

LSB Ephesians 5:7 - 14

Psalm 103

*19 Yahweh has established His throne in the heavens,  
And His kingdom rules over all.*

*20 Bless Yahweh, you His angels,  
Mighty in strength, who perform His word,  
Obeying the voice of His word!*

*21 Bless Yahweh, all you His hosts,  
You who serve Him, doing His will.*

*22 Bless Yahweh, all you works of His,  
In all places of His rule;  
Bless Yahweh, O my soul!*

This morning will be highly unusual. Highly irregular as the Scots might say. But the Spirit has prompted me to stick my neck out and present an idea that may or may not prove valuable to you in the future.

Miss Pam wisely warns me, and I might add, she reminds me often, to avoid political speak of any kind in my weekly messages . . . like the plague. And I do that. My purpose in this pulpit is to build you up in the Word of God so that when storms rage against you, you will have biblical answers close in your minds, and you will after the storm has passed by, still be standing.

Or to mix metaphor's, one of my favorites is from John Piper who equates christians to a fleet of small sail boats. And the Word of God, taught in depth, creates ballast down below the surface, down in the water, a heavy ballast weight so that when the tempest and the hurricane passes by, those little boats have not tipped over, they are all still afloat. The ballast down below is a stronger force to stay upright than the hurricane is to tip you over.

And thus we operate on the premise that having a full biblical understanding to draw on in all kinds of different situations will supply you

with an entire biblical world view no matter what the current question or threat might be.

Some talking head says something, from either party or no party, and your store of bible knowledge either says that's in agreement with God's word, or that's in violation of God's word. His revelation is the bar that we judge against.

And so this little encouragement this morning is going to be very political in a way. Actually, my purpose is anti-political.

Ten or so years ago when I first began to fill this pulpit I was admittedly taking some thinly veiled swipes at President Obama. And a member of our church asked to have some time alone with me. I knew he enjoyed a beverage at the Mizpah from time to time so I offered to meet him there over a glass of something or other. We did that.

He said to me, Jim, I'm a blue dog democrat and Mr. Obama is my president. In fact he is the only president that me and my wife have actually donated money to his campaign and purpose. And your attacks are making us crazy and we had decided to leave, but I thought I should give you the benefit of the doubt and meet with you and share our concerns first.

Well I agreed that I had no business taking sides, unless, the Bible was clear on matters that crossed over into political platforms, and in that case, I had to teach what the Bible clearly says, like it or not. But I promised to be less political in the pulpit. My job was to teach the word of God. It's job is to approve or condemn.

They stayed but they never got beyond the politics. They believed that I had a political agenda and actively even tried to have me displaced. Ultimately they did leave our group, and not too long afterwards, they moved back to the midwest where they had come from.

The pot shots against a democrat president were a failure on my part and I

owned it. And I believe you could read through all my sermons for the last nine or 10 years and not find anything very political.

I call out wicked people doing wicked things when the passage clearly speaks to our current cultural moment. But I don't take sides. I'm on the Bible's side and it can fight it's own wars without any help from me. I just have to let the Lion out of the cage. It eats up and spits out whoever disagrees with God's revealed truth.

In fact I'll often tell people on a scale of 1 - 100 in wickedness, if the democrats are hailing at 99, then the republicans are only slightly less wicked at perhaps a 97 out of 100. Both groups are operating well within the authority to reign of Satan. The kingdom of Satan. The real ruler of this darkness.

Last Sunday, just as we finished preaching the news was hitting people's phones that our ailing president was throwing in the towel. And I sensed some glee among you faithful folks. Some of you were dancing a jig in your minds. A lively Irish reel. And that's OK. I have sympathy with like minded saints who rejoice when a wicked man steps out of the way. Or perhaps is physically removed against his will.

But I want to look at the big picture this morning and hopefully with the Lord's help, get our feet on firmer ground. Here's a quick outline of what I hope to cover this morning.

