

# God's Sovereignty & God's Glory

by Rolfe Barnard

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*Rolfe Barnard's sermon emphasizes the vital relationship between God's sovereignty and glory, urging believers to seek a living experience of God rather than mere doctrinal understanding.*

**Duration:** 55:07

**Scripture:** Exodus 33:18, Matthew 6:33, John 6:44, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 9:15, Ephesians 1:4-5

**Topics:** "Gods Sovereignty", "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a revival in the church. He believes that many Christians today are caught up in rigid doctrines and institutional Christianity, lacking the dynamic and life-giving presence of Christ. The preacher calls for a cry to God, asking Him to reveal His glory to this generation. He also highlights the importance of recognizing that it is God who does the preaching and uses our mouths as vessels. The sermon emphasizes the need for a deep understanding of God's grace and mercy, which is demonstrated through His Son Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

The book of Exodus is chapter 33 and verse 18. The subject tonight is God's sovereignty and God's glory. I want to just start with reading this request from a man who believed in a sovereign living God, and he made the most tremendous request that a person could possibly make.

Out of the barrenness of his experience, he's akin to us. A man by the name of Moses goes to the only one that it would be any use to go to if one dared hope to ever see God's glory. Since he knew he couldn't work it up himself, he couldn't manufacture it himself, he goes to the Lord God and says, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

If any man ever sees God's glory or God in his glory, it will have to be by God doing it. I want to face a problem with you, if I may. It's a problem for me at least.

In the matter of God's sovereignty, we're all detours to the men whom God was pleased to use in what we call the Reformation. The Reformation, that awakening, that movement of the sovereign Redeemer that went so far toward a recovery of Christianity in its fullness, that movement was characterized above all else by its fresh, not its new, but its fresh insistence on the present sovereignty and initiative of God. They, with a freshness and a vividness and a conviction that had well nigh been lost, came to experience the truth that it is God, a present God, not an absent monarch, who forgives and saves, that it's a present God

who reveals truth and life, that God, a present living God, not somebody who made a visit, instituted some laws and went fishing.

But a present living God is keen and man is utterly dependent upon him every moment that he lives. And that present God demands obedience. Now, this was nothing new as the content.

The Roman Church, the medieval Church, also taught that final salvation can come only from God, that without his grace it is impossible to see God, that God is the source as well as the goal of life, that God is the seeker as well as the sought. But the men God raised up and through whom this movement was born and grew, laid whole with a vividness of these truths, the vividness of which had been lost. What had been habitually believed became a matter of urgent conviction, and that's a desperate need of us.

What had been taught as ancient and accepted doctrine was realized as vital experience. Edward sobbed and agonized and screamed and prayed and wrestled with the solemnity of an ever-present living God. He didn't come to believe it as a doctrine, he came to experience it as truth.

And that's the reason when he preached, men would reach up and grab ahold of the rafters of the Jorish and hope that God would not cast them into hell now. This is a problem that we face. When the sovereignty of God has been reduced to a code of law of an ancient monarch, all the ideas connected with it at a time when this sovereignty was experienced as a living reality, all the ideas are lost.

And that's the reason anybody's tempted to even speak on these things in the last few years. It's been the center of debate and made a million mistakes in everything else, because it's been a matter of debating doctrine against doctrine, a conception of one fellow's conception against another. We've lost the vitality of the truth that the sovereignty of God means the living action of an ever-present God upon whom men are utterly dependent every moment of their lives.

Now, if I can illustrate what I'm talking about. Blessed men of God who have left us on heritage, men like Edwards and Hopkins and Whitefield and Finney and others, knew the sovereignty of God as the present activity and the present initiative of the being on whom men are dependent every moment of their lives. But in your reading of history, by the time you get to one of the great successors of these men whom I mentioned, a man by the name of Lyman Beecher, a leader of his day, he and his colleagues preached or seemed to believe in an absolute monarch who declared his will and recorded it in some laws and went back to heaven to let us work it out.

