

Palm Sunday: Fearless Week Six: Fear of Releasing Control  
 March 28, 2010  
 Rev Ken Wratten at St. Stephen's

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.' Jesus knew that the only way his life would serve God, was by giving control to God.

This is a lesson from our Lord about releasing control. The Fear of Releasing Control, the Fear of God Getting out of the Box we put Him in; is the last fear we are going to examine in our sermon series.

We know God has a plan; we know God is powerful.

We still want to be the one to say when and how much God is in control of our life. We don't want to release control. In fact the idea of giving away control of our life to anyone else produces fear. So we keep the control. How is that working for you?

How is it working to fight for control over your life?

How is it working to succeed at being in control?

How is it working to stay one unforeseen event away from losing control?

How is it working to control your fears of not mattering, of disappointing God, of reaching the end of your life, or facing calamity?

The key is to give up the search for self-control, and take up self surrender to God. This surrender is based on knowing that God is big enough to do the job for you, and is qualified to run your life.

God is sovereign. God's sovereignty is His kingship over everything based on His infinite power, wisdom, and authority.

God is sovereign over nations: **Daniel 4:17** *"This has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone he chooses—even to the lowliest of people."*

God is sovereign over people: **Proverbs 19:21** *"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails."*

God is sovereign over circumstances: **Proverbs 16:4** *"The LORD has made everything for his own purposes, even the wicked for a day of disaster."*

God is sovereign over nature: **Revelation 4:11** *“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”*

God is sovereign over spiritual powers: **Ephesians 1:21** *“Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.”*

There is another assurance we need, in order to confidently turn things over to God. It isn't enough to know that God has the absolute power to do whatever has to be done. We need assurance of God's providence; God's divine guidance and care for us. How involved does God want to be in the details of your life? Maybe he's too busy to sweat the small stuff in your life. Or maybe he is just too important to care about the small stuff.

That isn't what Holy Scripture says.

Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus existed before everything in creation began, and he holds all creation together. The fact that this world does hold together, that your life does hold together, is because Jesus is active in every moment of your life, upholding all things.

Jesus said that every hair on your head is numbered. Think about that. When I comb my hair in the morning, a few hairs usually end up in the comb. Jesus says that God recalibrates His record of me because of that insignificant change in me. That is how much God is into the details of my life; and yours.

Scripture says that dewdrops don't just happen; God fathers them. Sunrises don't just happen; God gives orders to the morning and causes the sun to shine.

Storms don't just happen; God calls up clouds from the ends of the earth; He cuts a channel for the thunderstorms and a channel for the rain that falls.

Rainbows don't just happen; more than just light refracting through water, they have to do with God wanting to remind you and me of a covenant He made with Noah.

God is NOT just presiding over the big picture but He is passionately orchestrating the details of every part of your life. That is a truth that can

set you free from having to control your own life. You are not qualified to do it; but God is.

There are three ways of responding to God's sovereignty.

1. By cooperating with it.

**Ephesians 1:8-10** (Msg), *"Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth."*

Even if you and I don't know the details of how the pieces of our life fit together, God does. He has already thought of everything. Because of that we should Fear Less, and cooperate with God's sovereignty.

2. Respond to God's sovereignty by integrating it into the way you think.

Live with less anger and quick action; but with more rest and reflection. Giving a Christian response to our fears isn't the easy response. It takes some time to think through our response, and talk to God about it, and maybe talk with our spiritual partner. Integrate God's sovereignty into the way you live your life.

3. Respond to God's sovereignty by celebrating it. Look back at the good times and the bad times in your life. Look for the pattern of God's control in what happened. Look for the ways those events helped your character grow. Look for the ways your image of God grew bigger. Look for ways you have let God out of the box you may have had Him in before. In looking back, celebrate the signs of God's sovereignty in your life.

Christianity is about serving a very, very big God; not a knee high God or a head high God, or even a sky high God. It is about serving the most high God who runs the big picture, but is also passionately into the details of your life, and wants you to give Him the controls.

The hope of this course we have undertaken throughout Lent, was to discover from our Christian faith, release from the fears that disable us

from living the life God wants for us. Live your life with God at the controls and Fear Less. Amen.