1. God rules ultimately and sovereignly towards His final solution in this world.
2. Satan rules on earth within God's permissive will
3. Unseen forces are at work behind national politics world wide at all times.
4. Caution; We never see the whole picture. Book of Job.

5. We operate based on what we absolutely DO know. Truths of this book.
  - a. Psa. 2 describes the rage against God of this nation.
6. We hope for the ultimate solution based in the Lord's prayer.

That's a lot to cover and most of this is by way of reminder;

Turn to Psalms 115:3 or perhaps just listen and if you want to review the references later, this manuscript will go on line. Psalm 115;

*3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.*

1. God rules ultimately, fully, and sovereignly towards His final solution in this world.

The extent of God's sovereign reign is too vast for our minds to comprehend. Every neutron, electron, proton in the universes holds together at His command. His will spoke them into being at the beginnings and His word will speak them out of existence in the fiery implosion described by Peter at some future moment, according to His pleasure.

Nothing moves outside of God's providential will. Nothing. It pleased God, for His unknown purposes, to cause Mr. Trump to move his head, and it pleased God to allow the sniper to pull that trigger even as Trump's ear moved into the trajectory. There are no accidents within God's sovereign rule over both good and evil.

It was by God's providential design that according to Job chapter 14, the shooters' breaths were all completed at the moment the Secret Service agents neutralized him. God did that.

It pleased God to inflict our current wicked president with dementia and render him incapable of doing his job. And it has pleased God to allow whatever coup is happening within the power structures of the governance

of this nation, sweeping the old man out of the way and placing someone else in power without the legal process of primary elections taking place.

God is in control. The other day, Holly called me aside in the super market and proceeded to confide in me that she is fearful of what is going on behind the scenes and out of the control of the voters in the highest offices of the land. She was whispering and quite serious.

And so I whispered back in deep concern, *Oh dear! Do you think God has lost control?* She thought about that and started to giggle. Psalm 2 says God laughs at the nations who try to wrestle control away from His sovereignty. God laughs in derision. And those of us who belong to Him can giggle at the thought of our God losing sovereign control of all that is happening before our eyes.

1. God rules ultimately, fully, and sovereignly towards His final solution in this world. And when it comes to the big shots who are in the ruling class in the governance of nations; God puts them in their positions.

Listen to Daniel chapter 4 but first let me give you the context. Nebuchadnezzar is the ruler over all the earth, in Babylon, sometime around 550 BC, and he's up on his rooftop, beating his own breast, saying how fabulous it is to be him and how he has assembled his vast kingdom over which he rules. The entire known world at that time answers to him.

But God changes everything. Not so different than what we're watching in real time with our current president. Same causal source, but different ultimate outcomes. But listen to what Daniel says about the king;

Daniel 4

*13 'I was looking in the visions in my head as I lay on my bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. 14*

*He called out loudly and said thus:*

*"Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,  
Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;*

*Let the beasts flee from under it  
And the birds from its branches.*

The kingdom is dismantled and scattered to the 4 winds.

*15 Yet leave the stump with its roots in the earth,  
But with a band of iron and bronze around it  
In the new grass of the field;*

The stump is what's left of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, and the iron and bronze are a picture of God's preservation of that kingdom in the time period without the king. The king is out in the grass of the field living as a beast. God gave Nebuchadnezzar the mind of a beast.

*And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,  
And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.*

*16 Let his heart be changed from that of a man,  
And let the heart of a beast be given to him,  
And let seven periods of time pass over him.*

*17 This edict is by the resolution of the watchers,  
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,  
In order that the living may know*

**That the Most High is the powerful ruler over the kingdom of mankind  
And gives it to whom He wishes  
And sets up over it the lowliest of men."**

Who rules over the kingdom of mankind, and who sets the governing kings in place? The Most High is ultimate ruler. He puts wicked men on thrones and He causes everything to advance toward His ultimate end.

If you read the story, ultimately, after seven years of eating grass with the beasts of the field, God not only restores the king's mind, but He actually restores his kingdom back to his control.

