



Sympathetic Resonance

Gospel Culture, #9

Romans 12:15-16

David Sunday

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Congratulations to all of you who got up after missing an hour of sleep and got to the early service this morning. *“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you”* (Isaiah 60:1). He will appear as the brightness of the dawning.

Here we are in Romans 12. We downshifted into first gear in our journey through this chapter. I looked on John MacArthur’s website yesterday, and I discovered that we’ve preached more sermons on this chapter than John MacArthur did—which I think is saying something! We wanted to slow down because this is such an important section on how we as a people live out the gospel in our community together and the world in which we live.

Let’s remember what this chapter is all about by reading Romans 12:1-2 again, where we started early in January. God’s Word says:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 1-11 is all about God’s merciful plan to save sinners through Jesus Christ. It’s about the gospel. But it’s not enough to just say we believe the gospel. It’s not enough to just get our doctrine straight. Romans 1-11 has a lot of rich doctrine that is so important. But most people in our community don’t really care what we say we believe. They do care, however, about how we live. Most people in our community don’t want to hear a long treatise on our doctrine, but they do notice when we live lives of radical love, kindness and mercy.

This chapter and the chapters that follow are all about God’s mercy. Do you see that in verse one? *“By the mercies of God.”* It’s all about how God’s mercy shapes the way we live. It’s about living Spirit-transformed lives through the beauty and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There’s a quaint poem by a man named Paul Gilbert that puts it like this:

You're writing a gospel
A chapter each day
By the deeds that you do
By the words that you say.
Men read what you write
Whether faithless or true
So what is the gospel
According to you?

What kind of testimony are you giving through the way you live your life? That's what the rest of Romans 12 is about. This week we're going to focus on verses 15 and 16. Just like Romans 12:9-13, this is about the type of community people should find when they come into a church. What does it look like when people on whom God has poured out His mercies come together in community? What kind of fragrance fills the air? You know how when you enter a house, you can tell what's being cooked there. Or there may be certain things you can tell about a house—whether it's old or new—by the fragrance that fills the air.

What fragrance fills the air here when people come in? How do we treat one another? What does it really mean for us to love one another with a sincere brotherly affection? What will we do to show that kind of love in the ups and downs of our life together in this fallen world? The Bible does not believe in churchless Christianity. When you are joined to Jesus, you get joined to His church. Jesus loves His church. His whole attitude toward His church is one of love. She is His bride and He cares about how we love one another within His church.

So let's listen to verses 15-16 and catch Jesus' vision for what this love should look like within the community of believers:

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*

This is God's Word. If I could summarize these two verses with one sentence, I'd say, "Live in sympathetic resonance with one another." What is sympathetic resonance? It's a harmonic phenomenon in which a passive string responds to the external vibrations to which it has some kind of harmonic likeness. So on a piano, for instance—if it's a well-tuned piano—when you strike and hold down a low C, then go to the upper end of the keyboard and play a C chord, you will hear on that low C string the echo of all the notes from that upper chord. That's sympathetic resonance.

Or suppose we have two perfectly tuned pianos in this room and we play a note on one piano. If you were listening carefully, you could hear sympathetic resonance coming from the second piano. When you touch a string, the other “feels” the vibration and echoes back. What touches one is felt by the other and is echoed back.

Jesus has sympathetic resonance with us, His people, in heaven. He is our great High Priest. He’s truly man and truly God. Did you know that? Jesus is still truly man in heaven. He is fully man—just as human as He was when He walked on earth. He is fully man and fully God. So when a member of Jesus’ church is hurting here below—when we’re feeling pain, when we’re struck with difficulty—there’s a sympathetic resonance in the heart of our Savior in heaven. He echoes back. He feels our pain. And when His church rejoices, Jesus Himself rejoices. He wants us to feel that same kind of sympathetic resonance with one another here below. I want to talk this morning about the beauty of that, as well as the barriers to that.

