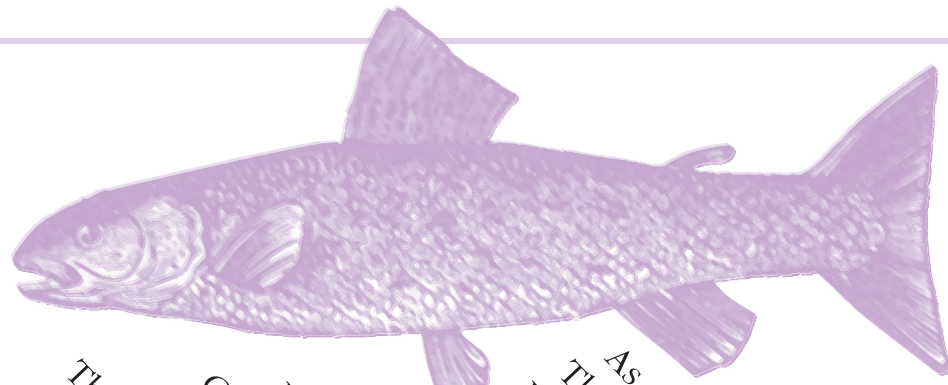


IN THIS ISSUE

In his introduction to the **Book of Kings**, Eugene Peterson points out the meaning of God's sovereignty. **Please**, author unknown, offers advice on what not to say to someone who has lost a loved one. We're up to R and S in Buechner's **ABCs of Living**; Righteousness, Sacrifice and Saint.



As good enough to keep.
That in his mercy I'll be judged
I'm peacefully asleep
When, in the Lord's safe landing pray
I'll then most humbly pray
I'll then come to my last cast
And when I come to my last cast
Until my dying day,
God grant that I may fish for trout
The Trout Fisherman's Prayer

MATTHEW 11:28-30

*Come to me, all you
that are weary and
are carrying heavy
burdens And I will
give you rest. Take
my yoke upon you,
and learn from me;
for I am gentle and
humble in heart, and
you will find rest for
your souls. For my
yoke is easy, and my
burden is light.*

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NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!



The Books of Kings provide a premier witness to the sovereignty of God carried out among some of the most unlikely and uncooperative people who have ever lived.

Sovereignty, God's sovereignty, is one of the most difficult things for people of faith to live out in everyday routines. But we have no choice: God is sovereign. God rules. Not only in our personal affairs, but also in the cosmos. Not only in our times and places of worship, but also in office buildings, political affairs, factories, universities, hospitals – yes, even behind the scenes in saloons and rock concerts.

It's a wild and extravagant notion, to be sure. But nothing in our Scriptures is attested to more frequently or emphatically.

Yet not much in our daily experience confirms it. Impersonal forces and arrogant egos compete for the last word in power. Most of us are knocked around much of the time by forces and wills that give no hint of God. Still, generation after generation, men and women of sound mind continue to give sober witness to God's sovereign rule. One of the enduring titles given to Jesus is "King."

So how do we manage to live believably and obediently in and under this revealed sovereignty, in a world

continued on page 3

Why not put church back in your life this weekend?

It's never too soon. On the other hand, it's never too late either.

We have a place where you can get started right away. A place where you can begin to seek and to find new meaning for your life. We are all seekers, yearning for that connection to God that makes our lives complete. And we help one another along the way, in a caring community of all ages.

It's always a special season to be drawn toward Christ, in church. Spring, summer, fall and winter - His love knows no season. We're there every Sunday morning to welcome Him - and to welcome you.

Come to our Sanctuary (Orange Street in Lancaster, between Lime and Duke Streets) for 8:30 (informal) or 11:00 (traditional) services. Or if you prefer contemporary worship, come to our 9:16 service on Cherry Street, on the west side of our church.

