

Confidence in God's Control

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[0 : 0 0] so that's that's a beautiful testimony of God's grace that only God's people recognize and live by is that right so when we live with that kind of focus it changes everything about our lives it changes everything about the perspective that we have when we face the difficulties and the trials and the uncertainties of life great is your faithfulness now I'm gonna ask you as we get ready to to jump off here does God's faithfulness ever wax wane or change absolutely not or we wouldn't call it faithfulness would we we'd call it something else but he's not like us do we wax wane and we yes we do so when we look to God's faithfulness morning by morning new mercies we will see what a way to start your day rehearsing the mercies of God in your life each morning all I have needed his hand has provided now do you believe that sometimes we struggle to live like that don't we sometimes we live like God isn't giving us everything we think we need or everything we everything we think we should have but what we just sang if you really believe it now all I have needed all your hand has provided great is your faithfulness Lord unto me that's the message this morning the title of my message is confidence in

God's control we'll be using a number of different scriptures to look at beloved all I want to do this morning is just rehearse the goodness of God in the way that he controls and sustains and provides for us as his people but for all that he's made in all of the universe he upholds it by his hand the hand of his power now I'd like for you to do this with me as we begin we'll we'll be looking at a number of different scriptures we'll be turning here and there and I want to encourage you to do that with me it's fine if you have to look in the front of the Bible at the table of contents and say well where's that book and get that page number and get there I'd rather you do that and then get there with us I want you to see this with your own eyes for those of you with devices you're using your phone or whatever it's a lot easier you get a cheat you just push the button and it looks it up for you right but you follow along with us now I'd like for you to do this think of all of the different things that people say they're afraid of and perhaps you have some of those in your life it may be things that you're afraid of regarding people you're afraid of certain things that people might say to you or do to you or the way people act toward you or the potential for people to hurt you you're you're really afraid of that and it affects the way you do relationships you could be afraid of critters on the earth right some of those fears are probably justified and healthy there are some people like me who are repelled by critters that slither I think I got that from my dad and her father Suzanne's dad was that way too he told the story one time he was a farmer for a while and they would do cotton and they had irrigation in Arizona or nothing would grow and he claims that he was jumping an irrigation ditch one day and saw a rattlesnake on the other side and turned in midair and went back to the other side without touching the ground he told it to be the truth we're afraid of things aren't we people are afraid and there seem to be as many expressions of fear about things that there are people in the world now think of all of the ways that we've developed however and this is the point to cope with fear to cope with what we're afraid of so that we risk even as Christians going through life coping we don't go through life like what we just sung about we go through life just trying to manage my fear just trying to figure out how to deal with whatever it is that I'm running from now may I suggest to you that of all the ways to cope with fear and anxiety we can probably put them in two extreme categories and then there's things in between let me give you those polar opposites two major divisions perhaps to think about this people either shrink their world to try and control it and cope with it or they expand it to try and control and cope with it all right it's not rocket science just think about it with me when people shrink their world what are they trying to do they're trying to bring all the pieces of their life into arm's reach as it were so that they can manipulate those pieces and control those pieces and move those pieces around in their life so that they are always feeling like they're on top of what's going on now the reality is this though they're in a constant state of struggle

because nobody can do that but that's what they do don't they it's like they reach out in their life and they just try to scoop it all in and bring it in pack it in as tightly as possible and then keep it there so nothing just jumps out and pops and they grab it and they stick it back in its place and they just hold it that's one way that people try to go through life they want to keep everything in familiar territory a very small world which they

