

Brandon Phillips / General

The King and His Glory / Prayer / Matthew 6:9–13

In Matt 6:9-13, Jesus teaches His disciples the proper, God-honoring, and worshipful way to pray.

Pre-sermon Comments

[Ephesians 4:14–15](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ so that we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *that is* Christ,

[Jude 4](#) (LSB) ⁴ For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

[Ephesians 4:11–12](#) (LSB) ¹¹ And He Himself gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ,

[Matthew 6:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

Theodicy involves a vindication of God’s justice against the charge that the presence of evil in creation shows him to be unjust, impotent, both, or nonexistent. Theodicy declares that God is all-powerful and all-good even though this might not seem to be the case since evil exists in the creation. ~

John F. MacArthur; Richard Mayhue

Since the ultimate theodicy is future, we must now deal with the problem of evil by faith. ~ **John Frame**

Discussion Questions

Sermon Text

[Matthew 6:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

Sermon Outline

In this week’s sermon, we will consider from Scripture three propositional truths about God’s relationship with evil. God’s Word assures us that God is/has an/is not the:

- **Absolutely Sovereign over Evil!**
- **Astounding Purpose For Evil!**
- **Author of Evil!**

Review

Passage Outline

- **God’s Power and Sovereignty ([Matt 6:9-10](#))**
- **God’s Provision and Security ([Matt 6:11-13](#))**

God’s Word assures us that God is Absolutely Sovereign over Evil!

God’s decree is simply His eternal plan, whereby, according to His decretive will and for His glory, He foreordained everything that comes to pass. ~ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue

God's decretive will is His good pleasure, His eternal, unchangeable counsel or decree in which he has foreordained all things. ~ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue

God's Word assures us that God has an Astounding Purpose For Evil!

[Genesis 50:20](#) (LSB) ²⁰ "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to do *what has happened on* this day, to keep many people alive.

[Acts 2:23-24](#) (LSB) ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put *Him* to death.

²⁴ "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Discussion Questions:

In the sermon, it was mentioned that "God's decree is eternal, unconditional, immutable, and exhaustive." How does understanding these characteristics of God's decree give us confidence in His sovereignty over evil?

How does [Matthew 6:9-10](#) (praying for God's will to be done) relate to God's sovereignty over both good and evil?

The sermon outlined four categories of evil: supernatural, natural, moral, and eternal. How do you see these types of evil manifest in our world today?

How do we, as believers, respond to these forms of evil in light of God's sovereignty? How does knowing that God is sovereign over evil help you face the reality of these evils in the world?

The sermon explained four ways God restrains evil (human conscience, government, family, and the Church). How have you personally seen or experienced these restraints in action?

In [Genesis 50:20](#), Joseph tells his brothers that their evil actions were used by God for good. How does this passage encourage you to trust God's plan when facing evil or difficult circumstances in your own life?

Can you think of a time when you saw God bring good out of something that initially seemed evil or wrong?

How can we develop a deeper trust in God's eternal, unchangeable, and exhaustive decree, especially when we encounter evil or suffering in our lives?

God's Word assures us that God is not Author of Evil!

Sin is not Created

Sin is simply *a lack of moral perfection in a fallen creature*. ~ John MacArthur

[Romans 5:12](#) (LSB) ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

God is Unquestionably Good

[Genesis 1:31](#) (LSB) ³¹ And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

[Habakkuk 1:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ Your eyes are too pure to see evil, And You cannot look on trouble. Why do You look On those who deal treacherously? *Why* are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?

[1 Corinthians 14:33](#) (LSB) ³³ for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

[James 1:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

[1 John 1:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ And this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

God cannot be charged with doing evil.

It is not our place to sit in judgment upon and question the consistency of those declarations. That only breeds the worst of biblical and theological mischief. To argue that God is unrighteous for ordaining evil is to sit in judgment upon both the Word of God and the Judge of all the world. Instead, it falls to us to receive *both* propositions as true on the authority of God's infallible and inerrant Word. ~ Michael Riccardi

Two Biblical Propositions We Must Uphold

1. God is the ultimate cause of all things - even evil, yet God is never the proximate or efficient cause of evil.
2. The bible shows us that those responsible for the proximate and efficient cause of evil are the only chargeable or blameworthy parties.

