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A Lesson in Submission

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*Which of all these does not know that the hand of the **LORD** has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. (Job 12:9-10)*

It is quite simple to confess that God is sovereign, and that we submit to that sovereignty. **I can say** it without hesitation, but the day-to-day, practical acceptance of His sovereignty is much more difficult to deal with. There are times in everyone's life when submitting to God in a particular situation is extremely difficult. Jonah found himself in such a predicament when the Lord told him to preach to Nineveh. John Calvin was in a similar situation when **Farel** asked him to return to Geneva.

And I have found myself in that situation the last few months as I prayed and worked to continue the ministry of Geneva Ministries. I could not face the possibility that Geneva Ministries might die. I refused even to entertain the prospect! Morning, noon, and night I cried to God and told Him that under no circumstance would I allow Geneva to fail—this ministry was too important; therefore, He needed to meet our needs. I can truthfully say that the last six months have been among the most **painful** of my life.

As I reflect back, I see the problem I had in submitting to God's sovereignty revolved around the **idea** of control. To put it bluntly, as far **as** I was concerned, God seemed to **be** out of control! Life was just not going the way I thought it should! He was not coming to the rescue of Geneva Ministries! After all, I was not **asking** for a Cadillac or a new house. I was **interceding** for Geneva Ministries—a religious ministry **that** has been very influential in many of His people's lives. Day after day, I prayed and told God what **He ought to be** doing, but then **He**

went and did whatever He jolly well pleased (at least so I thought).

Often I looked up into heaven and wondered whether or not God was paying any attention to my prayers at all. He simply did not respond in a satisfactory manner. In other words, he didn't give me what I asked for. I wondered what He did with all those prayers I was sending His way!

The strange thing about the last six months is that I never got angry at God. To be internally consistent, it seems I should have. My attitude was carnal and sinful, but **I** didn't compound the problem with anger. In fact, at the end of all my prayers I confessed my submission to His **will**, but in the back of my mind I added a postscript which generally went "I sure hope You know what You're **doing!**"

After about a month of praying and no answer, I made a resolution that I was not going to give up. I purposed to be a combination of the importunate widow before the Judge and Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Lord. God may decide not to answer my prayers, but He was going to hear **from** me on a regular basis! Every day I went to Him with the same prayer. I repeatedly told Him that I would not be denied.

Now it's likely that most of you have never responded to God's work in your life **like I** did. Looking back it's a wonder the Lord didn't strike me with leprosy or make me blind for my presumption. Despite my carnality, He responded mercifully and graciously.

One **day as I was** praying, He opened my eyes to what I was doing. I was shocked at what I saw. I realized that **I was not** submitting to God, rather **I** was seeking to bend His **will** to mine. No wonder He had withheld His blessing! **I** confessed my sin, and asked **God to teach** me how to submit to Him. **I**

wanted Him to show me what it means to “bow the knee.”

A few days later He did just that. As I was praying one day, the Lord powerfully brought to mind an event that took place last fall. Our family had been invited to the coast, **and** we were delighted to be able to accept. One **afternoon** I was sitting on the beach reading, our two boys were playing **in** the water, and **Charissa**, our 8 year old daughter, was floating on a raft. Donna was back in the room taking a nap.

I kept my nose in my book just a little too long. When I looked up **Charissa** had drifted down the beach. I hollered at her, but she didn't hear me. Slipping on my **sandals**, I got up to walk down the beach so that she could hear me.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon so the sun was pretty high **in** the sky, but **I** could swear my eyes were playing tricks on me. It *seemed* that the farther I walked, the farther out she went. Finally I began to run, and I knew it was no tick. **Charissa** had drifted onto some kind of current going out, and her little **raft** was taking her farther and farther out.

She was about 75 yards out when I faintly heard her little voice screaming for me. She was trying to paddle in, but to no avail. **I** turned to my two sons and told them to sit downright **where** they were and wait for me to come back. I had to go get **Charissa**. After handing Austin my sunglasses and sandals, I walked into the water after her.