1. The beauty of being in sympathetic resonance with one another (Romans 12:15-16a).

There is beauty when we are in sympathetic resonance with each other.

Consider this picture of Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo. When they were both playing soccer for Manchester United, Rooney had been praised for how he put his own goal-scoring instincts aside in order to let Cristiano Ronaldo become the great soccer player that he is—in order to let Ronaldo shine.



In this great picture, Rooney is congratulating Ronaldo after a great goal. You can see the look in their eyes of rejoicing with one another in this great victory. It’s an inspiring snapshot of what it means to be part of a team. You rejoice when the other player gets the goal.

That’s the way it is in the church—or at least that’s the way it should be in the church. *“Rejoice with those who rejoice.”*

First, what that means is that through the new birth I have in Jesus Christ, I can enter into the joy of my brother or sister as if it is my own joy. Through the new birth, I can enter into the joy of my brother and sister as if it's my own joy. When you look at the two commands of verse 15—*“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep”*—you might wonder which of these is the harder of the two to put into practice.

As I think about it, I actually think it's the first that's the harder to put into practice—and so does Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He says, “It is simpler to be sympathetic toward those who are down than it is to rejoice with those who are up.” Why is that? Because we've got a problem in our hearts called pride. Envy and jealousy rise up. When a person is rejoicing, it's because he's had some success or good fortune. Something has uplifted him. He's happy. And when someone is uplifted above us, our natural temptation is to be jealous of that happiness.

When a person has failed, or they're down or suffering, they're unable to be in competition with us. So we can feel we're in a better position than that person—“I'm not weeping, they are, I'm up, they're down”—so then we can afford to weep with them. That's the natural way. But Paul is saying that's not the Christian way. He's not just telling us, “Don't show envy toward one another.” He's telling us, “Don't even feel envy or jealousy toward one another. Don't even let it enter your heart. Take positive pleasure in the rejoicing of your fellow Christian. Enter into his happiness. Delight in his success.”

Friends, to really put that into practice you must be born again. This requires a gospel to have this kind of new heart that can genuinely rejoice in your brother's victory or success. By nature, here's what we do: we tend to cultivate a detachment from one another. We are passive toward one another. We're not affected by one another's joys or sorrows. We just sort of stay aloof, because we are jealous. We might not articulate it or even realize it, but in our hearts there's resentment when someone else is doing better than we are. So we stay at a distance.

Or, if we have to, we put on an artificial smile. We look all happy. We mouth congratulations to them. “Oh yes, good job!” We smile at one another. We applaud one another. But all the while, we're scheming and plotting behind each other's back. Like a night at the Oscars, it's all fake. It can only become real through the work of the Holy Spirit. He fills you with sincere love, as He delivers you from this deadly bondage to self and gives you such an identification with your brothers and sisters in Christ that you genuinely feel joy whenever someone in the family is rejoicing. You feel joy the way Jesus rejoices with His church. Friends, this takes a miracle of grace to really put it into practice.

One pastor illustrated it like this. Imagine you're at a Cubs game with a friend. They're winning, run for run, against the Yankees. Every time the Cubs hit a home run, you and your

friend are jumping out of your seats. You're giving each other high-fives. You're cheering the team on. You're congratulating them. You're so excited at the victory of your team.

But then, during the seventh inning stretch, an announcement comes over the system. Someone in the stadium is going to win a new house, or a new car, or a great vacation. Then they announce the level and section where the winner is seated—and it's your section. You're getting all excited. Then they announce the row—and it's your row. And then they announce the seat. It's your friend's seat. He won! You didn't win. Can you rejoice with those who rejoice—seriously? Can you feel 100% happy for your friend, without a tinge of disappointment? Not a whiff of resentment? Not even just an uprising of, "Couldn't you share that with me? Really, do you deserve that new house? I deserve it more than you." Can you do that? Can you rejoice, 100% happy for your friend, without any anger? Without any disappointment?

