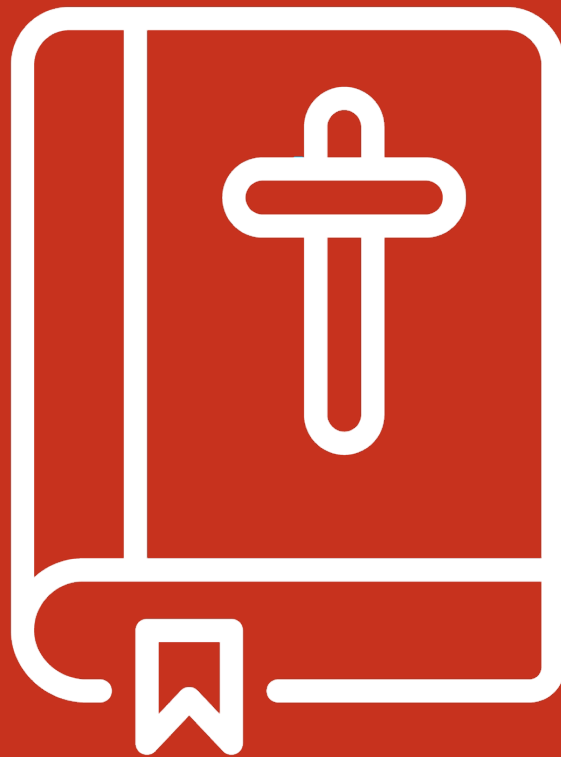


A Series of Short Messages with Big Truths

STORIES AND SCRIPTURES

Issue One



GOD IS IN CONTROL

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STORIES AND SCRIPTURES #1: God Is In Control

[The following transcript is from a ten-minute message shared with an audience at a local gathering.]

For reasons I do not know, I have always been terrified of flying. Something about slamming into a mountain at 500 miles an hour doesn't sit well with me. If the plane goes down, I can't hit the brakes, honk the horn, or yell "Get out of my way, you blockhead." Nope. It's all totally out of my control.

So, naturally, one Sunday, God calls me, Paula, and our son Jacob to go on a mission trip – to Poland. Which meant getting into an airplane for the first time. Which, in my mind, meant ending up in a lifeboat eating soggy pretzels in the Atlantic Ocean.

I prayed like crazy for the months leading up to that trip. And my mission team teased me about everything that could go wrong: turbulence, engine failure, rogue birds that might take the whole thing down.

When we got to the airport, I was green. Not metaphorically. Actually green. I could barely shuffle to the gate. I was basically a zombie, except more anxious. But the moment I stepped onto that Boeing jet, a wave of peace swept over me. I turned to Paula and said, "It's going to be okay. God's got this."

Something that has been life-changing for me since that day is learning to rest in God's sovereignty. We'll talk about what that word means in a couple of minutes, but first let me give you the main point that I want to make, the one thing I hope we all leave here with today...

Things are often out of our control, but they are never out of God's control.

Let's talk about that first part: "things are often out of our control" ...

One of the most exhausting things in all of life is trying to be in control of your life. Things will often not happen the way we want them to, and the more we try to force them to, the more frustrated and fearful we become. We get frustrated over what didn't happen or fearful about what might happen. Right? When we start to live as if we've got this, instead of as if God's got this, pressure starts to build inside of us instead of peace.

But there is good news: God rules and reigns over the cosmos for the good of His people.

Things are often out of our control, but they are never out of God's control.

Let's talk about that second part: "they are never out of God's control" ...

What we're talking about here is God's sovereignty. There is way too much to be said of this than I can

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cover in these next few minutes, and I don't want to oversimplify this, but let me give you a very brief definition that I hope is helpful...

God's sovereignty is his right and power to do all that he decides to do. – John Piper

God has absolute control over everything in the universe, and there is nothing in the universe that is out of His control. Let me share just a few Bible verses that tell us about this...

Psalm 115:3 says...

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (ESV)

Job 42:2 says...

I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. (ESV)

Ephesians 1:11 says...

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will. (ESV)

Isaiah 46:9b, 10b says...

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose. (ESV)

Listen to me. I want you to remember what I'm about to say to you because this is going to give you hope in those out-of-your-control times that leave you feeling frustrated and fearful. You ready? Here's what the Bible teaches us about God's sovereignty...

God has a 100% success rate in accomplishing what He wants.

Nothing is too hard for Him. Nothing is mightier than Him. Nothing can stop Him. And, listen, if you know Jesus ... He is for you, not against you. He has graciously chosen to use His power and authority and control over all things to work all things together for our good.

Romans 8:28 tells us just that...

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (ESV)

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Even when bad things happen? Yes.

Even when we do stupid things? Yes.

Even when other people do evil things to us? Yes.

Let me return for just a moment to my airplane flight. This isn't a perfect illustration of God's sovereign control, but maybe it will help us get an idea about how He accomplishes what He intends in the end no matter what we or others do or what happens along the way.

