We come to our sixth lesson, which you can find on page 17. Page 17. Let me start with a few true or false questions today. Page, yeah, page 17. It's true or false, there are numerous things that happen by chance each and every day. What about how we talk about things happening by chance? I thought that's something we talk about, so I'm confused. What does that mean if we say things happen by chance? Yeah, that's right. It's just our finitude, our human perspective. We speak in that way, but of course that's not really true, right? We're speaking, to quote Paul, I speak in a human way. He says that in Romans. Exactly, from the appearances it appears to be random, right? In air quotes, but it's really not. So if you're playing a board game and you roll your dice, is that my chance? That whatever comes up? Nope.

So you can think perhaps of Proverbs 16.33 is helpful here.

It says the lot is cast into the lap, which would be sort of like dice, but it's every decision is from the Lord. So even the scriptures explicitly answer that question, and obviously when it talks about the lot being cast, or we might say dice being rolled, that's a principle that is being used there that implies all things, right? So anything that happens, as Jesus says, the hairs on her head are numbered. If a sparrow falls from the heavens, even these things are in God's hands. These things don't really happen by chance.

But what about somebody who you might meet, and they want to say that, well, God can't be in control of hard things in my life, you know, the death of a loved one or difficulties, those things are in some ways maybe outside of God's control, but the more pleasant experiences of life, those are part of God's control, but He's not in control of those death of loved ones or difficulties. A lot of people aren't going to think like that, so... That would be a terrible way to think. You don't think that's a good way to think? Well, why not? You know, when somebody dies in the world, you don't blame God. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

So what would be the alternative to, what would be the alternative, so Beckbeck is saying that God's in control even of the death of your loved one. Let's see, what would be the alternative view? If God's on a control, what would be the? result of that way of thinking? I mean, what comfort would you take, right? Yeah, so but if he didn't believe that he was in control, what would be the, I mean, what kind of, what does that make sense? What kind of comfort would you take from him? What kind of, what kind of, exactly? It would be horrible, right?

So, so, I always say it doesn't make things easier, right? It doesn't make things easy, I would say. But it doesn't make things easy, per se, when we acknowledge this reality of the complete sovereignty of God over whatsoever comes. It doesn't make it, oh, all of a sudden, oh, it's easy now. Now it's not hard anymore. No, it's still hard, but the reality is it's either hard, and God's in control, or it's hard, and he's not in control, and everything's meaningless, and there's no purpose in life.

That's your alternative, right? I'm sure y'all have had opportunity to read lots of things over the years that deal with this, but I remember reading a book in high school It's called Night. We had to read it at Cambridge, but anyways. And it's a really... I mean, I haven't read it since high school and I don't know if I'd ever read it again.

It's so heart-wrenching. It's a good one about the jerk. Exact Jewish concentration camp. It's brutal. It's awful. But this little boy is in the concentration camp and he lives. It's all true. But anyways, he becomes this really hardened person by the end of the book. It's super sad because it's true. But, you know, people like that, and of course I can't imagine having gone through those things, so I don't say that lightly, but the reality is, so you go through this horrible thing, you go through the concentration camp.

Okay, well, now you're on the other side of it, in God's providence you've survived, and you either can look at that horrible event and go, well, that was meaningless, and there was no good God in control, and everything's purposeless, Or you can say, yeah, I still don't understand why I had to go through that. I don't know why God was orchestrating those things, but I trust him. He knows what he's doing, and it's still really hard, but that's a far better outcome, a far better outlook, than the meaningless empty void, which you get to by the end of that book. It's unbelievably sad, but the point is, those are your alternatives.

So just from a, you know, If we could say it like this, although I don't say this in a trivial way, but if we could set aside truth for a moment and just say, what's the most helpful way of viewing these events for the individual who's gone through them, surely it's better to believe in the complete sovereignty of God than something like random chance or meaningless nothingness, which is the alternative.

But the scriptures speak to this directly. Actually, my mom and I were talking about this earlier this week. And you can think of, for example, Isaiah 45 verse 7. It says here, God says here in Isaiah 45 7, I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things." So he tells us right there, I do these things, I am in control, I am the one who's bringing about these events. A couple of other passages, that was Isaiah 45, 7, saying that I do these things.