feel like they've created for themselves in which they manage they feel it fill it with all kinds of comfortable and here's the word predictable things people like this don't like surprises guess what what's life full of amen but now here here's the important thing who's the one person in all the universe that's never surprised by what happens to us never he's never surprised he never says oh goodness i didn't see that one coming mike i sure hope you'd be able to deal with that man we laugh because that's just so ridiculous isn't it that has nothing to do with a sovereign god who controls what he's made well there's a second way the second group cope with fear and anxiety by actually and this is crazy to me immersing themselves in situations that actually foster fear and anxiety they have the attitude that yeah i'm scared to death of this but i'm going to run in and try to control it before it controls me they try to rush into it as fast as they can these are crazy people no offense but if they jump out of airplanes perfectly good airplanes flying along doing its thing and then just soar and giggle and think that's great and then pull that string and hope that canopy appears before i'm like you just stay on the ground and just live your life and adrenaline junkies these are people that say that answer you and say aren't you i thought you were afraid of heights i am that's why i do that people who go whitewater rafting in these dangerous roiling boiling rivers and all and i thought you are scared to death of the water i am that's why i do it two extremes but both trying to do the same thing and i'm going to say it just as plainly as i know how trying to control the uncontrollable there's just no way for you to get all the pieces of your life and put them where you want to be and keep them there and avoid the realities of the trials and the hardships and the tragedies of life we're in a fallen world living among fallen people as a fallen person that means we live in a broken world and this world will never be never be what we want it to be until we get to heaven and then god remakes the new world and we live there for all eternity this ain't heaven yet is it no and that's the reality that we live in most of us however as you recognize those polar opposites those polar extremes most of us i think it's fair to say move in and out of those two extremes and live somewhere in between most of us while we might gravitate toward one or the other we tend to live somewhere in the middle and we move into one or move into the other as it suits us in the circumstance is that fair that's probably how most of us do it but in whatever ways we've developed to cope it comes down to the fact that we run from we hide from we distract ourselves from reality and that's not how god's called christians to live and there is a much higher and much better way thank the lord thank the lord now folks while uncertainty uncertainty is a very real part of life this morning i want to talk to you about the greater reality of certainty i want to encourage our sometimes feeble and fearful hearts with absolute certainties regarding the faithfulness of our lord and the one certainty that i want to assert from the bible because there are many i could choose from we sang about a number of them this morning already the one certainty that i want to assert from the bible briefly but boldly is this god controls every part of his creation now we can we can typically do this and this is where i'm really going to poke around with you this morning we can do this we can say yes yes he does but then when it comes to the details of our lives we tend to back off from that statement do you believe that god is in control of even the minutia of your life do you believe he even cares about the minutia of your life the scriptures give us a clear clear clear case that he does in both cases the answer to both of those is yes god controls all the minutia of his creation to include the details of your life christian friend and god cares about the minutia of your life he is a good and caring and gentle creator he's a loving creator if we ever ever have cause for pause to doubt the goodness and gentleness of god all we have to do is reflect what did it cost god to purchase us away from sin that should settle that issue right there so we move into this according to the title of my message confidently confidence in god's control which means confidence in his kindness and his goodness to us we experience friends so much more of the joys and wonders of christian living when we focus on the certain things and not the uncertain things of life and that's my appeal to you this morning so i want to discourage you from robbing yourself of the joy and the comfort and the peace which comes from confidence in god's control i want to encourage you to encourage you to live with confidence and thankfulness in your hearts to god for his control over his universe and the details of your own life if you look at this this is the way we'll express it god's providence that's what we're talking about his providential control what does that mean god's

providence is god's care for his caring concern for and control over his creation the biblical doctrine of god's providence tells us the truth the truth about god's caring concern and involvement in the events and affairs of our everyday life god's provision for us does what it helps us understand how we are to respond to god's care and guidance that's why this is so critical how would god have me respond to his faithfulness what is faithfulness in my life in response to god's faithfulness look like so that i can be confident that i'm coming to the lord and responding in that way i want to be faithful to the lord even as he is faithful to me so we're talking about the what and the way and the how of god's provision or caring for us as christians do you often wonder when you see people who are in distress and you know maybe it's a family member or a friend or a co-worker and you know that they're not christians they're not believers they're not looking to the lord they're not walking with the lord do you often wonder how those people get through life especially when they get slam dunked to the mat i do too i look back on my life i was saved in college and even that short time that i was in the world before i was born again i look back on my life and think of the kinds of things that happened to my family and to me and i think man what did i do how did i get through that stuff i'll tell you what i did i don't know what you do well yes i do because i work with a number of i've been doing this a long time so i kind of know what people do but here's what i do and what i did i lied to myself but i was deceived in sin and so i lied my heart lied to me and i lied to myself and i lived a lie i told myself all kinds of things living in sin and trying to face the hardships of the world the kinds of hard things that hit families we had some tough stuff by the time i was in college that's what people do well let's look at the certainties let's rehearse some certainties and what i'd like to do and it's intended to do is is almost just flood you just overwhelm you with some of the just some just a smattering of the bible's declarations of this wonderful god who is so faithful so powerful so that nothing can thwart his hand as he works in your life and conforms you to the image of his son the lord jesus christ we'll go old testament we'll go new testament there's only a couple of major points that i want to deal with and here's the first one god controls every part of his creation every part of so we're talking about god's sovereign power god's sovereign power his absolute rule and control over all that he's made and the first thing that we'll look at is his control over all the affairs of earth and men so that's us that's us now if you would turn with me to these different passages so that you can work through them with me and we'll go rather rapidly the first one is in first chronicles first chronicles so in the old testament and it's chapter 29 first chronicles 29 hopefully you can get there with me well it'd be helpful if i get in first chronicles not second so this is the last chapter in this book before we go into second chronicles and i want you to understand something of the context here david has been commissioned by the lord to gather the materials for building what will be the great temple that will reside in jerusalem it'll come to be known as solomon's temple god told david i can't let you build the temple because you've been a man of war and have shed too much blood but i will allow your son solomon to build the temple so david said well i'll get everything ready and then i'll hand it off to my son and so this is a section in scripture where david is praising god for provision for provision and here's the interplay that i want you to see the people were doing the work of giving and gathering but i want you to hear david's heart as he expresses his gratitude to god about all that they've given and gathered to build this wonderful magnificent house of god in jerusalem we'll pick it up in verse 9 then the people rejoiced because they had offered so willingly oh isn't that good we want to offer god all that we do in the way of our resources and lives willingly for they made their offering to the lord with a whole heart and king david also rejoiced greatly so david blessed the lord in the sight of all the assembly and david said now remember this is the gathering of the people of god and david [18:02] is standing before them to address them blessed are you oh lord god of israel our father forever and ever talk about a call to worship yours oh lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth yours is the dominion oh lord and you exalt yourself as head over all both riches and honor come from you and you rule over all and in your hand is power and might and it lies in your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone now therefore see he's come to all that declaration and now he wants to say therefore by this reality of who you are our god we thank you and praise your glorious name but who am i and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this for all things come from you and from your hand we have given you drop down at the end of verse 16 and my translation reads this way it is from your hand and all is yours do you hear what david is doing here in the interplay of his praise god we've gathered all these things together and it's magnificent it even went beyond david's expectations and he's overjoyed about it but when he comes before the lord

