**St Martins C3 – October 2, 2022**

**Knowing God – Lord of All**

**Sermon Summary:**

One of the foundational ideas within the Christian faith is that God has revealed to us how we are to come to know Him in a very real and personal way. How we respond to what God reveals, will determine our experience of God.

Different ways people respond to God making Himself known to us:

1. Some people choose to deny what God has revealed about Himself and have no awareness of a relationship with God in their lives. They live life their way, not God’s way.
2. Some people accept that God exists, but they don’t like who God has revealed Himself to be. They decide for themselves what God is like. This is why we have different religions in the world. Their motives may be good, but a genuine relationship with God is still missing.
3. Then there are those who make the changes needed in themselves so they can relate to God as He truly is. This is the Biblical approach to knowing God.

There is no reason God needs to change, because He is the one who is perfect, we are the ones who are not. When we approach God with the humility to change who we are, we will discover who God truly is. We begin to know God in a personal way when we acknowledge that He is the rightful Lord of our lives. When we acknowledge His sovereignty.

**Read: Genesis 1:1, Psalm 24:1, Isaiah 46:9-11**

From these scriptures we see that God in His Goodness and Wisdom decides what is best for His creation and with His Sovereignty He executes that good plan. Not only is the world in God’s hands, but history is also in His hands. When God reveals in scripture that He is Sovereign, He is revealing that He rules wisely over His entire creation.

* God has all the KNOWLEDGE needed to rule.
* God has all the POWER needed to rule.
* God has the FREEDOM needed to rule.

There are a couple of questions that are often raised regarding the sovereignty of God:

1. **Why did God take the risk and share His sovereignty with us?** – EG: Genesis 1: 27-28

God sharing His sovereignty with us, was a big risk. However, for a genuine relationship to happen, there has to be the freedom to choose to be in that relationship. With freedom of choice, comes the risk to choose what God doesn’t want. However, there are limits to this. We have been given enough sovereignty to choose, but not so much that we control history. This is where we need to find balance. God calls us to put our trust in Him, but keep in mind that He also puts His trust in us. Therefore, God allows freedom within boundaries for the purpose of genuine relationship.

1. **Why does God allow things in His creation that are not what He wants**. EG – Genesis 6:6

There is always the potential of evil being present when you give people the freedom to choose. In God sharing His sovereignty, He didn’t create evil, but He did allow for the possibility of evil to exist. What we need to keep in mind, is that there will come a time when both evil and the freedom to choose will end. At that time God will establish the fullness of His Kingdom.

So, if God has revealed Himself to be the rightful creator and sustainer of us and the world we live in, how ought we best respond to that revelation? – (Romans 12:1-2) It is when we acknowledge the fact that Jesus is Lord, that we come to know Him for who He truly is. When Jesus is Lord of your life, your life is back to the way it was always supposed to be.

1. Surrender your whole life to Christ’s Lordship.
2. Partner with Him in extending His Kingdom.

**Suggested Questions to Ponder and Discuss:**

*What do we mean when we say that God is sovereign?*

*How do we reconcile God’s sovereignty and the presence of evil in the world?*

*Why is it important to seek to understand what God has revealed about Himself, rather than just what we want God to be like?*

*Why is it hard for us to surrender to Christ’s Lordship?*

*Why does a life of extending God’s Kingdom naturally flow from a life surrendered to Christ’s Lordship?*

**Monday’s Devotion – Lord of my moral choices**

**Deuteronomy 5:32-33**

*So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.*

This week we are going to explore what it means for God to be in control of various areas of our lives. This is what it means for God to be Lord of our lives. It means that we hand over control to Him, rather than retaining control ourselves.

The first area of our lives that God asks us to surrender is our moral choices. God is Holy and we are not. We only have a faint idea of what living a holy life would look like. As we contrast our lives, with God’s nature and ways we see a huge disparity. Hopefully we see God’s way as attractive and we desire to live a righteous life, but having the desire is not enough. We need the empowerment of God’s Spirit to not only desire the right thing, but also the empowerment to not want to do the wrong thing.