Ultimate Cause

[Romans 11:36](#) (LSB) ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

[Colossians 1:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ For in Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Proximate Cause

Efficient Cause

Scriptural examples

[2 Sam 24](#) and [1 Chronicles 21](#)

[2 Samuel 24:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ Then David's heart struck him after he had counted the people. So David said to Yahweh, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Yahweh, please take away the iniquity of Your slave, for I have acted very foolishly."

[2 Samuel 24:15](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ So Yahweh sent a pestilence against Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and 70,000 men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

[2 Samuel 24:1](#) (LSB) ¹ And again the anger of Yahweh burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”

[1 Chronicles 21:1](#) (LSB) ¹ Then Satan stood up against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

God’s motives in this action must be presumed entirely righteous even though we are not explicitly told what good God intended by ordaining this evil. After all, shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly (Gen 18:25)? There can be no unrighteousness with God, can there? May it never be (Rom 3:5–6)! And yet because Satan always desires to ruin God’s people, and because David’s motive was to pridefully exalt himself, they are the chargeable cause(s) of this evil. ~ Michael Riccardi

[Isaiah 10](#)

[Isaiah 10:1–2](#) (LSB) ¹ Woe to those who enact evil statutes And to those who constantly record mischief, ² So as to turn the poor away from *their* cause And rob the afflicted of My people of *their* justice, So that widows may be their spoil And that they may plunder the orphans.

[Isaiah 10:3](#) (LSB) ³ Now what will you do in the day of visitation, And in the devastation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?

[Isaiah 10:4](#) (LSB) ⁴ Nothing *remains* but to crouch among the captives Or fall among those killed. In *spite of* all this, His anger does not turn back And His hand is still stretched out.

[Isaiah 10:5–6](#) (LSB) ⁵ Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation, ⁶ I send it against a godless nation And command it against the people of My fury To capture spoil and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets.

[Isaiah 10:6](#) (LSB) ⁶ I send it against a godless nation And command it against the people of My fury To capture spoil and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets.

He [Yahweh] is not outside history; history is not working itself out apart from Him; He controls it at this moment. It is in His hands and He is unfolding it. ~

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)

Assyria wasn't sitting around minding its own business when God came and twisted their arms to mercilessly destroy a nation. No, they still acted according to their freedom of inclination; they were doing what they wanted to do. ~ Michael Riccardi

[Isaiah 10:6-7](#) (LSB) ⁶ I send it against a godless nation And command it against the people of My fury To capture spoil and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets. ⁷ But it does not intend *to act* in this way, And it does not think in its heart in this way, Rather, *what is* in its heart is to destroy And to cut off many nations.

God ordains the evil of the destruction of Israel by Assyria. Yet while Assyria meant it for evil—to satisfy its own pride and bloodlust—God meant it for good: to punish unrighteousness and bring about repentance in His people. Assyria is the efficient cause, and because their desires were sinful, they are accountable for their sin. God is the ultimate cause, but because His desires and purposes for ordaining that evil were not evil but righteous—in other words, because He ordained the evil *for goodness' sake*—He is not the chargeable cause of sin. ~ Mike Riccardi

The Murder of Jesus!

[Acts 2:22-23](#) (LSB) ²² “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put *Him* to death.

[Acts 4:27-28](#) (LSB) ²⁷ “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

[Acts 4:28](#) (LSB) ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) (LSB) ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

[Acts 2:23](#) (LSB) ²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put Him to death.

