

ESSENTIALS 1 – Sovereignty of God (who is in charge here)

Isaiah 55:6-11

A man & his wife had put much time and effort into training their large dog to jump into the back of their pickup truck on command.

One morning a neighbor walking by, I noticed the husband, with a look of frustration, holding the cell phone to the dog's ear.

Suddenly the animal leaped into the vehicle.

"He wouldn't move," explained husband,
"so I phoned my wife to give the command.
The dog always obeys her!"

NOW YOU KNOW WHO IS IN CHARGE – - at least for that household.

But the question still remains: who is in charge of our larger house, of this world, of my life.

Religious people answer that God is (or gods are). The Judeo-Christian faith professes that a singular loving being (the triune God: father, Son, Spirit) who has eternally existed outside of our world – yet has always been intimately involved within it – is in charge... of everything ... is ruler over all. That is the meaning of the word "sovereign" And that is what we mean when we sing: *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*

But ultimately everyone of us must answer this question, of who is in charge, by faith – because it is impossible to

scientifically prove a being who while freely entering into is still larger than and living outside our world.

This would be like the fish in the fish bowl trying to prove the existence of owner of bowl. Yes food regularly appears in the sky and floats down gently down to feed them, and occasionally a net reaches in to remove debris, or a dead fish, up beyond the sky. But how do the fish prove where the food comes from who is attached to the other end of that net?

Like it or not, that is basically what the Prophet Isaiah was explaining about God's relationship to us and our world.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

We fish are just incapable of knowing or proving anything that goes on outside the bowl. We have to take it by faith. And that is not an unreasonable thing to do – because we take far more, even most of our life by faith without even realizing it.

The Hebrew people and early Christians understood this aspect of faith quite well – they had no problem with it and not because they weren't scientific; they were far more educated and sophisticated than we give them credit for.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrew Christians explains faith this way:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ... By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.... And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Our modern world doesn't like in faith. We have been taught to believe that reason and rationality are far superior --- yet how many fully rational people have you met. I haven't met any that I know of – myself included

And now the demand for scientific rationalism has become for some a religion in its own right. Lately the Christian faith (all brands of religion) have come under strong attack by members of the "New Atheism:" Scientific authors like Dawkins, Stenger, Hitchens, & Harris, preaching that **religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises.**

These fish just refuse to believe that there is anything outside the bowl – which is just as much an act of faith as the religions they are attempting to discredit.

I just finished reading a book titled "The information" by James Gleik (award winning author of book on Chaos theory). This book documents that scientist, who for

centuries have insisted that the universe was made up of a single substance "matter/energy," have now come to realize that there is another substance in the universe – equally real, more basic than matter, prime shaper of our very existence, it's existence provable by its effect on our world, yet untestable by the scientific method... and **that substance is information.** IT is information that has created the world we live in. like the information carried exclusively in my DNA molecules that has shaped a bit of matter/energy into this particular living being known as John Salley

One current analogy is that the entire universe is in essence a single large computer that is programming its own destiny.

You might say that scientists have come to believe that *in the beginning information created the heaven's and the earth. And without the information nothing was made that has been made.*

That's not too far away, with but a few changes in wording, from what we Christians have professed all along.

So let's move beyond this debate on the validity faith in the unseen – knowing that God (or if you wish, the Master Programmer) has built knowledge of himself within each of us. As Solomon, reputedly the wisest man in the world, has noted that

[God] has put a sense of eternity into our minds, yet we cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Lets together do an exercise in faith and reason on this question of the sovereignty of God.

Pull out the 6-question insert in your bulletin: on the existence and rule of God and let's work through it together – using primarily our reason – to move from the existence of God to what we should be doing about it.

Note that if you answer any of these 6 fundamental questions with a "NO" you can stop. You will have your answer as to how to live the rest or your life.

But every "YES" answer will require you to also ask and answer the next question.

6 Faith Questions on the Sovereignty of God and Our Reasonable Response..

1. **Is there a God?** "design implies a designer"
 YES ↓
 NO ↓
 We are alone.
2. **Is God in control?**
The God who made the world and everything in it ... made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps find him — though indeed he is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:24-27)
 YES ↓
 NO ↓
 We are in charge.
3. **Is God good?**
For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, (Romans 7:22)

4. **Is our God-made world bad (broken)?**
... but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Romans 7:23)
 YES ↓
 NO ↓
 We just don't understand the system
5. **Is God doing anything to fix our world?**
For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)
 YES ↓
 NO ↓
 "what will be will be"
6. **Are we doing anything to respond to God.**
Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18)
 YES ↓
 NO ↓
 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne ... And they were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. (Revelation 20:12)
 YES ↓
 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8.1)

What will your answer be? YES or NO.