We have trained out brain to enjoy sinful ways, so it takes quite a sacrifice to repent of our sin and live for God. The good news is that God’s empowerment comes, as soon as we turn to Him. He strongly supports those whose hearts are truly His. So, if you are wondering where to start on your journey of surrendering to Christ’s Lordship, start with the moral choices you are making.

**Tuesday’s Devotion – Lord of my finances**

**Matthew 6:24**

*No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*

I like how clear Jesus makes the issue of Lordship over our finances. We are to make a choice, we either put our trust in money, or we put our trust in God. We can’t give our heart to both.

We are focusing on money, because it is a big focus of the culture we live in. It takes an intentional way of living to keep our hearts on the things of God, not money. The one intentional thing we can do is sincerely pray that God guides us as to what we do with the money He gives us. After all, it is His money, not our money.

The other issue in our culture that is closely connected to money is the perceived security that money gives us. It is natural for us to want to be financially secure in the future. Security is a significant need in our lives. However, we need to keep in mind that we don’t control the future and our money doesn’t either. God is in control of our future.

Prayerfully consider how much time you think about money and your future security. As you think about that, prayerfully consider whether you have truly handed this area of your life over to Christ. Would you willingly give away whatever God asked you to give?

**Wednesday’s Devotion – Lord of my time**

**Matthew 10:38-39**

*Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.**Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.*

When we think about that “life” that Jesus is asking us to give up here, what is He actually talking about? Certainly, one thing that Jesus does mean is our time and our future choices. It was obvious when Jesus was calling His disciples to follow Him that He meant it to be a whole life commitment. What they would do from that point on with their time and energy was going to be directed by Christ.

In my younger days I found this a particularly difficult area of my life to surrender to Christ. Sure, I was happy to sacrifice my Sunday mornings and maybe a night during the week, but to surrender ALL my time to God? That was a different story.

Have a think about it for a moment, do you schedule when God can use you? Do you allocate time for God, then time for yourself? Surrendering our time to God means that we let Him decide how we best use all our time. It means that we trust that He will lead us to use our time effectively and in a way that will energise us and not deplete us.

Then there is the really big question, would we surrender to the point where we would willing give up our careers or major life direction, if God asked us to? A big question, but, how we answer it reveals how surrendered we truly are to Christ.

**Thursday’s Devotion – Lord of our relationships.**

**1 Samuel 1:28-28**

*“I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he shall be given over to the Lord.”*

The prophet Samuel’s mum Hannah is saying these words that you have just read. Imagine that your deepest life’s desire is to have a child. Then, you have to surrender that child to God. It sounds almost cruel, but Hannah willingly does this, because she knows that Samuel was a gift from God in the first place.

Relationships form an important part of our lives. We rely on those relationships a lot. Therefore, it is hard for us to imagine God asking us to surrender those relationships to Him.

The interesting irony here is that when we truly rely on God to receive from Him what we normally seek from our earthly relationships, it ends up improving the way we relate to others. This is because we have internalised God’s enormous love for us. We will discover the security and the affirmation we need is actually found in God, not in others. When this begins to happen we are more confident and secure people to be around. We become less dependent on others and more able to be generous in our care and commitment to them.

Take some time now and consider how much you rely on the relationships around your life and what surrendering them to Christ might look like for you.

**Friday’s Devotion – Lord of who we are.**

**Romans 8:16-18**

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.* *Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

Before you were even conceived, God had a purpose for your life. He planned the natural family you would be in, but even more importantly, He planned for you to be a member of His family forever. This is the most important aspect of your identity. You are a child of God.

The problem is, we don’t usually grow up with that awareness. So, we seek to build an identity for ourselves on our own. Maybe we think of ourselves as the varied mixture of likes and dislikes, experiences and aspirations that develop in us over the years.

God seeks to go much deeper than all this. God calls us back to our true identity. God calls us to surrender who we are creating ourselves to be and discover who He has called us to be. As we go through that process we discover a more fuller and richer life than we could have ever create on our own. We discover who we truly are. We discover all that God called us to be and do. We will be astounded at the glory that God will reveal in those people’s lives that are fully surrendered to Him.