[1 John 1:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ And this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

God does not will sin *as sin*, but for the good which He desires to bring from it.
~ Mike Riccardi

That we should say, that God has decreed every action of men, yea, every action that is sinful, and every circumstance of those actions; that he predetermines that they shall be in every respect as they afterwards are; that he determines that there shall be such actions, and just so sinful as they are; and yet that God does not decree the actions that are sinful, as sin, but decrees them as good, is really consistent. For we do not mean by decreeing an action as sinful, the same as decreeing an action so that it shall be sinful; but by decreeing an action as sinful, I mean decreeing it for the sake of the sinfulness of the action. God decrees that they shall be sinful, for the sake of the good that he causes to arise from the sinfulness thereof; whereas man decrees them for the sake of the evil that is in them. ~ Jonathan Edwards (***Concerning the Divine Decrees, Works, 2:527***)

[Romans 9:20–21](#) (LSB) ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? WILL THE THING MOLDED SAY TO THE MOLDER, “WHY DID YOU MAKE ME LIKE THIS”? ²¹ Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

[Romans 9:22–23](#) (LSB) ²² And what if God, wanting to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath having been prepared for destruction, ²³ and in order that He might make

known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory—

God ordains sin and evil—He even ordains the eternal punishment of the wicked—to *make known to His elect the riches of His glory*. ~ Michael Riccardi

Conclusion:

[Romans 8:3–4](#) (LSB) ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

[Matthew 11:29–30](#) (LSB) ²⁹ “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Discussion Questions

According to the sermon, what is the nature of sin, and how does it differ from something that is created? How does this distinction impact our understanding of responsibility for sin?

[Romans 5:12](#) states that sin entered the world through one man (Adam). How does this passage affirm the idea that fallen creatures are responsible for sin?

How can we reconcile the fact that sin exists in a world created by a good and sovereign God?

[Genesis 1:31](#) declares that everything God made was "very good." How does this affirmation help us understand God's goodness in the face of evil in the world?

How do passages like [Habakkuk 1:13](#) and [James 1:13](#) affirm that God cannot be blamed for evil? What are the implications for how we view God's character?

The sermon states that God is never the proximate or efficient cause of evil. How do the examples of David's census in [2 Samuel 24](#) and [1 Chronicles 21](#) illustrate this truth?

In the case of David's sin in conducting the census, both Yahweh and Satan are said to have incited David. How do we reconcile these two accounts ([2 Samuel 24:1](#) and [1 Chronicles 21:1](#))?

What role does Satan play as the proximate cause of evil, and how does this relate to God's ultimate sovereignty?

How does sin factor into David's decision to number Israel, and what does this teach us about personal responsibility for our sin?

The sermon mentions that God uses evil for His holy purposes while remaining blameless. How does this truth challenge or comfort you in your understanding of God's sovereignty?

How does [Isaiah 10](#) illustrate God's use of evil nations (like Assyria) to accomplish His purposes while holding them accountable for their actions?

Mike Riccardi emphasizes that we must trust in God's righteousness, even when we don't fully understand His purposes in ordaining evil. How can this mindset shape our response to difficult circumstances?

How does the acknowledgment that God is sovereign over all things, including evil, affect the way we approach questions about suffering and injustice in the world?

What dangers arise when we attempt to judge God's actions or demand that He account for His ways? How does this affect our relationship with Him?

The sermon highlights that right doctrine leads to right living. How can a proper understanding of God's sovereignty and goodness lead us to worship Him more fully and trust Him more deeply?

Communion

[Luke 22:14–20](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ And when the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. ¹⁵ And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ “For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁰ And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

The Gospel

God

Created and owns everything

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalm 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

Is Perfectly Holy

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Requires perfect obedience to His Law

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Man

Has broken God’s law

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Cannot save himself by his good works

[Titus 3:5](#)—*He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

Christ

Came to earth both as God and sinless man

[Col 2:9](#)—*For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form*

Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty

[Rom 5:8](#)—*But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Rose from the grave and is alive today

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—*And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*

Sinners

Must repent of all that dishonors God

[Isa 55:7](#)—*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

[Luke 9:23](#)—if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior

[Rom 10:9](#)—that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

Brandon.Phillips@gracegainesville.org

Keith.Kemp@gracegainesville.org

Next Time:

