4:23-31: Why pray to a God who *isn’t* in control of all things?
- 5) God gives humanity limited sovereignty
 - a) Romans 13:8: As individuals
 - b) Proverbs 1:8, Hebrews 12:7-11: In homes
 - c) Romans 13:1-7: In society
 - d) Jeremiah 27:5: As nations
 - e) Genesis 9:2, Psalm 115:16: Over the Earth
- 6) Why then do some people get worse than they seem to deserve, while others get better than they seem to deserve?
 - a) Sometimes we are the authors of injustice and cause suffering by the way we treat one another
 - b) Sometimes those entrusted with authority fail to protect the righteous and fail to punish the wrong-doer
 - c) Job 2:1-6: Sometimes evil exerts its power and God, for reasons we do not understand, allows it
 - d) Romans 5:3-5, 8:28-30: In any case, God can use the hardships we face to shape our character
 - e) Philippians 3:8-12: Jesus demonstrated that suffering is necessary if we are to enter into glory, just as pain precedes birth for mother and child both
- 7) Before I complain about God not using His sovereignty to grant me what I want, I must ask myself how I handle the sovereignty He has granted me:
 - a) Regarding how I treat my body
 - b) Regarding what I fill my mind with
 - i) Thoughts I entertain
 - ii) Entertainments I enjoy
 - iii) Attitudes I carry
 - c) Regarding how I treat myself and the suffering I cause myself by believing lies about myself
 - d) Regarding how I treat others and the suffering I might cause through my lack of respect and love for others
- 8) John 16:33: “In this world you will have trials and tribulations, but take heart; for {I have experienced these things as well, and} I have overcome the world”
- 9) 1 John 4:4, 5:4: And we overcome through faith in Him