When I got on that plane, it departed from the United States and headed toward Europe. During the flight, I did many things. Watched a movie. Stretched my legs. Ate some food. Went to the restroom. At some point, I was actually walking down the aisle in the opposite direction of Europe. But, in the end, that's where I ended up.

God allows us and others to do many things – even heading in wrong direction – but He works those things out to accomplish everything He intends. Everything ends up where it's supposed to end up no matter what takes place along the way.

Even the sinfulness of people, the brokenness of this world and the maliciousness of Satan which seem to stop God's work, are made to bow down and serve His good purposes. No purpose of His can be thwarted.

God causes some things to happen. God allows some things to happen. And all things work together to accomplish what God wants to happen, when God wants it to happen, how God wants it to happen, why God wants it to happen and to whom God wants it to happen.

Things are often out of our control, but they are never out of God's control.

So, having said that, how are we to live this out? What does it look like for us to rest in God's sovereignty so we don't live in frustration and fear over what we can't control? Here's what I want to suggest to you...

Do the things God tells you to do and trust Him to do the things only He can do.

God's sovereignty doesn't mean we're passive and we just sit back and say, "Well, God's gonna take care of all of this." No, we're to walk by faith, right? We don't stand still by faith or sit down by faith ... we walk by faith. We're not idle; we're intentional. We take steps to follow Him in loving obedience and in humble dependence, and we leave the results to Him.

We do the things God tells us to do and trust Him to do the things only He can do. He changes hearts. He changes circumstances. He changes outcomes. He changes lives. Ultimate control of your life is a

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weight you were never meant to carry. That's not your job. That's God's job. Your job is to trust Him.

Now the road He has called you to travel on may not always be smooth.

It may be hard.

It may be painful.

It may be dangerous.

It may be lonely.

It may be tiring.

It may be long.

But it's going to be good in the end because God is working all things together toward that end. He is in control; you can stop trying to be.

So, let me ask you:

What area of your life that is leaving you frustrated and fearful do you need to stop trying to control when and where and what and how things happen?

It's exhausting. And it's not up to you to hold it all together or make it all work out. By the grace of God, do your part and trust God to do His part.

And He will do His part for an ultimate purpose.

He does all of this so we might marvel at Him, so we might be devoted to Him, so we might deeply treasure Him and so we might find our joy in Him. He wants us to know there is no one like our God!

Now, maybe this morning, sin is still controlling your life because you haven't started trusting Jesus at all. Listen, you aren't here by chance. God sovereignly got you here this morning so you have this opportunity to say "yes" to the free gift of saving grace that He offers you.

God loves you, and through Jesus, you can find forgiveness, a new life and eternal joy in heaven with Him. Jesus died for your sins and rose again so you can be free from sin's control and united forever to God. Will you trust Him today? Ask Him to forgive you and save you ... and if you mean it, He will do it. Come see me after if you have questions or want to start a relationship with Jesus.

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Now, let me close with this...

We will face many things each day that are beyond our authority and power to handle, but that doesn't mean we have to be frustrated or fearful. God has promised to be with us. God has promised to help us. God has promised to provide for us.

Things are often out of our control, but they are never out of God's control.

Whatever happens, the peace of God will sweep over us like it did to me on that airplane if we will just take the steps of faith God has called us to take, and trust Him with the results.

It's going to be okay. God's got this.

Let's pray:

"Heavenly Father, give us the faith this morning to turn from sin's control or our own attempt at self-control and yield to Your control over our lives. Help us to rest in your sovereignty in such a way that it drives out frustration and fear and replaces it with Your peace. And may we have spiritual eyes that see there is no one else like You so that we honor and treasure You today and every day. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen."

Reflection Questions

1. What stood out to you from this message as most meaningful? Why?
2. What was the central idea or theme from this message?
3. What Bible verses or passages were used, and how do they support the message?
4. How does this message relate to your life right now?
5. In what ways did this message convict, encourage or inspire you?
6. What good news did you receive in this message?
7. What did you learn about God that is praiseworthy in this message?
8. How was grace and the gospel presented in this message?
9. What do you think God wants you to do as a response to this message?
10. With whom do you need to share or discuss this message?

PRAY IT

- *God, I praise you because...*
- *I confess that I struggle with...*
- *I thank you for...*
- *Please help me...*

How has God spoken to you through this message?

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Connecting With Me

If you have questions about any of the enclosed material, or if you have any other questions about life with Jesus, please reach out to me by using the *Contact* form at the bottom of the page at *JimmyBrown.com* (making sure you enter your email address correctly). I will personally reply back to you, usually within 24 hours (excluding holidays or weekends).

NOTE: There are a number of free resources available at JimmyBrown.com, and I regularly add more to the site. Check back often for additional materials to access at no cost.

Other Connections

- Social media (personal page): www.Facebook.com/thejimmydbrown/
- Daily devotions: www.FinishLineFaith.com or www.Facebook.com/FinishLineFaith/
- Travel / mission vlog (with my wife, Paula): www.TheMissionAmerica.com

*If this resource has been helpful to you, please reach out and let me know.
And please pass this document on to other people who may, by the grace of God, be helped too.*