he declares you did this you provided this you gave these things because all of it belongs to you and comes from your hand now friend what would your life be like to get up every morning and live like that here's the trouble off to the side of the road we go we're already late flat tire what happened to the faithfulness and the thankfulness and all that stuff god got off his throne because you got a flat tire and now god's not in control of all that and so that has nothing to do with god that's what we do now that's minor take a bigger thing you think of it is god still on the throne and still in charge of the details in the little bitty things and in the big things or do we take what david said and just go yeah well that's just hyperbole he's just exaggerating the reality listen christianity gets right down into the bone the marrow the joint of life jesus is either lord or he isn't we say he is we just struggle to live like it sometimes so be encouraged god knows that he knows we're but dust he knows our frame and he knows how to minister best to our hearts and this is what david is rejoicing about if you turn then to psalm 24 verses 1 and 2 the earth is the lord's and all it contains it doesn't say some of the earth is the lord's some of the people are the lord's some of the stuff is the lord's the earth is the lord's

and all it contains the world and those who dwell in it he put the second part in there just in case we were a little bit unsure or uncertain about what all means that means everything that's contained in the earth to include all the people verse 2 for he god has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers so god didn't make the world and then take his hands off and say now i guess it'll just have to run like it's going to run i don't know either i'm hanging on by my fingernails too no absolutely not how about psalm 47 we looked at that this morning in our call to worship just review that with me psalm 47 verse 2 for the lord most high is to be feared now that would be a reverential fear that's not running away from god in terror that's the kind of fear that causes you to have a high and holy reverence for him you're in awe of him he is notice what it says at the end of verse 2 in psalm 47 a great king over all of what the earth the entire earth well that makes sense he made it all he created it all and how about psalm 103 verse 19 again we're just rehearsing here we're just turning to certain places in the scriptures and rehearsing the truth i just want to show you a smattering across the spectrum of the bible psalm 103 and we'll look at verse 19 excuse me the lord has established his throne in the heavens and his sovereignty rules over all or yours might say his sovereignty rules over all creatures or all his possessions that's right and then while we're here how about psalm 104 verse 24 104 24 oh lord how many are your works now notice my bible doesn't have a question mark there it has an exclamation point so oh god how many are your works in wisdom you have made them all the earth is full of your again creatures possessions the the point here is the earth is full of what you've made and what you own and as a good and righteous king god cares for what he's made and for what he's owned for what he owns we can also then look in proverbs i'll take you back now proverbs 16 verse 9 now this gets real nitty gritty for us i told you his absolute rule his sovereign power over all the affairs of earth that's what we just looked at and now the affairs of men proverbs 16 9 the mind of man plans his way but the lord directs his steps we just can't escape that now as christians we're glad that we can't escape that there are some people who like to think that they're doing their own thing apart from god and what they fail to realize is that everything we do as people is done under the gaze of almighty god in his world even unbelievers are living like that they don't know it they don't recognize it they don't give god the glory for it but the reality is every single human being from the time of the creation of human beings they have lived under the gaze the control of almighty god over all that he's made we live in other words in god's world that's a great thing for us as christians to understand and to live by how about proverbs 20 verse 24 man's steps are ordained by the lord how then can man understand his way this is a great passage for people when i do counseling who want to try to scoop up everything in their life bring it into arms control here arms length and then manipulate it all i try to tell them with this verse look the reality is man's steps are ordained by the lord you can't undo god's purposes for whatever it is he's designed for your life you can't you cannot listen folks you cannot even sin your way out of god's design for you you can't now can you bring the consequences we have to understand the principle of what i sow i reap that's absolutely true but in that sowing and reaping there's the mystery of god's wonder that even when i make decision b instead of decision a god is in control of all of that in my life i can't even sin my way out of god's design for my life now as a christian you want to rejoice in that don't you not even the most powerful thing that has ever happened to me beyond jesus christ can control god's will for my life or change it or alter it the most powerful force in the universe is god's love it's the only thing more powerful than