If you've got someone like Daniel running the kingdom during the king's

absense while he's out on all 4's eating grass, the kingdom itself would be in better shape when Daniel gave it back than when he left.

Now skip down to vs. 34 and listen to Nebuchadnezzar's first person account.

*34 "But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes toward heaven, and my knowledge returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;  
For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.*

*35  
And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of earth;  
And no one can strike against His hand  
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'*

God is absolute Sovereign over the kingdoms of this world. God sets the rulers in place, and God removes them in their time.

That raises the obvious question. Why is there evil? Why does God allow evil to go on. And on and on and on.

We don't have all the answers. Yet. We know what God has revealed. In a way, we did this to ourselves. God's creation was perfect. And Satan comes along and offers the first woman and by default the first man Adam, a better deal. Revolt against God and get more. And they did. And here we are.

I was listening to a poscast last night called The Just Thinking Podcast that 2 black brothers put on for the church and they spoke of this very problem in Genesis 3. God is God and He owns everything and He therefore, being God has the privilege and power to define constraints. Soveriegn God sets limits.

Eat anything you want but do not eat this one apple. And Satan comes along and says "rebel against God's constraint, and you'll end up with so much MORE." Their point was nothing has changed since Genesis 3. God made you a person of the female sex. Rage against that constraint, set by God, at the moment of your conception, and be a man instead. You'll have so much more. We rage against God's "Godness" Who said He gets to make the rules? Who died and made Him the first person of the trinity?

Then by default, since all creation fell along with Adam and Eve, sin then traps every human. We're born into it. The world is corrupted. Death reigns. And in that situation, Satan, because he has sin and death unilaterally, he reigns in this world.

2. Satan rules on earth within God's permissive will

1Jn. 5:19 *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

Two possibilities thanks to the cross. The default is that we are born in sin. Born condemned. Born into a world that is corrupted and slated for judgement. Utter destruction. That world is ruled by Satan. *the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

Christians are redeemed. Purchased out of that imminent destruction. Our sins are paid for by Jesus death in our place. We are the sole exception to the rule stated here. *the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

Thus though God is Sovereign over every molecule and all spirit beings that have no physical matter, God permits Satan and his demons to rule in this condemned world. For now. For His purposes.

Back to our question. Why doesn't God end evil. Why does He allow evil to go on. Answer; It pleased God to begin a plan on the day of the fall, back in the garden, in which in His time and according to His sovereign rule and purposes, all evil will be judged, and this world will be returned to

the reign and control of it's rightful owner.

The plan is unfolding, one nano second at a time, according to the sovereign design and will of Almighty God. Let me show you a window into the future when the current ruler is vanquished and the rightful owner takes back what is rightfully His.

The words of Revelation 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “**The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.**”*

The authority to reign, in this world, usurped by Satan and held because of sin, will on that day and at that moment become the authority to reign of God and of His Christ. And HIS reign will be forever and ever.

Right now the world is under the reign and rule of Satan. But a day is coming in fiery judgement when the authority to reign in this world will be taken by Christ. That change of authority is surrounded by cataclysmic events on the level of creation. You can read about that fight in the book of Revelation.

Every time you repeat the Lord's prayer, you're praying for those cataclysmic events to be completed. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, like it is in heaven.* We're praying for the war to be over, the world regained, evil to be vanquished, judgement to be complete. Harmony on earth like the current harmony in heaven.

But for our purposes, back to here and now. God is ultimate sovereign. Satan has usurped the reign in this world. A battle rages that our eyes cannot see. And that's what I want to show you this morning as pertaining to political rulers on this earth.

If you're in an ages long battle with God to wreck His world, and to cause misery and evil and sin in this world, in other words, to rob God of as much

of the glory as possible that is due Him in His creation, there are many myriads of angels and demons at war, unseen, around us, and political rulers end up with the chief demons using them to advance Satan's cause.

The more authority you hold in this world, the higher up the scale of power of the demons assigned to use you for their causes. Pope Francis probably gets 2nd or 3rd in command demon after Satan, or perhaps Satan himself works within Francis. We don't know.