A few other passages to this same effect would be Ecclesiastes 7, verse 14, Ecclesiastes 7 14 in the day of prosperity be joyful and in the day of adversity consider God has made the one as well as the other. So I'll read that again. In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider. God has made the one as well as the other.

That's Ecclesiastes 7.14.

And then just one other passage carrying this same theme is Amos 3.6. Amos chapter 3.

Yeah, we have to think about what we mean by complain here, right? These things aren't always so easy to... Yeah. Yeah, so you can look at Psalm 102 and it's called, by divine inspiration, not a title given to it by us, a psalm of complaint, I believe is what it's called. But we can think there, I believe, about You're certainly right.

We have to accept God's will, and we have to even rejoice in all things, right? So there's a sense in which we can even rejoice in our sorrowing, in a sense, as Christians. But we can also acknowledge a healthy sense of, I'm

allowed to grieve to my Heavenly Father in honesty and with a broken and burdened heart, without doubting at the same time, right? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

That wasn't doubt. That was trust in the midst of sorrow that our Savior took upon his lips. Psalm 102, the divinely inspired inscription of it is, a prayer of one afflicted when he is faint and pours out his complaint before the Lord. So I always love the way Matthew Henry puts it. You can complain before the Lord but not about the Lord. Does that make sense? That's the way Matthew Henry put it.

So anyways, Amos 3.6, is a trumpet blown in a city and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city unless the Lord has done it? I mean, that's what it says. So that hurricane, that tornado, that volcano, that earthquake, those are in the hands of the Lord. The scriptures are just really clear on this. Since God has predetermined all things, true or false here, we are not responsible for our choices. False, right? So we're still responsible for our choices.

The best passage here, I believe, to this effect is that great passage, Acts 2.33, where we read this. Peter's preaching and he says to the men there, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, Speaking to the crowd, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. So this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosened the pains of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it. But the point is there, God had predestined the cross and the men who crucified Christ were still responsible for their actions and guilty for having put him on that cross, which God predestined from before the foundations of the world that they would do. God changes his plans depending on our free choices.

True or false? False, right? Yeah, God doesn't change his plans. God does not know what the future holds. False. God controls not only the end of all things, but the means toward that end. True, right? So that's why we can talk about all sorts of things, but we can say, for example, we can say God ordinarily saves people through the preaching of the Word. That's the means that he uses to communicate his truth to people that they might repent and believe in him. though that's the means that He has ordained. We talk about prayer in that way, right? God uses our prayers, so that's why we pray, because we love Him, but we also know He's pleased to use it.

The way I remember one time hearing this described, I thought was kind of helpful, is it's not that, of course, that God needs us, but a father might be doing some mechanic work on his car and his son is there, she's just a few years old, and the son wants to participate. The reality is that son is not going to make the dad's work any easier, he'll probably make it more difficult, but maybe the father is wanting to try to have that special bonding time so he lets his son, you know, hand him screwdrivers or whatever else and the son just thinks he is just He is just indispensable to the working on this car. But it's really the father's way of lovingly allowing that son to participate in that work that he doesn't need his son to do. But it's because he loves his son.

And so obviously we know all analogies break down at some point. but I think that can be a helpful way of trying to capture the way we might think of our prayers. God is kind to let us, you know, wouldn't it be special if God let you, and I'm sure he has in one way or another, whether it's your children or grandchildren or some

other capacity, wouldn't it be special if God let you be a part of his plan to draw someone savingly unto himself? God didn't need to use me or you or anybody else to do that, but that's the most, you know, highest honor, that's the highest honor in the world to be able to be an instrument in his hands to draw somebody savingly to himself. So it's very gracious of God to let us participate in that work. So how are God's plans different than our plans?

Probably lots of things you can think of here. It's a whole lot smarter, right? Everything he does is for his own glory. Yeah, that's a great point. Everything he does is for his own glory. That's a fantastic point. Yeah, as opposed to us. His plans come to pass, unlike ours. Yeah, his plans always come to pass, right? You know, it's a question. You know how. So yeah, I like that. He does all things for his own glory. His plans are for his own glory. They always come to pass. They're perfect and comprehensive, too. You can see how they're comprehensive. We plan a lot of things for ourselves anyways.