your sin the cross is the only thing more powerful than your sin your sin had produced in you death and the principle of death and it took jesus christ the son of almighty god the creator of the universe dying on the cross to change that prospect for you that's how powerful sin is folks that'll give you some perspective on the power that had overcome you and killed you spiritually god's son had to come and die to rectify that reality in your life that's sobering isn't it but that's the reality that we're dealing with here and then how about proverbs 21 verse 1 this is so good for us to rehearse now as we pray for ukraine as we pray for the events around the world that are taking place that are so heart wrenching the king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the lord he turns it wherever he wishes we need to remember that god is ultimately in control of all of this in romans chapter 13 verse 1 now how about a new testament verse romans 13 1 another very important passage for us to remember in these times every person is to be in subjecting subjection to the governing authorities look now for there is no authority except from god and those which exist are established by god that's comforting for me to know that god has a plan and a design and he hasn't lost control of his planet because there are despots and tyrants they have always those people have always been with us they've always created all kinds of human malady and destruction on this earth but not beyond god's control now if you if you say to me jeff explain that i can't go further than that i can't go further than the bible gives me wisdom to do that's what i know i at that point i just trust god in his goodness and realize his ways are higher than ours his mind is beyond knowing beyond what we expect for what he's put in scripture for us to know and then this is very interesting if you turn to the book of daniel will you go there with me i'm going to pause here for just a second i love giving you these real life testimonies and illustrations from scripture they just jump off the page for us and they provide us with such real life stuff even though the context sometimes is kind of weird because it's outside of our cultural experience we can still get in touch with it as individuals and understand something of what god's doing here's what's happening in daniel chapter two daniel chapter two king nebuchadnezzar is basically the king over everything that the known world understands right now he has really militarily been successful under the hand of almighty god from what we've just read about god exercising his control over kings and nations so god has used this man to do many many things his army to do many many things across the globe it's basically babylon has changed the face of society in the known world so daniel and all of his compatriots and many many thousands of israelites have been taken into captivity in babylon and daniel is experiencing that captivity now and here's what happens king nebuchadnezzar has a dream instituted by god so he goes to his wise men and he says tell me the dream now here's the thing he doesn't just say tell me the interpretation of the dream he says tell me the dream in other words i'm not going to tell you what i dream you're my wise men and my conjurers and my magicians these would be people on the equivalent of the wise men that came to the manger so these are people who read the stars and look into the matters of future events and those kinds of things and help people discern and divine the outcomes of things that's who these guys are and so he says tell me what i dreamed and they stammer around and he says yeah yeah i know you're buying for time because the edict has come through if you can't tell me what my dream is you die no pressure well they can't tell him and so they say oh king who among men could possibly have the wisdom and understanding and knowledge and depth of insight to do that there is no man alive what you seek is not real we can't give it to you oh king so to make a long story short king nebuchadnezzar says fine off with their heads kill them don't just kill these guys go throughout my kingdom and kill every wise man there this is a man of extremes right this is the guy later on that will build a great big statue and tell everybody to worship in and when daniel and them don't do that he gets upset he's like go big or go home that's that's what he is well the word comes down to daniel because the soldiers show up to grab daniel because daniel has exhibited wisdom among people him and his friends so they're going to kill him too and daniel said now hold the phone hold on let give me a minute he goes and talks to his friends and he and he comes back and he says i can do this i can tell i can tell the king what he dreamed because god visited daniel and told him here's what i gave the king as a dream here's the interpretation i want you to go tell him god did that not daniel god did that and daniel recognizes that and so we pick up the story then in verse 19 of chapter 2 then the mystery was revealed to daniel in a night vision now folks please key in on revealed revelation all right something that's revealed is not something you can discover it's something that is revealed to you because it's not discoverable that's what the wise men told the king we can't discover this who could know this god had to reveal it to daniel let that bless your soul let that help you reflect on the bigness of your god and the goodness and

