"HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION"
Romans 1:20-22

FOCUS

On this Canadian long weekend I thought it would be good to remind us of what makes a Canadian a Canadian.

Only in Canada

- Only in Canada……..does everyone know what a touque and Zamboni are.
- Only in Canada.....does everyone know what TIMBITS and POUTINE are.
- Only in Canada..... have you switched from "heat" to "A/C" in the same day and then back again.
- Only in Canada.....you may have more miles on your snow blower than your car.
- Only in Canada…...do you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit.
- Only in Canada…... is driving better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow.
- Only in Canada ……. do we have these 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter … and road construction.
- Only in Canada.....do we use the word 'politics' to describe the process so well: 'Poli' in Latin meaning 'many' and 'tics' meaning those 'bloodsucking creatures'.

Only in Canada do we have a long weekend called the May 2-4 weekend and many of us think it is called the 2-4 weekend in celebration of the case of 24 beers. That is not the case. May 24 was Queen Victoria's actual birthday. She was born on May 24, 1819.

Victoria Day was made a holiday back in 1845 - before Canada was a country and was still part of Britain. Later on the day was moved to the Monday before May 24 to give Canadians a long weekend and time to enjoy that case of beer. Even though Canada is no longer part of Britain, we still celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday.

It was in October about 151 years ago that the fathers of the Confederation of Canada gathered in 1864 at the Quebec Conference to write the original constitution of Canada, the British North America Act. On one day of the conference Sir Leonard Tilly came down to the meeting from his morning devotions and said, *"Men, if we are forming a nation without God then we will fail."* He proposed a motion that would make the phrase of Psalm 72:8 the motto of Canada - *"He shall have dominion from sea to sea."* That motto is inscribed on the seal of Canada, our coat of arms, and on the stone arch leading into the parliament buildings.

This morning I want to speak about God's dominion, and God's dominion not just over Canada, but over everything that exists including you and I. The motto - *"He shall have dominion"* should be inscribed over our lives.

A key passage for our thoughts this morning is Romans 1:20-22:

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools"

Why is it true that our lives should have written across them - *"He shall have dominion"?*

1/ GOD IS CREATOR OF ALL

Last summer we rented a cottage outside of Bracebridge. On one clear night my granddaughter Kayden and I laid down on the dock and looked up at the stars. It was amazing. On that night we could see millions of stars. We could see the Milky Way. Gazing up into the night sky has always amazed and astounded people down through the ages.

I'm sure many of you have seen the trailer for the upcoming Star Wars 7 movie which will be released in December. We don't get to travel space like Luke Skywalker and Hans Solo. Maybe someday we will. We are though becoming increasingly aware of this vast and incredible universe in which we live. We have seen up close pictures of Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Huge telescopes reduce the size of the starry sky. We are getting a better handle on the universe and yet there is a sense in which the more we learn the more we realize we don't know. We may know a little bit more about our own galaxy - The Milky Way - but we have also discovered that there are many more galaxies with multitudes of flaming stars way beyond the galaxy of stars we see displayed in our night sky. It is amazing. It is beyond comprehension. Our proper response ought to be - *"HOW GREAT YOU ARE GOD TO HAVE CREATED ALL THIS!!" 'HOW GREAT THOU ART. HOW GREAT THOU ART".*

My youngest son works for Honda in Alliston. Hondas are called Japanese cars even though the Honda Civic you buy is made right here in Canada. Nevertheless we can still call it a Japanese car because it was designed in Japan. If you go up to the plant in Alliston you will see all kinds of parts that are made in different countries – Canada, U.S., Mexico, and Japan. You will see a variety of materials - steel, plastic, rubber, glass, silicon, aluminum and more. It is obvious that someone designed a Civic and thought about how to assemble it all so it looks nice and actually works. Civics don't just spring together by chance.

It's amazing that so many people who look into the far more complex universe around us suggest that it just happened. It is a big cosmic fluke.

The Word of God clearly tells us that the world did not make itself. It is the work of a creative and caring God.

The first verse of the Bible - Genesis 1:1 states - *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth".* In the pages following Genesis the Word of God affirms over and over again that God is the creator. Look also at our text - Romans 1:20:
"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and

divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

David in Psalm 8 stands before creation and becomes overwhelmed by the God behind it all. He then reflects on the smallness of humanity in light of the greatness of God, and also God's love and care. He says - *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ... O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"*

Well, since it is true that God is the creator what does that mean practically?

2/ THEREFORE, HE IS OWNER OF ALL

It follows that because God is the creator of all things, all things belong to Him. This includes me and you and all people, and all parts of His creation. God is the rightful owner of everything and everyone. A number of verses in Scripture emphasize this thought.

CF: *Psalm 24:1,2 / Psalm 50:10,12 / Haggai 2:8 / Job 41:11*

> *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,*
> *the world, and all who live in it;*
> *for he founded it on the seas*
> *and established it on the waters.*
>
> *for every animal of the forest is mine,*
> *and the cattle on a thousand hills.*
>
> *If I were hungry I would not tell you,*
> *for the world is mine, and all that is in it.*
>
> *'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty*
>
> *Who has a claim against me that I must pay?*
> *Everything under heaven belongs to me.*

When we recognize that God is the creator and owner of all it will affect how we look and what we do with what God has given us – our money, time, talents, and spiritual gifts. They all belong to God. He has entrusted them to us to use for His glory. We will do that if we recognize that He is Lord – that He has dominion.

