Wrestling with the Sovereignty of God & the Freedom of Relationship
Introduction - His Tactical Flexibility in the NT

We spent the last 2 weeks look at God's ability/willingness to ebb and flow with us
That for the sake of the relationship God enjoys being in the NOW
And in His infinite power, wisdom, omniscience, and sovereignty He can and does move back and forth with us in His decision making all the while not losing sight of His ultimate goals
This morning we will look thru the New Testament and we will see what I feel is the same pattern
And mostly we will look at Jesus
In John chapter 1, it says Jesus "EXPLAINS" the father
So you would think you would see the same mindset with Jesus and how He relates to the Father

New Testament

Birth
Mathew 1-2 & Ex. 1-2 have MANY parallels - In both there is:
- *Royal decree*
- *Parents who actively respond*
- *Fearful kings*
- *Slaughter of babies*
- *People on the run*
- *Dependence on the decision of weak people*

- Luke 1:29,34
The word for pondered comes from the root word for dialogue
It literally means to DELIBERATE and DISCUSS
She mimics what she knows of her OT counterparts
She isn't condemned for this but rather given an explanation
Even with Mary God doesn't force His will without a discussion

Temptation of Jesus
Is this REALLY a test? Does Jesus actually have the capability of making up His own mind? Does this matter?
Who is said to be the greatest being ever created?
What does Satan assume about God in this case?
Then wouldn't you assume that Satan knows what God is like to a large extent?
Even Satan himself knows God is flexible
(Brian by the way might be willing to do an entire talk on this topic alone)

Syrophoenician woman
* Recount the story
- Math. 15:27
What does Jesus do with her request? Is this just for our benefit or does this fit what the Father is like?

How about the parables?

The Story of the Prodigal
Amazing freedom of choice – to go and come back
The Father does not force His will on either son, even when they are dead wrong

Parable of the Banquet
ALL are invited, and free to reject
The one inviting is in an extremely humble place of utter rejection
Why? What creates this vulnerability?
CHOICE/Risk of rejection

Gethsemane
• Math. 26:39, Luke 22:42
"if it is possible"
"if you are willing"
Is this just for our benefit or is this a REAL conversation?
What is Jesus literally asking at face value?
Why would Jesus ask this? What does it appear Jesus assumes about the Father?
I submit to you that Jesus wrestled with God over this decision because even with the crucifixion
He did not assume the Father had ONE SET BLUEPRINT
You know, and some of you will not like this, but it isn't the CROSS that is necessary to pay for your atonement
Jesus could have died on Jupiter and it still would have worked
Isaac asked Abraham where the offering lamb was
Jesus is asking potentially the same question
Is this a lack of faith?
On the contrary, this is a statement that He knows what His Father is like

During the walking about of Jesus, you NEVER see Him force His will on another human being
He is constantly loving, inviting, calling to choice
But He is ALWAYS leaving the decision there for the other to make
He draws but He doesn't ever force

It is interesting, in Rev. 5:6 it is not the Lion that opens the Book, it is the Lamb
It is the slain Lamb that explains the kind of Lion God is

I want to close this morning by turning to the passage we usually seem to go to to define love
What passage in the letters from Paul do we normally go to as the most exhaustive definition of Love in the NT in contained in one place?

• I Cor. 13:5
This is the place we always seem to go to to define Love correct?
New Revised Standard Version
"it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way;"
Living Translation
"Love does not force its own way"

"It does not insist on its own way"
Literally, Love isn't demanding

It also…
"Hopes all things"
What does that mean?
Interesting, this will come up more next week