willingness of god to do this look hundreds and hundreds of people were about to be murdered and god stepped in and intervened and saved their lives and and most of these people didn't even believe in god they worshiped idols and false gods and god spared them verse 20 daniel said let the name of god be blessed forever and ever for wisdom and power belong to him notice what he says folks it is he who changes the times and the epochs he removes kings and establishes kings he gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding it is he who reveals the profound and hidden things he knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with him see look god knows what's in your darkness god is not confused confused by the uncertainties that confuse and confound you not god god knows verse 23 to you oh god of my fathers i give thanks and praise for you have given me wisdom and power even now you have made known to me what we requested of you for you have made known to us the king's matter and so i'll spare you the rest daniel went in told the king what the dream was interpreted the dream for the king and told him exactly what it meant and notice in verse 46 what happened with this proud proud king then king nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to daniel and gave orders to present him an offering and fragrant incense does that sound familiar fragrant incense we know another place in scripture where somebody brought fragrant incense and bowed down to the king of kings right the king answered daniel and said surely your god is a god of gods and a lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries since you have been able to reveal this mystery they promoted daniel etc etc if you jump over to chapter 4 now we have daniel in the fiery furnace and the context here is king nebuchadnezzar built this great big statue and he wanted to move it through the kingdom and everybody who came in contact with it or saw it was to bow down but daniel and his friends didn't bow down the king found out about it he went into a rage and he said i'll tell you what i'm going to do i'm going to take care of these people so the people that he was bowing down to and saying man you guys are awesome now he wants to kill them so he wants to put them in the fiery furnace and burn them up and they don't get burned up what happens to them what happens to the people to shadrach meshach and abednego and daniel when they throw them in the furnace do they burn up nope they come out god said to king nebuchadnezzar i'll tell you what this is what's going to happen to you i'm going to drive you insane you've exalted yourself and refused to bow to me so i'm going to drive you insane it's going to be for a period of time you're going to go out and you're [38 : 06] going to eat grass like a cow and that's your that's going to be your lot and that's exactly what happened the bible says that his hair his hair grew so long the king's hair grew so long it looked like feathers layers of feathers on his body and the dew settled on his hair because he was on his all fours walking around like a cow his fingernails and toenails grew so long they said that they were long like the claws of an eagle i think it was or a beast he looked more beast than man that happened to him and then god lifted the insanity from him and he honored god in that way he said my sanity came back to me and i realized what was going on he came to his senses in verse 34 of chapter 4 at the end of that period i nebuchadnezzar raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me and i blessed the most high and i praised and honored him who lives forever for his dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom endures from generation to generation all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing but he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth he does what he wants and no one can ward off his hand or say to him what have you done wow what a testimony of god's grace to this very proud stiff-necked pagan man what a wonderful god we serve folks now let me just give you a few more before we move on let me give you some that are over all of creation and nature we've already seen this rehearsed for us we go back to job go back to the book of job in chapter 37 you guys are familiar with the things that happened to job and how he lost his family satan came to god and said i want to test the hearts of men and god said have you considered my servant job and so he said yeah i'll get after him and this was the deal between god and satan satan's plan was i can make a faithful man turn away from you i can be more powerful in a human being's life than the work that you work in them and i'll prove it and he said have at it with job only do not kill him you have to stop you do anything you want to him stop short of killing him and see if you can turn his heart so satan sent all these kinds of calamities it they he wiped out his killed his family made his own wife curse him his own wife said to him at one point just curse god and die dude get it over with forget it his friends came to counsel him and all the counsel that his best and closest friends could give him was this you've sinned against god and you're denying it and you're in denial and until you fess up and tell god all the sin of your life that's why this is on you this is going to continue god sent big old boils all over his body that ran and oozed he had to take a piece of clay and scrape them just to keep

them from having this pressure he was relieving the pressure because they hurt so badly this is what this man's going through he's lost everything he's lost his health his wife is telling him to curse god and die it's awful now look perspective here right i look at my troubles and i would never say your troubles aren't real and your

troubles aren't real to you and that they're not hard i would never say that but perspective well what happens in all of this well in job 37 verse 1 at this also my heart trembles and leaps from its place listen closely to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that goes out from his mouth under the whole heaven he lets it loose in his lightning this is a this is a statement of reality about the lord from one of his friends who in spite of himself can declare this truth his lightning to the ends of the earth after it a voice roars he thunders with his majestic voice he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard verse 5 god thunders with his voice wondrously doing great things which we cannot comprehend for to the snow he says fall on the earth to the downpour in the rain be strong have you ever thought about how god controls the weather he seals the hand of every man that all men may know his work then the beast goes into its lair and remains in its den you think god cares about all the animals out of the south comes the storm out of the north the cold from the breath of god ice is made and the expanse of the waters is frozen also with moisture he loads the thick cloud he disperses the cloud of his lightning it changes direction turning around by his guidance that it may do whatever he commands it on the face of the inhabited earth whether for correction or for his world or for loving kindness god causes it all to happen isn't that an incredible declaration even from one of his friends who's been giving him all this counsel that misses the mark because nobody not job not job's wife not any of job's friends none of them know about the conversation that started all this when god and satan got together and satan said i'll turn him away now what's the end of the story did job renounce god and turn away from the lord absolutely not the grace the sovereign control and power not even those events could turn job's heart away from god god kept him god kept him god kept him friends and god keeps you he keeps your heart he keeps your hope remember friends god sees into your darkness you might not see what's on the other side or down the road that may be dark to you but god sees and he's faithful you're not alone you're not alone friends how about isaiah can you look at the book of isaiah with me now i think this is very very interesting the book of isaiah and chapter 45 i told you i was going to try to give you a sampling from all over the place this is unusual by the way for you who are visitors we're working our way verse by verse through the book of first peter and we were there last week and the week before but this week i wanted to take this and and share it with you and i have have reasons for doing this but rejoice with me at what isaiah says in isaiah 45 verse 5 i am the lord and there is no other that settles whether or not there are gods or whatever on other planets or in other universes or galaxies no i am the lord and there is no other besides me there is no god i will gird you though you have not known me