Additional Quotes

For, were it not good that evil things should also exist, the omnipotent God would almost certainly not allow evil to be, since beyond doubt it is just as easy for Him not to allow what He does not will, as for Him to do what He will. ~

Saint Augustine of Hippo

Every renewed heart is anxious to be free from even a speck of evil. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Evil is the real problem in the hearts and minds of men. It is not a problem of physics but of ethics. It is easier to de-nature plutonium than to de-nature the evil spirit of man. ~ **Albert Einstein**

There is nothing evil in matter itself. Evil lies in the spirit. Evils of the heart, of the mind, of the soul, of the spirit—these have to do with man's sin, and the

only reason the human body does evil is because the human spirit uses it to do evil. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

My child, flee from every evil and everything that resembleth it. ~ **Didache**

The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between parties either—but right through every human heart—through all human hearts. ~ **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (School Teacher)**

God would never permit any evil if he could not bring good out of evil. ~ **Thomas Watson**

A defense of God's righteousness is called a theodicy. ~ **Roy B. Zuck**

A theodicy is an attempt to vindicate the justice of God in his actions. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

A biblical theodicy assumes not that man in his fallenness has the ability to obey God but rather that fallen humans in their corrupted nature choose only what serves their own pleasure and power. ~ **John F. MacArthur; Richard Mayhue**

Jesus solved the Old Testament problem of evil by harmonizing divine justice and mercy. By his atoning death, he is the divine theodicy, vindicating both divine justice and mercy at the cross ([Rom. 3:26](#); [5:8-9](#), [20-21](#)) ~ **John F. MacArthur; Richard Mayhue**

The word theodicy suggests a man looking about in the world and coming to the conclusion that God's way with it is just. ~ **Gerrit Cornelis Berkouwer (Theologian)**

The problem of theodicy is insoluble outside of a faith that knows the limits of human reason. ~ **Gerrit Cornelis Berkouwer (Theologian)**

Whenever you find the people of God in a condition of real revival, they don't write books on theodicy; they make calls for repentance and contrition. ~ **D. A. Carson**

Since the burden of proof is on the objector, it is not necessary for us to come up with a full theodicy, a complete justification of God's ways. ~ **John Frame**

The most basic cause of controversy over the doctrine of hell is the challenge of theodicy. ~ **Dr. Richard Albert Mohler Jr.**

“Apocalyptic literature is always a theodicy literature, not in the sense of providing a theoretical explanation for evil, but in the sense of offering a vision that sees beyond the horrors of ‘the present evil age.’ ” ~ **Andreas J.**

Köstenberger; L. Scott Kellum; Charles L. Quarles

However, while God is properly said to ordain—and thus to be the Ultimate Cause of—all things, he is never the proper chargeable cause of evil. Scripture distinguishes between the (1) Ultimate Cause of an action and (2) the proximate and efficient causes of an action, indicating that only the proximate and efficient causes are blameworthy for an evil action. ~ **John F. MacArthur; Richard Mayhue**

Satan was the immediate cause, but God was the ultimate cause. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

This is not to say that God is the author of sin. He is the *ultimate* cause of sin, not the immediate cause of it. ~ **Millard J. Erickson**

Causality operates hierarchically in the universe: the first and ultimate cause, who is God, gives being to all. ~ **Saint Thomas Aquinas**

Old Testament thought consistently affirms God as the ultimate cause of all things, even the existence of the serpent (3:1), but it never attributes evil to God. He is not morally responsible for the sin of the first couple nor is he culpable for the serpent's deceit. ~ Kenneth A. Mathews

What is the problem of this world? What is the ultimate cause of our troubles? It is not man! It is the devil and his unseen forces and powers. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

These present sufferings ...are actually in a sense blessings in disguise, because the sufferings in this world are used by God for our ultimate good and for our ultimate benefit. ~ R. C. Sproul

God is the source of primary causality; in other words, He is the first cause. He is the Author of all that is, and He continues to be the primary cause of human events and of natural occurrences. ~ **R. C. Sproul**