Paul is saying that is a mark of a true Christian. That is a mark of someone who realizes, "God has lavished His mercy on me in Christ. I am infinitely rich in Jesus forever. I don't need to feel resentment when someone else in the body is celebrating the birth of a new child, when I would desperately love to be expecting a baby in my family. I don't need to get jealous when someone else has gotten a big promotion and a pay raise, when I just got cut. I don't need to feel envious when someone else is praised for her contributions to the ministry of the church, when I serve week after week and feel like it's been a long time since someone noticed me.

"I don't need to feel any kind of jealousy. I can actually rejoice with those who are rejoicing. Why? Because I have been lavished with mercy from God in Jesus Christ. I am rich with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I'm a child of the King. My sins are forgiven. My guilt is put away. My shame has been done away with and I am rich forever—so I can rejoice. I haven't lost anything. I have gained more than I ever could deserve, more than I ever earned. I never earned it—I never deserved it. Jesus has lavished His kindness on me."

So a person who is fixated on God's mercy—a person who's saying, "Lord, I want my life to be a living sacrifice. You don't owe me anything, Lord. I owe You everything"—that person is able to genuinely, wholeheartedly enter into the joys of the family. And whenever you can't, whenever you stand off, whenever you feel jealousy, whenever you're critical of the blessings that God is pouring on a brother or sister, what you are really saying in your heart—and maybe with your life—is, "God has really not been very merciful to me. I'm really not that grateful for how kind God is to me." If you are, then their joy is your joy.

The second thing we see of the beauty of living in sympathetic resonance is that through the new birth I have in Christ, I can share the sorrow of my brother or sister as if it is my own sorrow. “Weep with those who weep,” Paul says in verse 15. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “When you get an infection at the tip of your little finger, soon you’re going to get a headache, because the whole body sympathizes with the members.” If you get a toothache, your whole body aches. You feel it all over. Weep with those who weep. Don’t think, “I’m sure glad that wasn’t me who suffered like that.”

In his really helpful book, Being There: How to Love Those Who Are Hurting, Dave Furman gives a list he calls: “Whatever you do, don’t do these things” when your brother or sister is hurting.

- Don’t be the fix-it person. Don’t say, “I’ve been thinking about you. I’ve picked up this brand new organic, all-natural ointment that will surely heal your disability. My grandmother used it for her foot pain. It went away in a week. It should heal you too.”
- Don’t play the comparison game. “Oh, wow, you have arm pain? I had tennis elbow once. It was really rough. I couldn’t play any sports for a couple weeks. I know exactly what you’re going through.” No, you don’t. Unless you’re Jesus, you don’t know exactly what someone else is going through. It doesn’t help when you point out to a suffering person that someone else had it worse than they have it. That’s not weeping with those who weep.
- Don’t make their pain their identity. “Hi. Nice to see you. How’s your back? Is it feeling any better? Have you gotten any rest? Are you in a lot of pain right now? How is it compared to how you were last week? You really don’t look very good right now. Maybe you should sit down.” A suffering person doesn’t want to be defined by their pain. They’re more than their pain. If they’re in Christ, they’re a child of God. There are other things about their life that are vastly more important than what they’re going through at the moment. So don’t make their suffering their identity.
- Don’t promise deliverance now. “Oh, I just know you’re going to get healed. You love Jesus. You’re faithful to Him. He will definitely heal you. Just be patient, think positive, keep the faith and you’ll be healed in no time at all.” No. You don’t know the purposes of God, do you? Just remind them that God is present. Show them that through your presence. Remind them that He’s sovereign over us.
- Don’t encourage a grieving person to just move on. “Don’t be sad. You should be happy, because they’re better off in heaven with Jesus anyway. It’s a much better place to be. So it would be best for you to just move on with your life.” Any time you comfort someone and use the word “just,” you’re probably not being very comforting. “Just move on” is not a comforting statement. The pressure to “just get over it” can actually be intensifying pain. Allow for real grief. Allow for real sorrow.
- Don’t bring on the inquisition. “I’m sorry your husband is in the hospital because of that accident. Was he even wearing his seatbelt? Do you think he was texting

- someone on the phone while driving?” Ask questions that are going to open up someone’s heart to you, not enlarge their anger or pain.
- Don’t be hyper-spiritual. “Praise the Lord. Your baby has passed away. Her pain is now gone. She is with Jesus.” Friends, that’s a real story of a real pastor who went up to a real mother who had just lost her real baby and said those words. That is not comforting.