Certainly try to plan things for other people. It doesn't always work. It doesn't even work. We can't even do our own plans, let alone try to plan somebody else's life, right? Lots of people like to play matchmaker, right? put together this person and that person, and then it never... well, sometimes it does, but it usually doesn't work out. So we're always trying to plan other people's lives and so forth, but God's plans are comprehensive, and they're, as you said, Mom, they come to pass.

So are all events predetermined by God? We've already touched on this, so yes, right? Does God ever change his mind? I touched on that too, so no, he's immutable. Alright, so now we can get into the lesson, having moved on from the true or false, we can move on to our lesson. And there is a lot of overlap here, so some of this we might just breeze through, and some of it we might slow down and drill down on a little bit more. As we get ready to jump into this section a bit more about God's decrees, I think it is helpful to read Ephesians chapter 1, the first little section there.

Ephesians 1, starting in verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose. which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven, and things on earth in him. 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, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory."

So what does the catechism mean by the word decree? What was that? Laws? Yeah, that would certainly be included in his decree, his laws. His eternal purpose? Yeah. The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, right? Yeah, God's plan and purpose for all things. That would be included certainly in His decrees. So His plan, His

purposes for all things, His will to bring about what happens. Lots of different ways you might word it, but certainly, yeah.

So what does the word foreordain mean? Yeah, to plan beforehand, right? to decree beforehand, to ordain beforehand, to plan beforehand, and especially helpful too when we use our word plan here, which is entirely fine, but we remember His plans aren't like our plans, they're certain and assured. So does God decree my salvation? Yes, right? God decrees our salvation.

You all would know this, I understand, but that is not... I would say, at least in the United States of America, we would be in the minority who would say that, which I know is quite shocking, especially having just read Ephesians 1, 3 through 14. we would be in the minority of Christians who would actually say that, would actually agree with that. But it's entirely clear from Scripture, and the alternative is there's no salvation, because nobody's gonna will themselves to glory, because we, by nature, do not love God. So the alternative is there's no salvation. And my biggest hang-up with this...

I know I've said this in one way or another in sermons, but my biggest hang-up probably, is that if the classic Arminian view, right, is that God looks down through the corridors of history, this would be their view, God looks down the corridor of history, looks down the corridor of time, and he sees that, you know, Miss Kathy and Angie, they're really special, and so he goes, I'm gonna choose Miss Kathy because she's such a special person and she's so good, and Miss Angie because, well, Ultimately, in that view, I always say it like this, who saves who?

Well, then you save you. God didn't save you, you saved you. God saved you ultimately because he saw how great you are, which makes you the author of your salvation, which makes salvation no longer what the gospel teaches, which is that it's sovereign free grace. It's kind of like, yeah, you save yourself, God saves those who save themselves.

Well, no, that's just not even Christianity, and I'm not saying people who actually think this through in a logical way and that they're not saved, but it's extremely problematic stuff. So is there anything in the world that happens by chance or accident? We've already talked about this, right? It's, of course, no, nothing happens by chance or by accident. If anything happened by chance or by accident, if anything happened outside of God's control, we might say this, God would not be God, right?

One of the things that makes God God is that he actually is over all things, comprehensively, completely, in every sense of the word. As Martin Luther would put it, The devil is God's devil, right? And as John Calvin said, he said, Satan roars around like a lion, but it is God who holds the reins and he has a bit in his mouth and he goes wherever God wills him. So, you know, God is in control of even the devil. God is sovereign over all things. Otherwise, God would not be God.

There's that old Little poem or whatever it is and it goes something like this our little story to capture this If it was one molecule right that God was not in control of Theoretically that could throw off everything and so there's that little saying The nail was lost and could not be found.

It was lost. And because the nail could not be found for the horseshoe, the horse did not have his horseshoe on. And because the horseshoe was not on the horse, the horse got lost. And because the horse got lost, the soldier got killed, died in battle. And because the soldier died in battle, the battle was lost. And because the battle was lost, the war was lost. And so that one little nail that was lost, that prevented the horse from having the horseshoe on and so forth, in this little thing, this little story, goes to the fact that the whole battle ends up being lost and the whole war ends up being lost. And the point, of course, is simply that we could not have confidence in God's control of all things if there was even one little thing outside of his control. It could throw the whole mechanism off.