"You haven't got it right!" says the exasperated piano teacher. Junior is holding his hands the way he's been told. His fingering is unexceptionable. He has memorized the piece perfectly. He has hit all the proper notes with deadly accuracy. But his heart's not in it, only his fingers. What he's playing is a sort of music but nothing that will start voices singing or feet tapping. He has succeeded in boring everybody to death including himself. ■ Jesus said to his disciples, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:20.) The scribes and Pharisees were playing it by the Book. They didn't slip up on a single do or don't. But they were getting it all wrong. ■ Righteousness is getting it all right. If you play it the way it's supposed to be played, there shouldn't be a still foot in the house.

RIGHTEOUSNESS SACRIFICE SAINT

To sacrifice something is to make it holy by giving it away for love.

In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief. Those handkerchiefs are called saints.

Selections from
**WISHFUL
THINKING**
A THEOLOGICAL ABC
by Frederick Buechner

continued from page 1

that is mostly either ignorant or defiant of it? Worship shaped by an obedient reading of Scripture is basic. We submit to having our imaginations and behaviors conditioned by the reality of God, rather than by what is handed out in school curricula and media reporting. In the course of this worshipful listening, the Books of Kings turn out to provide essential data on what we can expect as we live under God's sovereign rule.

The story of our ancestors, the Hebrew kings, began in the Books of Samuel. This story makes it clear that it was not God's idea that the Hebrews have a king, but since they insisted, he let them have their way. But God never abdicated his sovereignty to any of the Hebrew kings; the idea was that they would represent his sovereignty, not that he would delegate his sovereignty to them.

But it never worked very well. After five hundred years and something over forty kings, there was not much to show for it. Even the bright spots - David, and Hezekiah and Josiah - were not very bright. Human beings, no matter how well intentioned or gifted, don't seem to be able to represent God's rule anywhere close to satisfactory. The Books of Kings, in that light, are a relentless exposition of failure - a relentless five-hundred-year documentation proving that the Hebrew demand of God to "have a king" was about the worst thing they could ask for.

But through the centuries, readers of this text have commonly realized something else. In the midst of the incredible mess these kings are making of God's purposes, God continues to work his purposes and uses them in the work - doesn't discard them, doesn't detour around them; he uses them. They are part of his sovereign rule, whether they want to be or not, whether they know it or not.

God's purposes are worked out in confrontation and revelation, in judgment and salvation, but they are worked out. God's rule is not imposed in the sense that he forces each man and woman into absolute conformity to justice and truth and righteousness. The rule is worked from within, much of the time invisible and unnoticed, but always patiently and resolutely there.

The benefit of reading these books is enormous. To begin with, our understanding and experience of God's sovereignty develops counter to all power-based and piety-based assumptions regarding God's effective rule. We quit spinning our wheels on utopian projects and dreams. Following that, we begin to realize that if God's sovereignty is never cancelled out by the so deeply sin-flawed leaders ("kings") in both our culture and our church, we can quite cheerfully exult in God's sovereignty as it is being exercised (though often silent and hidden) in all the circumstantial details of the actual present.

From: The Message Remix, The Bible in Contemporary Language, Eugene H. Peterson; NavPress Publishing Group. Copyright 1993 up to 2000.

please

don't ask me if I'm over it yet-I'll never be "over it."
don't tell me she's in a better place. She isn't there.
don't say,"at least she isn't suffering. I haven't come to terms with why she had to suffer at all.

don't tell me you know how I feel, unless you have lost a child.
don't tell me to get on with my life. I'm still here, you'll notice.
don't ask me if I feel better. Bereavement isn't a condition that "clears up."
don't tell me God never makes a mistake. You mean He did this on purpose.
don't tell me"at least you had her for 28 years." What year would you choose for your daughter to die"
don't tell me God never gives you more than you can bear - who decides how much another person can bear?

just say you are sorry.
just say you remember her if you do.
just let me talk if I want to.
let me cry when I must.



Do you sense that 2 years of presidential campaign has had a trickle-down effect?