Do you remember Job? He had no idea why God was doing what God was doing in his life—and God never gave him an answer why. Job never knew what we know from Job 1 and 2 until he got to heaven. God simply gave Job a revelation of Himself—that was all the answer Job needed.

I remember when Kate’s cancer came back a year ago this month. The first few days were disorienting. It was hard to wrap our minds around what was going on and we needed to readjust to another episode of this. We received so many helpful notes and texts during those first few days. You as a church did a wonderful job of encouraging us. Our pastors each wrote helpful messages to us.

One of the pastors simply said this: “I hate this. I’m so sorry. I love you.” That was all I needed to hear that day. I knew that pastor could say a whole lot more about what we were going through. I knew what he believed about what we were going through. But on that day, just to hear him say, “I hate this. I’m so sorry. I love you,” deeply comforted my heart. So when a friend is suffering, don’t play the avoidance game. Exercise the ministry of just being there. Be there with your friend.

Joe Bailey, who lived in Wheaton back in the 20th century, lost three sons during the course of his life. He wrote a book called The View from a Hearse. He describes his grief like this:

I was sitting, torn by grief. Someone came and talked to me of God’s dealings, of why it happened, of hope beyond the grave. He talked constantly. He said things I knew were true. I was unmoved, except to wish he’d go away. He finally did.

Another came and sat beside me. He didn’t talk. He didn’t ask any leading questions. He just sat beside me for an hour or more, listened when I said something, answered briefly, prayed simply and left. I was moved. I was comforted. I hated to see him go.

Weep with those who weep, because we have a Savior like that. We have a Savior Who has sympathetic resonance with His weeping children. I love how C.S. Lewis captures it in The Magician’s Nephew. He talks about the young boy Digory, whose mother is sick. Digory longs to

go to Aslan, the lion, and ask for his help, but he's afraid. He's afraid of this great lion (who is the Christ figure in the book). Lewis writes about Digory finally approaching the lion Aslan and says:

Up 'til then, he had been looking at the lion's great front feet and the huge claws on them. Now, in his despair, Digory looked up at his face. What he saw surprised him as much as anything in his whole life, for the tawny face was bent down near his own, and wonder of wonders, great shining tears stood in the lion's eyes. They were such big, bright tears compared with Digory's own that for a moment he felt as if the lion must really be sorrier about his mother than he was himself.

"My son, my son," said Aslan. "I know, grief is great. Only you and I in this land know that yet. Let us be good to one another."

Friends, with every tear of sorrow we shed, Jesus can honestly say to us, "I know. I know. Your grief is great," because He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with suffering (Isaiah 53:3). No one has suffered like Jesus has. No one ever could. He stores our tears in His bottle; He knows our griefs and sorrows. He is for us and He is with us. "*Jesus wept*" (John 11:35). It's the shortest verse in the Bible and the older I get, the more meaningful it becomes. "*Jesus wept.*" He is no less human now than He was when He stood at Lazarus' graveside and wept there. He weeps with those who weep.

The beauty of the good news is that when we are all living in such a way that we're looking to Christ together, then we can live in beautiful harmony as His body. That's what verse 16 calls us to: "*Live in harmony with one another.*" Paul is actually using 'thinking' language here. The King James and New American Standard Bible capture this by translating it, "*Be of the same mind toward each other.*" He's not saying, "Think in uniformity." He's not saying, "Never have a different opinion from another brother or sister." But he is saying, "Have your mind so tuned toward the things of Christ and His gospel—have your mind so preoccupied with the goodness of His Word—that we are in agreement with one another on everything that matters most. And wherever we don't yet agree, we'll realize it's ultimately not that significant—because look at what we do agree on. We're all agreed about Jesus and His gospel, so we're living in harmony with one another."