Someone like me probably gets the least powerful demon because I'm nobody and I'm not a particular threat. Not going to waste a high up demon on some little mouthy preacher in Tonopah. There's a hierarchy involved.

Let me show you the best example of what I'm talking about. In Ezekiel 28 you have a two part dirge, against the king of Tyre. And if you go look at that, the first part is clearly directed to the physical king of Tyre;

*The word of Yahweh came again to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘Thus says Lord Yahweh,  
“Because your heart is lofty  
And you have said, ‘I am a god;  
I sit enthroned in the seat of gods  
In the heart of the seas’;  
Yet you are a man and not God,  
Although you make your heart like the heart of God—*

And the diatribe of judgement against that man follows. But then in vs. 12 a second diatribe from God against the king of Tyre comes but this time it looks right through the physical man who was king of Tyre at that time and speaks directly to the power behind him, who in this case, was Satan himself.

*12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says Lord Yahweh,  
“You had the seal of perfection,*

*Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.  
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone was your covering:  
The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond;  
The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper;  
The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald;  
And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,  
Was in you.  
On the day that you were created*

There is the king of Tyre, the man in that position, and then there is Satan in the king of Tyre causing chaos for the whole world through that king's position of power.

In the book of Daniel we have the stunning account in chapter 10. Let me read part of that to you. Daniel prays and fasts for 21 days and when the answer comes it's shocking. I was dispatched the moment you began to pray Daniel, but I was bogged down in demonic warfare for 3 weeks until help came so I could get to you. Bizarre, but very real.

*1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the word was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the word and had an understanding of what had appeared. 2 In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were fulfilled.*

*4 And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose loins were girded with a belt of pure fine gold of Uphaz. 6 His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.*

*7 Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision that appeared, but the men who were with me did not see the vision that appeared; nevertheless, a great terror fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. 8 So I alone remained and saw this great vision that appeared; yet no might remained in me, for my outward splendor turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no might. 9 But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.*

*10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me shaking on my hands and knees. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to speak to you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you gave your heart to understand this and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was standing against me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. Now I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the last days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."*

The prince of the kingdom of Persia is a demonic spirit being operating unseen within the literal physical king. Spiritual forces of wickedness operating within and around and through the actual king in order to advance wickedness. Satan himself and his armies operating unseen in the actual physical rulers of this world.

The prince of the king of persia is not a man. It is a powerful fallen angel assigned to the king of persia in order to cause evil.

You think about these G8 summits where all these world leaders and rulers gather together and if we could see the demons in that room! The prince of the king of China. The prince of the king of Russia. The prince of the king of the USA. The prince of the king of the NATO countries. Etc.

Unseen demonic forces are at work in politics at all time. They advance Satan's agenda in this world. They work for Satanic ends within God's permissive will. And listen, they work towards the ultimate providential plan of God. God can turn all of Satans present evil ultimately toward the furtherance of His purposes.

Like the words of Joseph who his brothers had sold into slavery. *You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.* Gen. 50:20

What's my purpose this morning in looking at dark forces behind all of the world's political rulers? This is meant as a word of caution to the church to not put too much hope in the winds of politics.

I'll share a little bit of personal belief based on 54 years of biblical study. You don't have to agree with me at all. This is what Jim thinks. This isn't scripture.

I believe our nation crossed over a point of no return some time ago. I read Psalm 2 and think to myself, this is our nation shaking it's puny little withered fist at the Almighty. I don't see us coming back from judgement. Even if a better man is elected, you don't need a temperature probe to know, were cooked.

Listen to Psalm 2 and tell me if it isn't a direct description of the arrogance of this nation that has not just walked away from God, they hate Him.