One reason for the rebellion against absolute standards today in moral realms and everywhere else is that this generation knows nothing about the God of the law. We've lost the sense of the presence of the God whose character is revealed by the law. And so men who have no conception of a living God feel free to throw the ten commandments out the window because we've isolated the law from the God of the law.

To live under the sovereignty of an absent monarch who has just made some laws we expect him to obey is to live not in relation to a divine being, but in obedience to law. And there you have mechanical obedience. There a living protest, like an undammed stream, has been reduced to a petrified prodder, and in that way institutionalized faith has thus reduced the sovereignty of God to a law and his activity to faith.

And so the divine determinism of an Edward becomes fatalism in his successors. Deeply ingrained in this generation, you attack these truths that were vivid and livid and warm-blooded on yesterday. You're preaching them to people who don't have the slightest idea what on dark earth you're talking about.

It was to a living, active, ever-present God that Moses came and said, Show me thy glory. Show me the sovereignty of God. He is there.

He'll have to show his glory. Nobody can help it. I think in Moses' heart, surely something of what must be in the heart of every child of God in these desperate days of crystallized doctrine, institutional Christianity, and petrified laws, everything except the dynamic, life-giving stream of Christ Jesus alive.

Surely, surely, if you've witnessed anybody, if you've tried the public to preach, surely the agonizing cry of your heart is that in our day, for this is our only day, God Almighty might be pleased to uncrash this hand and reveal to this befuddled, religiously cocaine generation his glory. The message that God tells the prophet Isaiah to cry, cry, cry, lift up your voice and make a noise, what shall I cry, what shall I cry? Let's go up and down the land and say two things. All flesh is flesh.

The whole shooting match will just wind up in a grave. Strip men of every dependence on everything. Kill them up with shots and stairs, and then say, Behold your God.

Now, this sovereign God that the prophet is to point men to when he's whittled them down to where they walk, a glimpse of the Holy, that God to whom Moses went with a request, Show me thy glory. That is the unknown God of fundamentalism, of liberalism, of the whole reality. Us fundamentalists have got some craze and some loss.

The liberals have got some Tolkien dreams based on nothing. This world is going to hell without a glimpse of the glory of God. The God of today was made for America, instead of America being made for God.

Our Christianity, Calvinistic, Arminian, if you want to use those terms, the whole outfit is theistic to the core. We are suffering now because we've got an absent monarch who made some laws and left us alone. The prayerlessness of your life and your church in this church emphasizes the fact that we just don't believe that God Almighty is alive in the acts today.

This generation has never beheld his God, nor seen his glory. I'm trying to say this. The men and women who have been awakened to the nakedness of themselves get a glimpse of the glory of God.

That's how God saves men. They receive a deep conviction, and always multitudes are born into the kingdom of God. Whenever there comes this sense of the holy, this sense of the awesome presence of the Christ, holy living God, read again, Jonathan Edwards, sinners in the hands of an angry God.

The heart of it is, he believed in a living God that actually held sinners in his hands and could drop them into the pit any moment. It wasn't a cold option to be argued. It is a God-proved Bible to his heart.

That sense of the awesome holiness and presence of God, stealing over the hearts of men, the fountains of the great deep in their hearts have broken up. Gone is the voice of the sinner, I've heard it till I think I'll go crazy, who in with the debate whether or not he'll patronize the Son of God by saying, Christ is knocking at my sad heart's door, shall I let him in? Shall I bid him forever depart, or shall I let him in? Instead of that blasphemous cry that every personal working, perfect preaching child of God hears until yesterday, the soul in the pool of blood-donned revelation and dip his heart in it again to keep from throwing up his hands in despair. Instead of that we shall hear men and women, from them shall come the heart-wrung sob, depths of mercy.

Can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God's serious wrath forbear me, the great king of sinners spare? Oh, boy! When I had a little taste of that, the only reason I didn't go to heaven was because my gallows kept me down. Oh, what's the good? I'd love to live five minutes when men were under the descent of their dependence on this living God. When you go around catching hold of coattails of God's people saying, just a minute, do you suppose that a Christ holy God would show mercy to such a thing? Show me thy glory.