A.W. Tozer said it like this:

Has it ever occurred to you that 100 pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned not to each other, but to another standard, to which each one must individually bow. So, 100 worshipers meet together, each one looking away to Christ, are, in heart, nearer to each other

than they could possibly be were they to become unity conscious
and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.

The way to be in harmony is not to be looking at one another all the time, trying to tune ourselves to each other, because that just makes us self-focused, human-focused. But if we're all looking to Jesus, tuning our hearts to Him and letting Him retune our dissonance, anger, resentment and sin—tuning it back to Him—then we're going to have a wonderful unity with each other, because we've all been looking to Jesus.

Who wouldn't want to be part of a church like this, a community of sympathetic resonance where no one is jealous of another, where no one is detached, distant or aloof? A place where, when you are grieving, you don't have to pretend everything is okay, because you feel real sympathy and care from your brothers and sisters. When you're rejoicing, you don't have to hide it and be afraid that someone else is going to be jealous of you or resent you.

When we're overwhelmed with God's mercy toward us in Christ, this is how the church looks. This is how we'll be in our love for one another when we're fixing our eyes on the great Conductor Who leads us to feel the music of His heart toward us.

I remember when I was in the Strolling Strings orchestra during high school. Our conductor, Mr. Nosal, had a huge, long red beard that came all the way down, a Polish man with a glimmer in his eyes, who put on a tux and played the violin like no one else. I remember as we would play our music, he would sometimes stop playing the violin and just listen to us play. Then he'd hit his chest, saying, "Heart! Heart! Heart! Just feel the heart of the composer! Let the music fill your heart, so that it comes out of your heart—then the beauty of it rises and fills the room."

That's what Jesus is saying to us in these verses. "Feel My heart toward you. Let My heart fill your heart." We should respond,

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

[May the Mind of Christ My Savior by Kate Wilkinson, 1913]

This is what His Spirit can do in us. Through the new birth, He can give us the heart of God for the people of God, so that we love one another the way Jesus does.

2. The barriers to being in sympathetic resonance with one another (Romans 12:16b).

What gets in the way of this? Our pride. Let's look briefly at the barriers to being in sympathetic resonance with each other. What could choke this off?

First, we must beware of pride in our attitude toward certain types of tasks and certain types of people. "Do not be haughty," Paul says in verse 16, "but associate with the lowly." Literally, it's saying, "Be carried away with the lowly." Be drawn toward lowly things and lowly people. Be affected, be moved, by lowly things. Let Jesus give you His love for tax collectors and sinners. Let Jesus fill your heart with His love for little children. Let Jesus make you the kind of person who has time to care about and talk to the Samaritan woman at the well. Let Him make you the kind of person who has tender-hearted sympathy for the woman caught in adultery.

Let your heart be carried away toward the lowly. There's no room for snobbery. There's no room for favoritism. There's no room for special treatment of those who are wealthy and influential and high in their standing. You should esteem just as highly the brother or sister in Christ who cleans the hotel room as you do the brother or sister in Christ who owns the hotel. There should be no snobbery, no favoritism. Often it's the case that the brother or sister who's cleaning the room has a much higher spiritual standing than the one who owns the hotel. They've walked with Jesus and know Him deeply. There's so much you can learn from them.

It's been a while since we've read the letter of James in our church. I think we need to read this letter often. Remember what he says in James 2?

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

Friends, no one is beneath you. No task is beneath you. Let's face it—sometimes we don't rejoice with those who rejoice or weep with those who are weeping because we are being arrogant. We're thinking it's beneath us. We criticize other people's joys in our arrogance: "They

don't deserve that." We look down on their sorrows too: "They had it coming. They're just being too emotional."