*1 Why do the nations rage  
And the peoples meditate on a vain thing?  
2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against Yahweh and against His Anointed, saying,  
3 "Let us tear their fetters apart  
And cast away their cords from us!"*

*4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,  
The Lord mocks them.*

*5 Then He speaks to them in His anger  
And terrifies them in His fury, saying,*

*6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”*

*7 “I will surely tell of the decree of Yahweh:  
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.*

*8 Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,  
And the ends of the earth as Your possession.*

*9 You shall break them with a rod of iron,  
You shall shatter them like a potter’s vessel.’”*

*10 So now, O kings, show insight;  
Take warning, O judges of the earth.*

*11 Serve Yahweh with fear  
And rejoice with trembling.*

*12 Kiss the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way,  
For His wrath may soon be kindled.  
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

I believe our nation is lost. But the offer of individual refuge is wide open.  
*How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

Perhaps we'll be lucky and God will make provision for individuals and families that belong to Him, in the midst of judgement. But our nation is already under the judgement of God. No politician is going to rescue us from the cliff we're charging over into oblivion at top speed.

Christians want to get all excited and fool themselves that Mr. Trump is a "changed" man after the attempt on his life. Yeah, I'm not buying it.

The better plan is to put all of your hope for the future in Jesus and watch

what God is going to do to our country in the refuge of God's Son. Our refuge is in Him, not in politics. This turkey is cooked.

Well, we're approaching the end of our allotted time together. Let me very quickly finish the outline.

4. Caution; We never see the whole picture. Book of Job.

The book of Job is the prologue, the opening statement of the entire Bible. It's the oldest writing in the book. And the message is very simple;

Disaster happens to Job, by the permissive will of God, through the agency of Satan, and completely unseen and unknown by Job.

The worlds smartest intellects come to Job and they talk ad infinitum, ad nauseum to Job about what they do not know. None of them comes up with the right answer.

Then finally, beginning in chapter 38, what we believe is a pre-incarnate appearance of the 2nd person of the trinity, the Lord Himself, says this.

*1 Then Yahweh answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,*

*2 "Who is this that darkens counsel  
By words without knowledge?*

*3 Now gird up your loins like a man,  
And I will ask you, and you make Me know!*

*4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
Tell Me, if you know understanding,*

*5 Who set its measurements? Since you know.  
Or who stretched the line on it?*

*6 On what were its bases sunk?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,*

*7 When the morning stars sang together  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

8 *“Or who enclosed the sea with doors  
When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb,  
9 When I made a cloud its garment  
And dense gloom its swaddling band,  
10 And I placed boundaries on it  
And set a bolt and doors,  
11 And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther;  
And here shall your proud waves stop’?*

It goes on like that for 4 more chapters. The message is simple. Shut up. You don't know anything about God except what He chooses in His grace to reveal to us. Beyond this book, His purposes are beyond finding out.

We teach this book. Then we shut up. We watch the world's stage in awe of what God is doing, even as we speak this morning. We have no idea what will unfold. Hey within a few weeks time we've watched a current leader speaking in unintelligible nonsense and stumbling around like a helpless person.

Then we watched an attempt on the life of a person who wants the top job. Then we watched a coup happen before our eyes, the former leader is out and a woman with absolutely nothing to offer that our eyes have seen is put into the slot without the vote of a so called democracy.

God is in charge of all that I just mentioned. But to my eyes it looks more like judgement than blessing. We're helpless to defend against back room deals made by unseen people in power. But what I do know is those power brokers are being enabled by demonic forces working deals unseen by our eyes

The princes behind the princes (the power brokers) of the so called deep state? Fairly easy to argue that with knowledge available to us in this book.

Numbers 5 & 6 real quick.

5. We operate based on what we absolutely DO know. Truths of this book.
  - a. Psa. 2 describes the rage against God of this nation.

I'm operating based on an expectation of deserved judgement. My refuge isn't in any political hopefuls, my hope is in my refuge, the Lord Jesus.

6. We hope for the ultimate solution based in the Lord's prayer.

Thy kingdom come, Lord Jesus. In the words of the apostle John in the book of Revelation, Even so, Come Lord Jesus.