The old Puritan said that grace is glory to God, and glory is grace completed. The Apostle Paul challenges this in a verse that challenges me more than any verse of Scripture suggests to me. When he said, according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which hath been entrusted to me, O brother, even you, whom I loved in the Lord, you didn't know him, but the man, some of the younger brethren, during the last two, three, four years of his life, an old warrior, a saint of God, used to say to me, Brother Barnard, sometimes I get a little weary, and I just want to fall in with what they call the gospel now.

Everybody's getting results except me, and everybody's just having fun, just taking the kingdom by storm. He said, I think I'll just get me a little text and some free illustrations and leave out what we've been hearing about for these blessed men tonight. But then he said, I can't.

A godly pastor said to me the other day, Brother Barnard, why don't you just preach the simple gospel, because you get into so much trouble, raise hell to many places. And I said, I wish I could. Under God I do.

But I think about this generation of men and women that have got saved and never have felt anything of the awesomeness of the presence of a holy God who holds them in their hands, and have never had a glimpse of the glory of the Redeemer. They are the results of this simple gospel, that a man can get saved and never know it, and lose it and never miss it. Somehow or other we ask God for grace in our blundering, stumbling ways to preach the gospel of the glory of God.

For the gospel of the glory of God is the gospel of the grace of God. And the sovereign God reveals himself and his heart and his purpose through his Son, only in a gospel that unfolds and manifests and placards his glory. God answered the request of Moses, but before he did, he took note of the fact that Moses couldn't see God's glory in all of its fullness.

And he said, before I answer your request, there's a rock over there and there's a cleft in it, and you see that over there and get in the cleft of the rock. And he said, when the glory passes by, he said, I'll let you see behind bars. That's all he said.

That's the reason for the incarnation of Christ as a man. There was no hope for us to get any glimpse of the glory of God unless it was concealed in a man. The man Christ is, the glory of God.

The sovereignty of God is manifest in the verse 19. He said, you get over there in that rock and say, I'm going to show you my glory, I'm going to placard my glory, I'm going to unveil my glory, I'm going to manifest my glory, I'm going to let you get a little glimpse of my glory. He said, I will make my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

I want to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that's salvation. I want to look at this parade of God's glory. I think he says the same thing.

I say, I think he says the same thing three different ways. I want to see my glory, here it is. Watch me in action, as I will cause my goodness to pass before thee.

I don't want to wait until I learn anything about the grace of God to watch God in action. I don't want to learn about the glory of God until I watch him in action. I want to see my glory, here it is.

Watch me in action, as I will cause my goodness to pass before thee. I don't want to wait until I learn anything about the glory of God to watch God in action. I don't want to wait until I learn anything about the glory of God to watch God in action.

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I don't want to wait until I learn anything about the glory of God to watch God in action. Oh, the wonder that I can't create in anybody's heart. The Holy Spirit did in Hodge Vatnaya.

Negligent Calvary's cross he was led. Why? Why? Instead of this bargain-based gospel, there's God's own obligation to do so-and-so. God does give everybody a fair deal, a fair chance, and I don't believe God has been that way that I've endured for forty years.

Oh, no, not that. Just why should he love me?" And the organist quickly began to scream, Come along! Come along! Down on his feet was the pastor's wife. And the pastor began to scream, Have mercy! Have mercy! Have mercy! Down on his feet in the presence of the felt of a sovereign God who holds man in his hand.

That deacon wanted to tell you that he got saved, I think he did. There were certain Roman Catholics that had never been in the gospel service. They claimed to get saved.

Couldn't tell him the sun stood up, said, It's a sight on us. The next morning, the man who owned the biggest saloon in town came and interrupted us for breakfast, threw down some tea and said something about a saloon up in there. Didn't know him, Adam Goldhoff, said, Pastor, there's the key.

I locked that thing up. I never opened it again. And that news spread all over the city.

We had a little taste of God. Doing what only God can do, Melting men and women down to the place of thankful upstairs. To the place where he could open the skies, and their eyes, and reveal himself in Christ to sing for me.