Why does the catechism say the decrees of God are his eternal purpose, singular, rather than purposes, plural Exactly the final end goal of all things is his own glory. Yep. It's on his own glory Is there a purpose for everything that happens we know yes And that even of course includes the evil things that happen in life and in this world sin and Starting at this next section, I'm going to give you a kind of a quick scale or a quick idea of where we're going.

Starting at this question, which is, is there any possibility that God's decree is unwise? Starting here, we're going to have five characteristics of the decrees of God. And I'm going to tell you what the five are, then we'll go through them. God's decree is wise. God's decree is eternal. That's the second one. So God's decree is wise. God's decree is eternal. God's decree is immutable or unchangeable. God's decree is efficacious or effective, right? God's decree is unconditional. Unconditional.

And probably you could say unconditional and absolute, because that's part of that unconditional part. So it's wise, eternal, immutable, efficacious, unconditional, and then we're gonna stick with five, but it's unconditional and absolute. So going back up then, with that in mind, is there any possibility that God's decree is unwise? No, right? It's all lies.

And just to bring up one passage that would tell us this, Psalm 104 verse 24. Psalm 104 verse 24 says this, Oh Lord, how manifold are your works in wisdom. Have you made them all? The earth is full of your creatures." And there's various passages in Isaiah, for example, where we'll talk about God laying the foundations in His wisdom, or stretching out the heavens in His wisdom. So He does it in His wisdom. It's all done wisely. It's eternal. So if God has a plan for all things, when did God design this plan? So when did God design this plan? That's right. For the foundation of the world and eternity, right?

Isaiah 46 again is helpful here. Isaiah 46 verse 8. through 11, says, remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is no other, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done. saying my counsel shall stand and i will accomplish all my purpose calling a bird of prey from the east the man of my

counsel from a far country i have spoken and i will bring it to pass i have purposed and i will do it so from eternity um do god's plans ever change no so they're immutable psalm 33 verse 11 says, the counsel of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart to all generations, they stand forever. They do not change. Psalm 33, 11. Can anything stop God from carrying out his decrees? Even evil things, right? Even evil that happens in the world is not stopping him from carrying out his decrees.

Isaiah 46 10 again declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done saying my counsel shall stand he's saying it's gonna happen no matter what Isaiah 46 10 it's unconditional God does God need to seek out advice or counsel from others to determine his plan No, right? And again, that would go back to that earlier idea of God's got to look down the corridor of history and find out something from the object and then he'll respond accordingly. No, that would make him dependent upon the creation rather than the sovereign Lord of all creation. So it's unconditional.

You can think of that great passage from Genesis 50 verse 20, where we read, as for you, of course, y'all remember the context, Isaiah 50, 20, Joseph's brothers have mistreated Joseph for many, many years. They threw him to all the, you know, he ended up in Egypt and all the story, y'all know it. So then Joseph says to his brothers, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about. that many people should be kept alive as they are today. So despite all the evil that happened there, God even meant good from it.

If God has a plan for all things, then does this mean there is no such thing as man's freedom or free will? The answer is I've got to make sure I read the question right before I answer it so I don't misspeak. If God has a plan for all things, does this mean there's no such thing as freedom of free will? No, no. God, there is such thing as freedom and free will.

So this is a, admittedly, this is something that goes beyond our ability to fully comprehend, but we can say this, that God is sovereign over all things, and that man is still responsible for his actions. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. God is sovereign and man is still responsible.

Again, that passage from Acts 2.23, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God was sovereign and those men were responsible for putting Christ on the cross. They were guilty of those sins.

Now what does it mean to say that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass? Well this means that his decree, and we kind of touched on this, but it's absolutely comprehensive. So every single thing that happens, you can think of Matthew 10 where Jesus talks about how even if a sparrow falls from heaven, God knows it, God wills it, God ordains it. Psalm 139 talks about how even our rising up, going to sleep, and going about our day, even those things are in God's sovereign plan.

Psalm 139, the first four verses, O Lord, you have searched me and know me. You know when I sit down. He knew when he sat down here today. And when I rise up, you discern my thoughts from afar, you search out my

paths and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways, even before a word is on my tongue, before, O Lord, you know it all together. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it."