By then she was between .100 and 125 yards out. Being from East Texas, **I** had no idea how far that was in the surf. By the time I got out far enough for the water to be over my head, I was already tired. It seemed **that** the farther I swam, the more distant she seemed from me. From my position in the water I could barely see **her over the** waves. She had stopped screaming because she saw that I was coming to get her.

It didn't take very long to exhaust **me** completely. My chest **was** heaving and pain **began** to spread through my lungs. My labored breathing caused me to swallow water. Finally I turned over on my back to **rest** for a minute. After **floating** for a couple of minutes, **I** turned to swim **again**. [just had to reach my little girl! It wasn't long before I was forced over onto my back again. **I** turned **again** to try to **see** her, and realized that she **was** farther away

from me than before. By this time **I** was swallowing water, coughing, and laboring to swim. I then got scared and started to panic.

Up to this point I had only been concerned about **Charissa**. Now I realized that I could very well drown. Not only **would** I not rescue my little girl, but I'd kill myself in the process. I glanced back to shore and I honestly didn't know if I could even make it back. At about that time **I** heard **Charissa** screaming **again**, and **I** turned to try to see her. She was barely visible to me, and although **I** didn't know it at the time, she had just been stung by a jellyfish.

I had been praying all the way out, but now **I** began to pray in **earnest**. I didn't know what to do. **I** knew **I** couldn't reach her, but I was her *Papa*—it *was* my job to rescue her. I was afraid of drowning, and for the first time ever, I feared for my life. I cried out to God, and realized that the only thing **I could do** was turn around and try to make it back to shore. Before **beginning** to swim, I asked God to protect **Charissa** and take care of her. **I** prayed the prayer that **I** have prayed **from** the day she was born: Lord, give my baby girl what I cannot give her. Be a **father** to her as I can never be. Save her life. I begged Him to keep her safe, and I once again committed her life to Him. If He wanted with Him in heaven the best daughter a man could have, then she was His to take home.

Turning back was the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life. I felt like a complete and utter failure. I didn't know whether I would make it back, but **I** knew that **I** had failed my little girl. I could not save her. My tears mixed with the seawater as I slowly made it toward shore.

I did make it to shore, but when **I** stumbled up onto the beach I could barely walk. Onlookers saw what **was** going on and called the Coast Guard. A lifeguard from down the beach brought over a large “sea-tricycle” and was preparing to go after **Charissa**. **I** could still see her, but it looked like she was half-on and half-off the raft. **I** couldn't bear to think the thoughts **that** must have gone through her mind when she saw her **Papa** turn his back on **her** and swim toward shore. **I** know **I** felt utterly helpless. All **I** could do was pray that she **would** stay on the raft until someone could get to her.

Eventually the lifeguard reached her and brought her safely to shore. As you might guess, **I**

was overjoyed. I thanked God **and** cried as I ran to get her. There was no doubt in my mind, the Lord had delivered her. **Charissa's** guardian **angel** (Matt. 18: 10) kept her on the raft until the lifeguard reached her.

Later as I reflected on what had happened, I knew the Lord was telling me something. **Charissa** was His little girl. Doma and I are merely her trustees. She is His child, and He is perfectly capable of taking care of her. I cannot think of a day when I praised and thanked God more for His sovereignty than that day. *He was in control*—not me—and because of it, **Charissa** is alive today.

And when the Lord brought this experience to my mind while praying and thinking about Geneva Ministries' future, I immediately knew what He was saying. Geneva Ministries' is not *my* ministry or anybody else's ministry—it is part of the *Lord's* ministry. It was as if He very lovingly and gently said, "**Michael**, just like you couldn't save **Charissa's** life when she drifted out into the Gulf, you can't save Geneva Ministries no matter how hard you try. This is my ministry. I can save it, or allow it to die—but it is mine to decide whether I want to use it or not."

I knew then that He had shown me how to submit to His will. Quite honestly, I don't know any more about the future than I knew then. I do know that we have received \$14,535.33 as of June 30th. We are still behind, but not nearly as far. How long Geneva Ministries will continue, only God knows. It's His ministry—He decides. I believe that He has called me to help cultivate this small part of the Kingdom. I pray that **He** uses us, **and** I believe He will.

