

**Outline of  
the Messages for the Full-time Training  
in the Spring Term of 2015**

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**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
LIVING IN THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Message Fourteen

**Living under the Sovereignty of God and according to the Mercy of God**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 4:11; Dan. 4:3, 34-35; Lam. 5:19; Rom. 9:15-16, 18-23; Heb. 4:16

**I. It is crucial that we see a vision of God's sovereignty—Dan. 4:3, 34-35; Rom. 9:18-23:**

- A. Sovereignty refers to God's unlimited authority, power, and position—Rev. 4:11; 5:13:
  - 1. As the sovereign One, God is above everything, behind everything, and in everything—1 Kings 22:19.
  - 2. God has the full capacity to carry out what He wants according to the desire of His heart and according to His eternal economy—Dan. 4:34-35; Eph. 1:4-5, 9-11.
- B. Romans 9:19-23 refers to God's sovereignty:
  - 1. "For who withstands His will? But rather, O man, who are you who answer back to God? Shall the thing molded say to him who molded it, Why did you make me thus?"—vv. 19b-20:
    - a. We need to realize who we are: we are God's creatures, and He is our Creator—Isa. 42:5.
    - b. As His creatures, we should not resist His purpose or answer back to Him, the Creator—Rom. 9:20.
  - 2. "Does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?"—v. 21:
    - a. God is the Potter, and we are the clay in His hand; God, the Potter, is sovereign—Jer. 18:1-6.
    - b. As the Potter, our God has the absolute right over us; regarding us, He has the right to do whatever He desires—Isa. 29:16; 64:8.
    - c. If God wills, He can make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor—Rom. 9:21.
  - 3. Romans 9:21-23 reveals that God sovereignly created us to be His containers, according to His predestination—2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; Eph. 1:5, 11:
    - a. It is of God's sovereignty that He, the Potter, makes the riches of His glory known by creating vessels of mercy to contain Himself—Rom. 9:23.
    - b. Being vessels unto honor is not the result of our choice; it originates with God's sovereignty—v. 21.
    - c. God's sovereignty is the basis of His selection; His selection depends on His sovereignty—vv. 11, 18; 11:5, 28.
  - 4. "In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory"—9:23:

- a. In His sovereignty God has the authority to make the ones He has selected and called vessels of mercy to contain Him in order that His glory might be manifested—vv. 11, 18, 23-24.
- b. According to His sovereign authority, He has prepared us unto glory—v. 23:
  - (1) We were predestinated by His sovereignty to be His containers.
  - (2) This is the climax of our usefulness to God—the goal of God’s selection according to His sovereignty—vv. 11, 18.
- C. On the one hand, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Exo. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8); on the other hand, Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart (8:15, 32; 9:34):
  - 1. This indicates that God is sovereign (Rom. 9:14-24) and that man has a free will created by God and is therefore responsible for his actions.
  - 2. God’s sovereignty and man’s free will correspond and are not contradictory.
  - 3. God first hardened Pharaoh’s heart in His sovereignty (Exo. 4:21), and Pharaoh carried out this hardening through his own free will.
- D. “You, O Jehovah, abide forever; / Your throne is from generation to generation”—Lam. 5:19:
  - 1. In verse 19 Jeremiah, changing his position and angle from himself to God, refers to God’s eternal being and unchanging government.
  - 2. Jerusalem was overthrown, the temple was burned down, and God’s people were carried away, but Jehovah, the Lord of the universe, remains to exercise His administration.
  - 3. God’s eternal being and His throne are higher than His lovingkindness, compassions, and faithfulness; God’s lovingkindness and compassion may fluctuate, but God’s person and government remain unchanging forever—3:22-23; 5:19.
  - 4. In the New Jerusalem, God will be fully unveiled in His person as the eternal King and in His government as His eternal, unshakable kingdom, both of which are the unshakable foundation of His dealing with His people—Heb. 12:28; Rev. 22:3.

**II. “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy’...So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy”—Rom. 9:15a, 16:**

- A. Mercy is the most far reaching of God’s attributes, going further than His grace and love—Matt. 9:13:
  - 1. According to our natural condition, we were far removed from God, totally unworthy of His grace; we were eligible only to receive His mercy—Eph. 2:4.
  - 2. Man’s disobedience affords God’s mercy an opportunity, and God’s mercy brings man to salvation—Rom. 11:32.
- B. Our concept is that the one who wills will gain what he wills to obtain and that the one who runs will gain what he runs after—9:16:
  - 1. If this were the case, God’s selection would be according to our effort and labor.
  - 2. On the contrary, God’s selection is of God who shows mercy; we do not need to will or run, for God has mercy on us.

3. If we know God's mercy, we will neither trust in our effort nor be disappointed by our failures; the hope for our wretched condition is in God's mercy—Eph. 2:4.
- C. If we would serve God in His New Testament economy, we need to know that it is wholly a matter of God's sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:15-16; Heb. 4:16:
1. If we know God's sovereignty, we will thank Him for His mercy, realizing that we are under His sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:15:
    - a. The expression *sovereign mercy* means that God's mercy is absolutely a matter of God's sovereignty.
    - b. Being a vessel of mercy is not the result of our choice; it originates with God's sovereignty—v. 18.
    - c. God's mercy to us is in His sovereignty; the only thing we can say to explain God's mercy to us is that in His sovereignty, He has chosen to be merciful to us—vv. 15-16, 23.
  2. In God's sovereign mercy, our hearts are inclined toward Him; because of His mercy to us, we seek Him day by day—Jer. 29:13; Deut. 4:29; Isa. 55:6.
  3. The more we see that everything related to us is a matter of God's mercy, the more we will bear our responsibility before the Lord; however, even our willingness to bear responsibility is of God's mercy.
  4. Because of God's mercy, we responded to the gospel when others did not respond, we received a word about Christ as life when others refused to receive it, and we took the way of the Lord's recovery when others drew back from taking this way.
  5. Regarding His recovery, God has mercy on whom He will have mercy.
- D. Romans 9 reveals the principle that everything depends on God's mercy—vv. 15-16:
1. The apostle Paul applied this principle to the Israelites, showing us that everything that happened to them was of God's mercy—vv. 16, 23.
  2. There must be at least one time when we see God's mercy and definitely touch His mercy—Eph. 2:4; Matt. 9:13:
    - a. Concerning this matter, our eyes need to be opened at least once; there must be at least one time when we see that everything depends on God's mercy.
    - b. Whether we see this all at once, or we realize it through a process, the minute we touch this matter, we touch not a feeling but a fact; this fact is that everything depends on God's mercy.
- E. "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help"—Heb. 4:16.
- F. In His sovereignty God the Father has had mercy on us; therefore, we must praise and worship Him for His sovereign mercy:
1. "Father, we enjoy Thy mercy, / Ever fresh and ever new; / Every morning shed upon us, / It refreshes as the dew. / How we taste it! how we taste it! / Giving Thee the praises due"—*Hymns*, #26, stanza 5.
  2. "Father, Thy mercy with Thy love and grace / Did we obtain; / And in Thy mercy, with Thee face to face, / We'll e'er remain; / And for Thy mercy we would worship Thee / Through all our days and through eternity"—*Hymns*, #25, stanza 3.