For if we could have the wonder of it, the joy. The second thought, desperately do we need to affirm over and over again that God shows his mercy in, not apart from, the Son of his love. Mercy is not a great pool of mercy that a man can dip his dipper in that his can be used.

But God shows his mercy in and through His enthroned Lord. That man in Christ, and his gift from the giver. When have you heard anybody blessing God? Because he does.

All we know, Lord did this for me, Lord did that for me, Lord did that for me. I wonder if I know anything about that. Oh, the mercy of God's in the hands.

And that hand has a nail printed in it. It's in the hands of a man. And that man's in glory.

And there's no way on God's earth he can experience his mercy except he does what he says he does. Give. Give.

Give. Give. Give unto them eternally.

Who does it? The three gnosis. The living Lord. Where is he? He's on God's throne.

Contact. By faith must be made. Not with a dead Christ, but an enthroned Lord.

For he gives himself. He's the gift. That's mercy.

In that expression, I do not know that I'm capable of talking about it. I'll make a stab on it. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.

Thou show mercy to whom I will show mercy. I. The longer I live, the sweeter that passage grows. I'm almost to the place where I can say, Now, thank God for the blessed privilege of looking me in the face and telling me that God Almighty has stated and he exercises that right and he does it to show mercy upon whom he will.

I'll tell you, that's the widest application could be made of that. Just as Scripture said he showed mercy to the men who desired it, left alone of God. He never showed mercy to anybody.

The saddest, most pessimistic verse in the Bible is he will not come unto me that you might have life. There's no hope there. That's just plain faith.

That's just telling the truth about everybody from Adam down to the last man. Let a man get in a resting place like these people did in the scriptures and dig him a well and find the water and it satisfies them, whatever it is. And they never will, left alone of this sovereign spirit, come to die.

Thank God. There is a note of hope. No man can come unto me except the Father draw him at the toes and say, Open as wide as the heart and will of God.

Our old pilgrims that we try to learn how to preach the gospel for are a bit dutiful, too. They talk so much about the freedom of the gospel, the wide openness. It's as wide as the heart of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And since he's the only one that can show Satan mercy, I'm glad it's left into his hands. I believe he'll do a better job of dispensing it than any of us could if we would, or would if we could. It's the only alternative to what they call the gospel of this day.

If we suffer today by living in a day when men feel no need of mercy, it is because for these years and years and years, mercy has been what God owes men, not what God gives men as he wills. It's the alternative to a page-of-gold religion. It's the door of all hope.

The offense of this has amazed me. The fact that a standing pulpit has fallen to baptist churches, or to standing of a congregational church, or any of the churches that started as a burden, broke their merit, every last one of them has found it in the sovereign displeasure of God. Yet I am preaching to thy children and to look me in the face and say, that's our problem.

Don't get mad about it, but our hearts need to be broken about it. This is a desperately deceived generation. Hear me? I'm so glad it's in his hands.

I couldn't produce a Savior, thank God he could. I couldn't write a Bible, thank God he did. I couldn't show any man how to be holy, thank God he can.

I haven't got any mercy to show anybody, to do anybody good. I need all that I can get for myself. Thank God he said, I'll show mercy.

I'll run it. I'll determine it. In my Son, with him I will.

There's a freedom there that enables us to preach and extend this to every human being. Oh, my Lord will say, this picture says, but God who's rich in mercy. This picture will say he's rich toward all who call mercy.

The revelation of God's glory. God's glory in action. The glory of a sovereign living God in action.

Many years ago in Canada, I went to hold a meeting for a fundamental independent pre-military separated headship. Well, they were separated. No question about that.

They hadn't spoken to us in years. They could get their clothes dirty. And they were sound as a dog.

They had a man that leased his land and somebody blew the back on it and they turned the man out of the chair. But they hadn't had a conversion. Well, yeah, they're separated.

Separated and dead. Well, I come in getting them up in one hill and down the other. Twenty below zero.

And they come a-sliding up there, funny dog. They came in. And first thing I knew, I got them out, ringing doorbells.