But more than anything, I want to submit to His control, and I pray that the power of God will be manifest in this work and ministry. My prayer is that lives will be changed—individuals won to **Christ**—and the Kingdom of God advanced against the Kingdom of Satan. And I sincerely hope that you will join with me in this prayer.

Swarming and Crawling

Studies in Genesis One

James B. Jordan

*And God said, "Let the waters swarm (**sherets**) with the swarming thing (**sherets**) of living soul, and let **the flying** creature **fly** about upon the earth upon the face of the firmament of the heavens."*

*And God created the great tannins, and every animated living thing that crawls (**remesh**), with which **the** waters swarm (**sherets**), after their kind, and every winged flying thing **after** its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:20-21).*

On the **fifth** day, God created the living creatures of air and sea. Three categories are given us in these verses: the flying creatures, the water creatures, and the "great tannins." As we shall see next time, the tannins are the dinosaurs. In this installment, however, we are concerned with the terms "crawl" and "swarm," as these are used here, and as they provide insight into a Biblical view of the world.

Inverse 20, the water creatures are said to swarm (**sherets**), but in verse 21 they are said to crawl (**remesh**) as well as swarm. The meaning of the term **remesh** overlaps that of **sherets**, but there is a distinction. **Sherets** views the same creatures as a teeming, swarming, prolific multitude, whereas **remesh** views them as a creeping, crawling, wriggling mass. The idea of locomotion is present with both terms, but **sherets** entails also the idea of reproduction, while **remesh** entails also the idea of wriggling or crawling, motion in close proximity to environment.

The difference in these terms is very important. The land **remesh** crawls about in the dirt ('**adamah**'), and it is this soil that is cursed in Genesis 3:19. The **remesh** is also more generally said to crawl around upon the '**erets**', the term used for an ordered cosmos, but also rendered "earth, land" in English. On the other hand, the land **sherets** swarms and multiplies upon the '**erets**', never in the '**adamah**'. Thus, the **remesh** is fundamentally associated with soil, though it can also be used for sea creatures (but not

for winged creatures), while **sherets** is fundamentally associated with space **or place, and can describe** "teeming, swarming life" in all four categories.

This distinction is important to an understanding of the clean/unclean **symbolism in Leviticus 11**, having to do with animals. The **sherets swarms** and multiplies in a given place, and what make the **sherets** unclean in Leviticus 11 is that he, like the serpent, is a boundary transgressor, breaking the bounds of a given place. He reminds the Israelite not to try and break into the Tabernacle. The **remesh** crawls in the soil of the earth, and what makes him unclean is that he is like the serpent in having the cursed soil as his environment.

What is interesting here is the use of **remesh** for fishes. While some sea creatures can be said to crawl in the dirt, most fish do not. We might expect the Bible to take note of this distinction, and say that clean fish are those that travel in the water, while unclean-fish are those that crawl in the soil. But that is not what. **Leviticus 11** says. It simply says that **clean** fish have both fins and scales, and unclean fish do not. The distinction between swimmers and **bottom-dwellers** is not in view at all.

So, all water creatures are said to crawl, in some

sense. **All** water creatures and some land creatures are said to **crawl**, while **all** winged creatures and some land creatures do not crawl. The distinction seems to be this: Non-crawlers move about basically in the atmosphere. They either fly, or stand erect with only feet touching the ground. In contrast, crawlers move about in the midst of soil or water, things below the atmosphere. In terms of this distinction, human beings are not crawlers.

Now, we have seen before that the sea creatures are associated with gentiles. **In** the clean/unclean symbolism of Leviticus 11, the land crawlers are also unclean, and thus like gentiles. All crawlers, land or **sea**, are like the serpent who, in Genesis 3, was cursed to crawl on his belly. The serpent **originally** had been a non-crawler (likely a tannin). He was cursed to crawl in the midst of the cursed soil. All animals that resemble him are accordingly symbolically unclean, for they portray the curse. What they symbolize is man in 'rebellion against God. The apostate prefers to crawl in the Satanic environment of the cursed **soil rather than** to stand up erect and walk in the Spiritual environment of the air. (Remember, in Hebrew "spirit" and "wind" are the same word.)