And one of the things that this does that makes the gospel so profound is that the Bible teaches very clearly, we go to a bunch of different places, that God knows all things, and He even knows us, and He even knows us comprehensively. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows our futures better than we, of course, know our futures, our present better than we know our present, our past better than we know our past. And then what's so amazing and one of the things I got to teach when I did the little devotional for the Manchester kids is the most incredible thing about all that is he still loves you.

He still sent his son to die for you. That he actually knows you better than you know yourself. You know yourself well enough to know that you don't deserve God's love. I would hope that you have that. I mean, that would be something we can acknowledge about ourselves. But then not only does he know you, he loves you. And it's just profound to think about.

That's why I still, I'll never forget, I steal this from Jeff McDonald. I don't know if he'll even remember it, but I'll never forget Jeff McDonald, one of our pastors I grew up with, saying from the pulpit when he was preaching John 4, he said, and I've preached it to y'all so y'all have heard me say it before too, but he said, She runs into town and she says, come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. And then he asked the question. I still remember sitting there, probably 20 years old or whatever I was, or 18 or something.

And he said, now, how could that possibly be a good thing if someone could tell you all you ever did? And I remember sitting there thinking, oh, that would be horrible. I would be terrified. If somebody told me all you ever did, I'd say, all right, I'm going to go ahead and leave. And please don't tell anybody all the things that you know that I've ever done.

But she's excited because she knows that the man who could tell her all that he ever did had forgiven her. and loved her. And that is at the heart of the gospel is that he really knows his people and he really forgives them through the work of Christ. And Christ came for those people and Christ loves those people, his people. So it's profound to think about the comprehensiveness of his knowledge and yet the depth of his love that has to be there if he could know us so well and still love us.

There we go. Topic 19 here. If everything that happens is part of God's plan, how should we respond? And Bec, you've been getting at this. How should we respond, if you don't mind, since you've been touching on it? How should we respond to this reality if we know He's in control? We have to think that we've got to eat us first. And we've got to know all those things.

You see, that's the hardest thing for us to understand as a person is I know I'm bad. I know I'm evil. I don't have a problem with that. But what I don't understand is how in the world would you love me? And that's the thing I

think that we have to tension with because we treat people how they deserve. And so it's hard for us to comprehend that God could love somebody like me. And I think that's one of the hardest things. And it's something that we have to deal with. It is, isn't it? It's amazing. Yeah, I was thinking about for this question here about how if everything that happens is part of God's plan, how should we respond?

I was thinking of even in Hebrews 2.13 that I got to touch on last Sunday in worship, where Jesus does give us the perfect example of how we should respond. Now we know that Jesus was more than an example, but he was an example. He was more than that, right? He was the substitutionary atonement for our sins, our perfect mediator, but he was also our example.

And we read in Hebrews 2.13, how did he respond to his father's will for his life? We read this, I will put my trust in him. That's what he did. He put his trust in him. He believed in him. He trusted him as he was going through the sufferings, as he was going through Gethsemane, as he was on the cross, as he went through all those things as a real man. fully man. He really trusted his Father. He believed, Father, Your will, not my will be done.

And so it was. And that's a great example for us. How should I respond? I don't know why my kid is going through that, or my grandkid, or my friend, or my whatever, or my own life, why I'm going through X. I don't always know, but I know that I should, by His grace, strive to trust Him, to believe in Him in that hour.

If God plans everything that happens in my life, does that mean life is easy? Right? Of course not. We all know that, right? Life is, of course, not easy. Did God know that sin was going to enter into the world? Yes, he knew that, right? He knew these things. Is God the author of sin?

No, right? confession is helpful here if you desire to kind of think about these things more deeply you can look at chapters three and four it talks about how he permitted the fall but then it also talks about how it wasn't a bear permission so it's a little bit tricky but setting aside some of that challenging theological discussion I always appreciated there's in I think it's Archibald. Anyways, one of the one of the Alexanders of old Princeton He was Archibald or JW Alexander one of those guys. They have a commentary on the book of Acts and On verse 23 the way that guy put it Archibald Alexander I think it was or JW Alexander doesn't really matter who it was but what they said was this they said God permits what man performs.

God permits what man performs. I found that helpful. God permits what man performs. So in the cross, that's the way this author was trying to help capture what was happening. God was permitting what man performs. And that's in agreement with what our standards say, although our standards do somewhere say that it was not a bear permission.

