

# Live Out Loud

## *Courageous and Contagious*

Stop Thinking that God's Sovereignty Gets in the Way

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Jan. 17, 2016*

The Bible teaches BOTH the sovereignty of God and our responsibility to share the good news of the Gospel with everyone around us.

God's sovereignty doesn't get in the way of evangelism. A solid understanding of God's sovereignty gives us the right kind of passion for evangelism, helps us put our hope in the right place, and realize where the real power is!

A lack of understanding of HOW the sovereignty of God fits together with evangelism will leave you feeling guilty, burdened and tempted to fall into the latest-greatest evangelistic bells and whistles.

Two places Christians are guilty of putting their trust when they don't understand the sovereignty of God and the power of God's Word:

(1) Politics

(2) Ministry on Steroids

The Church is sometimes guilty of trying to use new bells and whistles to attract people to the Gospel and Christianity. This usually turns into a game of "Bigger and Better" or "What's Next." It's exhausting, expensive and honestly, quite fruitless.

Despite all the political victories over the years the moral fiber of our country has continued to deteriorate and the political arena has become a battleground where Christians are no longer on the offensive but spend most of their time just trying to defend our basic religious freedoms.

This forces the Church to go back to where she should have been all along: prayer, sacrificial living, loving our enemies, and faithfully proclaiming the gospel that is able to change people on a heart level – one person at a time!

"I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not saying politics are unimportant. And I am not saying Christians should stay out of politics. We live in a democracy. We have the right to influence the public debate. To neglect that would be foolhardy.

I'm simply stating that's it's a tragic miscalculation to place our hope in political solutions. At the end of the day, not matter how many elections we might win or how many laws we might pass, political power is fleeting. The tide always changes." ***Thriving in Babylon***, Larry Osborne, p. 137

As Christians who believe the Bible teaches BOTH the sovereignty of God AND our responsibility to share the good news of the Gospel with real people living all around us.

- What would it look like?

Let's look at **Four Characteristics** of what it would look like as a Christian if you held onto the sovereignty of God and our responsibility to share the good news of the Gospel.

### **I. You'd be Humble and Extremely Hopeful in the Power of Jesus and the Gospel**

You can see both the humility and the hope that the Apostle Paul had in his letter to the Corinthians.

Look at **2 Corinthians 3:4-6; 4:1-7**.

### **II. You'd be Courageous and Bold even in the Face of Growing Opposition**

Don't fall into the trap of thinking these are the worst of times for Christians. They're not! In fact, the only way you could think that is if you're not reading any history starting with the Bible. For example, look at **Acts 18:1-11** and **1 Corinthians 16:5-9**.

### **III. You'd be Patient and Willing to Wait on God to Do What Only He Can Do**

The Apostle Paul demonstrates this attitude in his exhortation to Timothy who is pastoring the church in Ephesus. Look at what he says to Timothy in **2 Timothy 4:1-5**.

God used a lot of different people and circumstances to finally bring this man to the point of giving his life to Christ. Be patient as you plant 'Gospel seeds' and let God be the Lord of the Harvest.

Our reward is not based on how many people we see come to Christ. It's going to be based on your faithfulness to share the Gospel.

Just like Paul told Timothy, keep doing the work of an evangelist. God will take care of the rest. Don't try to do what you can't do. You can't make anyone become a Christian, but you can share the good news of the Gospel and tell them why you turned to Christ.

### **IV. You'd be Committed to Praying Before, During, and After You Share the Gospel**

You need to recognize what's been true all along. When you try to spread the good news of the Gospel you are stepping into the front-lines of spiritual warfare.

It's not Washington that is so against us. It's not Hollywood that is killing us. It's something far worse that you can't even see and it's not a new thing. Read about it in **Ephesians 6:12-20**.

There's no magic in any certain methods of evangelism, but there's power in God's Word and prayer.

Knowing that God is sovereign frees us to joyfully pray and share the good news knowing only He can change a heart.

Who could you start praying for, by name, that lives on your street?

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Who could you start praying for, by name, that works with you or goes to school with you?

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Who could you start praying for, by name, that you have regular contact with in your community?

- Dry cleaners
- Auto mechanic
- Grocery store cashier
- Physician
- Bank teller
- Daycare worker
- Fellow athlete at the gym or on the same sports team