Don't be like those Paul referred to in Romans 1:21 - *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him"*

Augustine said – "*Jesus Christ is not valued at all until He is valued above all."*

When we recognize God owns my life - I will be a faithful disciple or follower of Him. If I recognize that God owns everyone else I will also be faithful in relationships and how I treat others. It is key that we understand that God is creator of all and that He is therefore owner of all.

I own my van. It's not much of a van – it is 15 years old – but still going strong. Because I own it - I can wash it and wax it - I never do, but I could if I wanted to. I could also take a screwdriver and scratch my initials into the paint if I wanted to.

I own my house - well sort of - but the bank lets me think I do. I can do what I want with my house. I can sell it, rent it out, live in it or don't live in it, renovate it - if the bank gives me some more money. I own it. I have a right to my car and my house.

Similarly God has a right to His creation. He created it for Himself. He is the owner. Sometimes people think that if we give God a little time or money or worship, or even obedience we are doing Him a favour. That's not what Scripture teaches. The reality is that we have no rights before God. He alone is creator of all. He alone is owner of all.

It follows thirdly -

3/ AND, I AM ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM FOR ALL

A young sentry was on guard duty for the 1st time, and he had orders not to admit any car unless it had a special identification seal on its bumper. About the middle of the night, an unmarked car approached his guard shack and the sentry stopped it. Inside, was a general and his driver.

When the Sentry advised them that he could not admit any car that didn't have the special seal on it, the General became impatient and somewhat angry. Ignoring the sentry, the officer leaned forward and told his driver: *"Don't worry about it, just drive right on through."*

When the sentry heard this he looked into the back seat and politely said, *"I'm sorry sir, but I'm new at this. Could you please tell me who I should shoot first - you or the driver?"*

As followers of Jesus, we take our orders from Him and Him alone. As Lord of all He has the authority to tell us what is right and what is wrong. He has the authority to tell us what to do. Our responsibility is to obey.

When Daniel Webster was asked what he considered to be the most searching thought that had ever entered his mind, he replied without hesitation, *"My personal accountability to God."*

We were created by God and for God. We are therefore dependent upon Him and accountable to Him for who we are, all we have, and all that we do. This too is affirmed in Scripture time and time again. Let's look at a couple verses.

> ***CF*** *- Psalm 100:3 / Acts 17:25*
>
> *Know that the LORD is God.*
> *It is he who made us, and we are his*
> *we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*
>
> *And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.*

Romans 1 teaches us that it is possible to acknowledge that God is the creator and even recognize Him as owner, but not submit to Him in worship and obedience. Sin causes us to rebel against God, to turn away from the one who has the rightful place in

our lives. This is what Paul spells out in Romans 1:21. - *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

Paul plainly tells us in the previous verse that we are without excuse: *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."* v20.

The fact that God is creator and therefore owner is evident all around us. We can see His handiwork. We ought to know that we are accountable to Him as a result. Instead we prefer to glorify ourselves rather than God, or replace God with other images, idols, or ideas - ones that make us less accountable to God the creator and owner.

What does God the creator and owner think of this? Paul tells us in v18. *"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,*

What a graphic portrayal of the society we live in! But this is not the way God wanted things. It was not His intent when He created the world. God created the world and its inhabitants to glorify Him through worship, stewardship, discipleship, fellowship, apostleship, and with all that we are, all that we have, and all that we do. Mankind instead, Paul tells us, has so often chosen to act independently of God. To presume that He is not creator and not owner, and we are not accountable to Him or anyone else. This is what has gotten us into so much trouble as individuals, families, and nations. People have gone against God and His God-given dominion. He would be right to pour out His wrath. But God is a wonderful God. He is full of grace and mercy. He redeems us. He restores us to a right relationship with Him if we come to Him in repentance and faith. Look at how Paul put it in 3:21-26:
"But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ***22*** *This righteousness is given through faith in*[a] *Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,* ***23*** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ***24*** *and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* ***25*** *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,*[b] *through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—* ***26*** *he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."*

Jesus paid the price to redeem us or buy us back from the penalty of our sins. The ransom price He paid was His own life on the cross. His shed blood made it possible for you and I who have rebelled against the God of this universe to be restored again in relationship with Him both now and for eternity.

If you have never taken this step of faith in believing in and receiving Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Saviour do it today. He is Lord. He is creator. He is owner. You owe it to Him. This is what He created you for. This is what He died for you for.

When you and I know the reality of our sins forgiven and a new relationship with the God of the universe through faith in Jesus Christ then God has a double claim on our lives. Each of us belong to God because He is the creator and owner, and more than that we owe Him our lives because He has redeemed us through Jesus. Paul proclaims in 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 - *"You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*

We could add to this - therefore honor God with your conduct, with your worship, with your money, with your time, with your obedience, with your discipleship, in your relationships and with your whole being. Adopt as the motto of your life; inscribe it mentally over the arch of your soul; write it into the constitution of your spirit - ***"HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION".***