that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides me i am the lord and there is no other the one forming light and creating darkness causing well-being and creating calamity i am the lord who does all these you ever thought about that that's god's my minutiae control over all of the issues of life then how about a new testament passage to end this this little section that we're doing matthew 5 one of the gospels matthew 5 chapter 5 verse 45 actually let's go back up into verse 43 and run run right into this you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy but i say to you jesus is saying this love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven notice for he causes his s-u-n to rise on the evil and the good and he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous that's the grace of god you've heard me say this before even unbelievers get to go on vacation and see the beautiful things that god's made in this world and rejoice at the wonder they they get to take all that in even unbelievers get to know the joy of holding their new baby and nurturing their baby and all the love and just the beauty of that experience even unbelievers get to get married and know the joys of married life there's so many ways that people enjoy the things of this earth we need to understand that even in an unbeliever's life it's all by grace that's the common grace of god being poured out on even unbelieving men and women men who hate him and want to have nothing to do with him and they get to enjoy all that god's made it's it's sobering we're talking about god's sovereign preservation and power and that's what i want to look at now god's sovereign press preservation i've talked to you about his power god's sovereign preservation of all that he's made has to do with his continuing his ongoing protection his ongoing

care there are some who have taught and believed that god made the world and then step back and he just kind of folds his arms and lets whatever happens happens no god is intimately acquainted with and has a hands-on with all of the issues of life to include your life and the details of your life god sustains and protects what he's made i'll just mention this to you you can turn there if you want but i'm going to run through it quickly hebrews chapter 1 verse 3 a portion of this verse declares that jesus christ upholds all things by the word of his power jesus upholds all that he's made in creation by the word of his power how did he create everything by the word of his power didn't he say let there be he just spoke and boom there it was that's what we're talking about in wayne grudem's systematic theology wayne grudem is a theologian in his systematic theology he says that the word used for upholding or uphold he upholds all things by the word of his power it means to carry or to bear along isn't that wonderful

see it's very intimate this word is also used in luke 5 18 it describes friends who are bringing the paralytic on the bed to jesus remember that they chopped a hole down through the roof but they had to get him there and so this word is used for those men carrying or bearing along their friend in his helplessness it's also used in second timothy 4 13 paul used it of someone bringing to him or carrying or bearing along a cloak and some books that he wanted and that he needed for his ministry grudem goes on to point this out to us look at this uphold does not mean simply to sustain but has the sense of active purposeful control over the things being carried from one place to another that's how god upholds all that he's made by the word of his power he doesn't just sustain it he's actively and purposely controlling those things to make sure that they present the outcomes that he designs for his creation now do you believe that about your life and that's how your god works in your life god is engaging in the active purposeful continuous control over his universe in your life in what we would refer to as a very hands-on way so god god is hands-on with your heart and your life friends he cares now what i marvel at is why in the world with with the god of this universe this big big god that spans the galaxies beyond where we can see with the telescopes and all the stuff we send into space why would he take any measure of me sometimes don't you want to say aren't you too busy to mess with me you're running everything but he's not i don't understand that all i know is great is your faithfulness lord unto me thank you thank you lord in colossians chapter 1 verse 17 it says in christ all things hold together not some or a few all in acts 17 28 in him we live and move and have our being in him we live and move and have our being and finally in nehemiah 9 6 ezra the prophet declares you are the lord you alone you have made heaven the heaven of heavens with all their hosts the earth and all that is in it the seas and all that is in them and you preserve all of them and the host of heaven worships you god preserves what he's made and that includes you and that worship should be and can be our response to god's sovereign rule over and his care for all that he has made let me hasten to give you this second and final point god's control should be our comfort now i'm going to move through these quickly because i think that we can intuitively understand what i'm about to say there are scripture passages galore for what i'm

about to tell you but i think you can grasp this without me having to go all over the place like i've done so far that was just laying the foundation for you all right god's control should be a great comfort to us but here's the thing because of our lack of faith because of our weak faith because of the reality of the hardships of this life that beat us down we have our bent toward focusing on the uncertain and the unhappy don't we you fight that too we just kind of gravitate there there could be 50 things that happen that morning that are awesome let one thing happen and it just kind of sucks me into the hole with it and there i go isn't it funny how something as small and insignificant really in the whole of life can just throw us into this spiral of discouragement something like i can't find my car keys i had my devotional i even did this in my devotion right five minutes later i can't find my keys and i'm all over the house throwing now i'm doing this is the end of you seeing my keys very loving very kind very thoughtful then i find them and off i go and two hours later i don't even remember that happened that's that's what we are that's just so the the issue here is focusing on the uncertain instead of the certain we can respond we can respond so negatively to the issues of life we just need to remember that because we're living life under the gaze of god under the control of god under the love and care of god everything we say and do is a response in some measure to him everything first and foremost here are some unfaithful responses to god's providential control his care and his provision for us in our life here are some of them the first is and i think it probably be the first on your list too complaining the universal response of personal loss or difficulty whether that loss or difficulty is trivial or whether it's very important doesn't matter it can be anywhere on the