Paul is telling us, "Get off your high horse. Come down to earth. Look a little child in the eye and laugh at what he finds amusing. Sit with someone in the nursing home and attentively listen to what their week has been like. Write a note of congratulations to a brother or sister who has experienced some blessing. Serve in the nursery. Get on the clean-up crew. Don't be haughty, but associate—be carried away—with the lowly. Get low."

I love how John Bunyan put it: "He that is down need fear no fall." You're not going to get bruised down there in that lowly place.

Humble yourself. Hold every member of the body of Christ with the deepest respect, whether they're high in this world or low. See your brothers and sisters through the lens of the gospel. Ray Ortlund says, "When you come to church, think gospel thoughts toward everyone." See them through the lens of God's mercies. When you shake their hand, think, "This person I'm shaking hands with is in Christ. This person is a living miracle, a resident of eternity, a knight of the King." Wow. Honor each other. Beware of pride in the way you view other people and tasks.

Second, beware of pride in your view of yourself. The last phrase of verse 16 says, "*Never be wise in your own sight,*" or "*Be not wise in your conceits,*" in the King James Version. Or The Message puts it like this: "*Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.*" Don't think you know more than everyone else. First Corinthians 8:2 says anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. Don't be opinionated, hard-hearted, stiff-necked, stubborn. Get low in your estimation of your own thoughts, your own abilities, your own opinions.

This doesn't mean you're always putting yourself down or pretending that you don't have any gifts or talents or wisdom to offer. It simply means you realize that what you don't know is vastly greater than what you do know, so be humble in the way you view your own opinions. You don't use your opinions as a wedge to come between relationships.

I love this story from church history and I close with this. I think it's a great example of a man who refused to be wise in his own estimation.

In 1836, Judge William Gould led a movement at the First Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Georgia, to buy their first organ. [I'm not making any kind of case here for buying an organ at our church.] It was a break with tradition. They didn't have any instruments up to this point. In a congregational meeting, one member rose and demanded chapter and verse where

the Bible authorizes the worship of God with machinery. But the members voted for the organ, then Judge Gould was appointed to raise the money.

Soon after, the Judge ran into Robert Campbell, a man in the church who had opposed the organ. Mr. Campbell asked the judge why he had not asked him for a donation. Gould replied, "I knew you did not wish to have an organ. I wasn't going to ask you to donate for something you didn't want."

"That makes no difference," said Campbell. "When the majority of the members of the church have decided the matter, it is my duty to put aside personal feeling and assist as well as I may."

There's a man who's not wise in his own conceits, a man who does not think too highly of his opinions, who puts personal preferences aside, who lives in harmony. All of this takes humility—a humility that can only come from Christ Who has such a feeling for His body.

We're going to close with a prayer for humility. I first ran across this years ago from Trevin Wax on his great blog that has a whole lot of prayers on it that I love. Then just this week someone in the church sent it to me. I don't know if they thought I needed this particularly this week, but I thought, "This is perfect for how to respond to this message." I want you to know this is a demanding prayer and not easy to pray. I've only given you half the prayer—there's more. But if you really want the kind of heart that's able to do what Romans 12:15-16 is calling us to, you need humility from Jesus. Would you join me in saying this prayer before our Lord?

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, Hear me.
From the desire of being esteemed, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being loved, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being extolled, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being honored, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being praised, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being preferred to others, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being consulted, Deliver me, Jesus.
From the desire of being approved, Deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That in the opinion of the world, others may increase, and I may decrease,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be praised and I unnoticed,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
That others may be preferred to me in everything,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

Lord Jesus, You've heard our prayer. We're thanking You now that in every circumstance of our lives You are sovereign over us. We want to praise You for this and encourage one another with this truth. We thank You that You're not sovereign over us in a distant, detached, aloof way, but You are sovereign over us with sympathetic resonance for every member of Your flock. You are so high and exalted that You can see every pain; You feel every need. You rejoice with every joy; You weep with every sorrow. You are with us, Jesus, and You are ruling over us for our good and for Your glory. So we give You our praise. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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