That's liable to get some of them non-elected, they say, over North Carolina. We wasn't going to do that. So, a deacon and I, we're ringing doorbells.

They never had done anything, any of it, in the average, whatever sentence in Calvinist is. He ain't neither, you know. And, oh, we came to a little old home with a wicked deacon.

Deacon Isaac and I started to un-elect the deacon. He's a pious Canadian. He said, he said, I wouldn't go in there.

I said, why not? He said, I wouldn't want to stay. I started to go in. He said, please don't go in there.

I said, why not? Oh, he said, I wouldn't want to stay. And I started to go on in. He said, preaching of the covenant to go in there.

And I said, yeah. He said, it'll ruin the meeting if you go in there. And I said, there ain't got no meeting.

It can't be ruined. It can't be heard. It's too dead.

I said, why would it ruin the meeting? He said, you don't know who's in there. I said, I'm fixing to find out. Oh, he said, if the people found out she's knocked on that door, it'd just cause terrible trouble.

I said, I'd welcome a little of it. And so I finally, the dear brother didn't want to speak evil. And I said, that's the most notorious woman in all this province.

And I said, well, that's where I'm going. I went up and knocked on the doorbell and the beautiful woman came and said, hello, big boy. And I said, hi.

And I said, I'm a southern preacher from down south, and I'm preaching out here at this little church building. And I've come to give you a special invitation to come hear me preach tonight. She said, you ready to preach? And I said, yeah.

You want me to come hear you preach? I said, yeah. She said, you know who I am? I said, no, but they tell me you're the biggest prostitute in this province of Canada. She said, yes, that's right.

She said, you really want me to come? I said, yes. She said, if I went up there, those people would faint. I said, they've been dead so long, they couldn't faint.

And that is the truth. And she said, I said, I doubled all day. I cheated all day for you to come hear me preach.

She said, do you mean it? I said, I do. And bless God she came. And when I finished preaching, we stood up and there she came, just sobbing like a heart would burst.

And she fell down the first closet on all fours. And just sobbed and sobbed and sobbed. I don't know where she got saved now.

I don't want to get to glory. But at the fire she stood up. And there was a kind of glory on her face.

You know, we are products of what we look at. Surely she put me on fire. And she got a glimpse of glory.

The glory of God and the face of Christ was revealed by the Spirit and the Holy Gospel. And it still settled on her face. And tears were streaming down her cheeks.

And I went up to her and I said, How is it? And thank God she hadn't lived long enough to learn some theology. She pointed here. And she said, He's in here.

I doubt not she told the truth. And I wondered what on earth that bunch of occupied, separated Baptists would do with a starless woman down there in front. What would you do with her? And I looked back, way back down to the old 80-year-old mother Israel of the church.

Bright as a spring, chipping pink cheeks and white hair, beautiful, godly woman. I knew whatever she did everybody else would do. And I saw her take her glasses up on her heart and wipe her eyes.

And directly there she came in a matronly walk, beautiful to behold. And she started walking, and then 80 years old she began to run. And she ran down and took that one starless woman in her arms and planted a kiss on her cheeks and then on her mouth.

And then with arm about her she turned and still painted. And the two of them faced that congregation and this older lady said, So everybody could hear her. Welcome, sister.

Nobody but a God of all grace act that way. Nobody but a God of all grace who manifested glory. But act in that way and put the impact to themself on the countenance of that woman.

Make her white as snow and pure as gold. Give her a new start and a new heart and a song. That's God's glory in action.

And those Canadians didn't sing like none of us can. They began to sing Amazing Grace Amazing Grace Amazing Grace Don't you wish you could sing it? Amazing Grace, how great that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found.

Was blind, but now I see. And the glory of God came and filled the temple. If you just revealed his glory, you could walk in a little church building.

I've done it. And he'd already got there. And the sinners come in.

They'll be melted with the awesome sense of the presence of God. Candidates for the experience of his birth. Amazing Grace.

We're going to stand and sing the song I love so well. Pass me not, O gentle Savior. Hear my humble cry, while on others thou art calling.

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