spectrum from car keys to whatever we we are complainers aren't we we are complainers well if god's in in control of everything who are we complaining against ultimately see all right how about this now again i could give you all kind of scripture who who are the first what's the first group of people that come to your mind in the bible who complained against god who israel right we want to go back to egypt we don't like it out here in the desert we don't got nothing to eat there ain't no water to drink it stinks we want to go back and be slaves we're crazy we're just crazy but what do we do after we're saved we run back to the mud and make mud pies that's what we do friends there's a better way and we're called to it what about this one these these represent our attempts to tag somebody else or something else with the responsibility for what we think is unjust or wrong or bad that's going on in our life so blame shifting how about this one blaspheming this is how we factor god out of the equation blasphemy is how we blame insult

[58 : 21] deny rebel against the lord in words conveying an attitude of ingratitude i'm not thankful for this and i'm not going to be thankful for this how about this one controlling and manipulating so not faith but fear not trust but tricks not grace but games i play games with myself i try to psych myself out i tell myself lies i believe lies and then finally this one retreating what do i mean well when we we can't bring ourselves to acknowledge or accept god's sovereign rule over what he's made we withdraw into false notions of security we retreat into ourselves some of us are really adept at this we withdraw now these are all false and foolish man-made ideas and explanations they give us a false sense of well-being these are coping strategies these are sins this isn't the way god's called us to live among each other and with him we find in these man-centered explanations the illusion of security but not the reality of it and you know that you just have to cycle right back around and you find yourself right back where you were again right you try all these things they don't work they don't last and you find yourself right back where you were in the despair perhaps even a little deeper because that didn't work and then that one didn't work you see how pragmat we're pragmatists aren't we we just want what works we want what's expedient until god begins to change what we want that's the work in our heart remember what i told you what the scripture said david with his whole heart the people with their whole heart turn to the lord the work that god does in changing us isn't just in our behavior it's in our heart so that our response to the lord is a heart of faithfulness and gratitude let me show you this before i move on these man-made answers and short-lived coping strategies do not help us with reality each of them attempts to redefine reality with us at the center but we don't have to live this way and so we can talk about faithful responses this is the comfort we receive from god's providential control over all that he's made and that should give us confidence in him not in us our confidence in god should be seen in the way that we live as his people especially when life becomes difficult i mean what difference is there between us and the unbelieving world when everything's sailing along and cruising i'm getting everything i want basically and everything's going really well we just look like everybody else we're just cruising through life but then bam something hits us now that difference ought to show up big time that faith in the lord right that that that's really when the test comes because what happens when life throws you the curveball it's a curve to you and remember it's not to god it's not like he didn't see it coming faithful responses you do and then i'll show you a few you do have a choice friend about how you respond to god so i want to give you three quick specific ways that we counter the temptation to unfaithful responses by consistently focusing our hearts on what is certain you can choose to live your life

always running from hiding from and trying to manipulate the uncertainties of life you can do that and you can miss the point of the christian life or you can live in the certainty that god's provided and that certainty is found in jesus christ and in jesus christ alone that's where it begins that's where it's sustained in your relationship to christ to the gospel respond to god in gratitude for his provision and the first thing that i want to show you is praise why not why wouldn't we start there praise this is a faithful response to god go back to job with me real quick if you would the book of job let's see what he has to say it's chapter one look at this i want to talk to you about hope and honor real quickly in this first point praise praise that is that is a praise of hope a praise of honor toward the lord job 1 13 now on the day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house a messenger came to job and said the oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them and the sabians attacked and took them they also slew the servants with the edge of the sword and i alone have escaped to tell you oh wow so this is a hit on his business his livelihood while he was still speaking another servant also came and said the fire of god that's

interesting isn't it the fire of god fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them and i alone have escaped to tell you so i look if that's happening to me the first thing i'm doing is going god what did i do what's what are you doing what how have i failed you you know verse 17 while he was still speaking another came and said the chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels then they took them and slew the servants with the edge of the sword and i alone have escaped to tell you this is going from bad to worse while he was still speaking oh please don't tell me now what right another also came and said your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house and behold a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house it fell on those young people and they died and i alone have escaped to tell you and so job cursed the lord and turned away from god and had a pity party and lived in such bitterness and resentment that's not what it says then job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head now does that sound like a man who's rejoicing in all of this loss is it okay for you to grieve is it okay for you to hurt is it okay for you to go to god with your tears and your weakness and say god help me that's what tearing his robe was all about that's what shaving is this is a man in deep grief he's his heart is absolutely broken can you still honor god faithfully with a broken heart job did he fell to the ground and what was the first thing he did worshiped that's the response to life folks worship worship of god and this is what he said naked