So it gets a little more tricky, but I think for our sake, it's helpful. I still find it helpful to think in that way. The illustration I used one time that I've just made up for myself and, you know, Again, all illustrations fall short, I understand this, but I have found this helpful for me.

When you're training a kid to learn how to ride a bike, and you're there and you're watching over, you're there, you're In a finite sense, but in a real sense, you're in control, and you are helping that child learn how to ride the bike, and you might give them a boost and push them and help them, and they might fall and skin their knee once or twice, and it is hard and it is difficult for that child, but you are permitting what that child is performing. You're allowing it to happen, even though you're sort of overseeing it. And even though it's difficult for that child, because their knee is getting skinned and so forth, you're ultimately actually trying to help them, in the long run, have a more fun childhood and learn how to ride their bike with their friends and all those things. You're permitting what they're performing.

And so, of course, somebody, if they're really wanting to argue with me, could start to say, well, it's not the same because God's in control in a way that you're not in that illustration. I understand this. But I hope that, for me, that was helpful Anytime I come up with something, I don't know if it should ever be said, but that's my own illustration, so do with it what you will. So if God determines everything that happens, then does it matter what we do with our lives? Right, of course it does, right? We're free, moral, responsible human agents. We're free, moral, responsible human agents. It does matter.

A lot of times the criticism of Calvinism is, or predestination, or God's sovereignty is that it leads to determinism or fatalism, but that's just not true. That's just absolutely not true. You don't see that in Scripture. All Calvinism is, is a faithful articulation of Scripture. All we're doing is we're looking at the data, and we're saying, this is the data. This is what it's telling us. It's telling us God's sovereign, and it's telling us human beings are responsible. You see that all over the entire Bible. God is clearly sovereign, human beings are responsible.

We don't believe in fatalism. We don't believe in determinism. So we don't believe that because God is in control of whatsoever comes to pass, I should close my eyes and try to walk across 49, because that's called being negligent, and it's being irresponsible. That's not good. So do we always understand why God does what he does? No, right? We do not.

But he is in control, and we can trust him. about Jesus hanging on the cross all that time, you know, some of your foot hurts, you know, and you have this pain, and you're moaning and groaning. And it's okay to moan and groan, but have you ever thought what it was for him to hang on that cross all the time? Absolutely not and especially back to your point when I always think too about that sort of thing and you think about how you add to that the fact that the difference between of course my moaning and groaning and my pain, I stub my toe, I jam my finger, whatever. I have absolutely no ability to sovereignly will to change that.

And I can promise you if I could, I would. He had the ability at every point to say, yeah, I don't want to be in pain anymore. And you think about every miracle he ever performed, he performed for somebody else. I mean, it's just amazing. Think about it. It's like you could literally do anything, and you never did anything for yourself, and you could literally do anything you wanted.

When he fed the 5,000, He didn't do that because, I mean, sure he might have been hungry, sure he was hungry, but he didn't do that for himself. If he was just trying to feed himself, he could have done that when he was tempted, right? Remember when he was tempted by Satan? Make bread for yourself. He said, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to live a selfish life.

So it's profound when you think about who he is and what he did for us. Yeah, we really can't wrap our minds around it. Any questions or things to think about before we close in prayer? All right, well, let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much for allowing us to gather and think about these things.

Lord, you are sovereign, the Lord of human pain, transmuting earthly sorrows into the gold of heavenly gain, and we pray that you would help us to believe that, especially when we're in the middle of something particularly hard. Lord God, we marvel at your son, Jesus Christ, and how he, who could have willed at any point to not be in pain, went through unbearable pain for us. But Lord God, everyone who's ever gone through any sort of deeper pain especially knows that if they could will to change it, they would. And your son could have done that, and he still endured because he loved us and he wanted to fulfill your sovereign will to atone for our sins, and we marvel at such a thing as this, we pray that you would help us, as Beckbeck's brought it up, you would help us to think upon these things when we're in pain in this life, to remember that you are still in control, and that our sorrowing, though real, and we can bring them before you and you care about us. It's nothing compared to what Jesus went through for us and we pray that we would appreciate more fully what Jesus has done for us even this day as we go to the after-school program or lunch or other things we might be doing. In Jesus' name, Amen.