i came from my mother's womb and naked i shall return there the lord gave and the lord has taken away blessed be the name of the lord through all this job did not sin nor did he blame god pie in the sky or real life that's real life that's as raw as it gets and then look at job 13 if you would this is a wonderful declaration we heard from one of his friends earlier now we get to hear from job himself job 13 15 though he slay me i will hope in him what's the worst case scenario i die god takes my life though he even goes so far as to take my life i will hope in him wow because that's where we get attacked hope and honor job has hope friends he's a man focused on the certainty of god's goodness and wisdom that's what grounds him we praise god because we know who he is he is sovereign he is in control he is good he is kind he is caring he is and we honor the lord we honor god because we know that he is perfect we're not his will is perfect mine's not and he always acts for our highest good romans 8 28 and following he never acts with impure motives he always acts from a heart of love and an attitude of perfect purity and his outcomes are best for us we just struggle with it in the moment don't we look here here's what we do this is what i would do i would be tempted to say you know what if you hand me the pen and you let me write the chapters for my life i would never write that one i wouldn't even come close let me tell you what i'd write and he lived happily ever after forever and ever and ever and everybody loved him and everybody thought he was all that yep but god's perfect will was demonstrated in job's life so that nothing that happened to job was outside the purview of what god designed and purposed for him to bring glory to god and good to job's life job never realized on this side of heaven that all of this was a test to see if satan could overcome god's grace in a believer's life and he couldn't now folks that's really really good news for us you can't even sin your way out of god's love for you let me give you another one philippians 4 from the new testament we'll just read it philippians chapter 4 why wouldn't we go here beginning in verse 4 rejoice in the lord i'm going to leave out that next word because we don't need to know that next word what's your bible say rejoice in the lord you just had to say it didn't you again i will say rejoice let your gentle spirit remember the car key illustration oh boy let your gentle spirit be known to all men why the lord is near does that comfort your heart the lord is near that never changes be anxious then for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to god friends does that sound like worship this is what david did this is the response of job do you see over and over throughout the bible people who love and believe in the lord turn to the lord in these times and it's just all about worshiping him it never stops being about worship and the peace of god in verse 7 which surpasses all human comprehension understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in christ jesus and brothers and sisters that's what we need in those moments we need our hearts and our minds guarded from sin and unfaithfulness and discouragement and believing the lies of the great schemer who wants to guide us into living in the uncertainty rather than to ground our hearts in what is certain in our god you might not know the answers you might not know the outcomes but god does so we need to trust and believe we pray to god because we've learned to depend on him why else do you pray to get what you want you pray because you've learned to depend on god we depend on him because we've learned to need to pray we have a need and we know who to go to life teaches us about our

need and where to go to have it met in the lord as christians the psalms show us this about david even jesus prayed depending on the father to do his will in jesus life i'll just give you a couple references all of john chapter 17 excuse me in the high priestly prayer in mark 14 36 you can look those up later we believe in the lord we walk by faith paul said and not by sight there's a lot we don't see behind the scenes and then finally let me give you this one and then i'm done peace peace psalm 23 oh i need to advance it there it is peace psalm 23 very familiar the lord is my shepherd i shall not want he makes me lie down in green pastures he leads me beside quiet waters or still waters he restores my soul he guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake even though i walk through the valley of the shadow of death i fear no evil for you are with me your rod and your staff they comfort me you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies you have anointed my head with oil my cup overflows surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life and i will dwell in the house of the lord forever i'll give you three ideas about this run rehearse and rest run to jesus rehearse his goodness and rest in his goodness run rehearse and rest friend run to god rehearse his promises rest in his provision praise prayer and peace this isn't magic it's not a pill doesn't help us cope praise prayer and peace can be and often are responses of a weak and needy heart we saw that in job didn't we we saw that in david we even saw that in daniel as he went to god and said if you hadn't shown me this i'd be dead now they were coming to kill me this is a weak and needy heart now folks look you can continue to choose to focus on what you can't control you can settle for trying to cope your way through life but god is encouraging you to abandon fear to trash the trappings of tricks that we use to psych ourselves out the self-made coping strategies that they don't solve anything move all that out in favor of a vibrant relationship with jesus as your maker your savior and your sustainer friends you're not alone in life you're not alone god cares for you and his will is for you to abandon fear and live in faith because he is faithful live in faith because god is near and his made away you know this turn your eyes upon jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace you believe that listen to this this is verse one oh soul are you weary and troubled no light in the darkness you see there's light for a look at the savior and life more abundant and free now sing with me turn your eyes upon jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace through death into life everlasting he passed and we follow him there or us sin no more have dominion for more than conquerors we are his word shall not fail you he promised believe him and all will be well then go to a world that is dying his perfect salvation to tell turn your eyes upon jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace will you pray with me father father we turn our eyes to jesus even now we look full in your wonderful face as you have revealed that face to us in scripture you are a sovereign god a god of power preservation control you are a good and kind and gentle lord we pray that you would help the things of earth to grow strangely dim as we put our

[78 : 25] focus on the lord jesus christ and all of that fades into the background help us to be faithful to you god knowing that you are first faithful to us and let us live in the glory and grace of your heart in christ's name we pray amen