

Offering Words: Rule (Genesis 1.26-28)

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Dominant Thought: God desires His children to rule.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to understand the command to rule starts in Genesis and goes through Revelation.

I want my listeners to embrace our responsibility to rule God's world as He wants.

I want my listeners to choose an area of your life you want to rule.

Today, we begin a new series called Offering Words. We are looking at some of the giving vocabulary of the Bible. To help us live generous lives as Christ is generous, we recommend the RightNow Media study called "The Generosity Practice" by John Mark Comer. If you don't have a RightNow Media account, we have a subscription to give you free of charge. Simply text "RNM" to our text number: 833-612-9972.

If you are visiting for the first time today, I want to thank you for coming. We are not one of those churches that is out for your money. We are a church that wants to be true to the heart of Jesus and His Word. Scripture teaches about money and possessions. So, if we are committed to the whole counsel of God, then we will address God's teaching on money, possessions, and wealth.

I've chosen to center this series around four words. At first glance, you may think, these four words? I've gone back and forth over my list for most of this year. So, today, here's my list: rule, tithe, first fruits, and bless. If you're keeping track, it's actually five words, but I'm treating first fruits as one word. Today, we will look at rule from [Genesis 1](#). God has given us this beautiful world, and we have a mandated responsibility to rule and care for the gifts He has given to us. The middle two Sundays we will talk about types of gifts. The tithe is 10%. We will discuss what that looks like in Genesis and for us today. The third week, we will look at first fruits. It was the first and best part of the harvest given back to God. It always has some

powerful connections to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. That will be fun. Lord willing, we will conclude this series with Michael DeFazio, Academic Dean at Lincoln Seminary. He will teach about bless. God has blessed us and we are called to bless others.

I hope you will join us for the next few weeks as we seek to improve our offering vocabulary to experience the heart of our giving and generous God.

I invite you to turn your Bibles to [Genesis 1](#). On the opening pages of the best-selling book of all time, we have a cosmic portrait of a generous God.

[Genesis 1:1](#), “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” He is a creative and giving God. In [Genesis 1](#), we see God bringing the universe into existence and shaping it with order and design. He creates light and separates it from darkness. He forms the heavens and dry ground and seas. He fills what He has formed. He creates sun, moon, and stars. Birds that fly across the sky like the brown creeper we heard in Maine. Animals that move along the ground like the porcupine we saw crossing the road.

Then, we come to the culmination of God’s creation in [Genesis 1.26-31](#).

In these verses, we see God creating mankind in His own image. He speaks, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...” Notice “our image” and “our likeness.” I believe God is speaking of the image and likeness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Then, God says, “so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” ([Genesis 1.26](#)). We will come back to the word rule in a moment but notice God’s first intent for His image bearers is to rule over creation.

God speaks and then He creates mankind in His image, “male and female he created them” ([Genesis 1.27](#)). God creates humanity as male and female.

Next, God blessed them. Even from creation God blesses His people. I’m excited that we will close the series with this word bless. It is one of our discipleship markers here at Berlin Christian Church, “Blessing the World.”

God blesses humans and gives them a command, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground” ([Genesis 1.28](#)). God loves humans and wants more humans. He wants more image bearers. And He wants His people to subdue and rule over creation. We will come back to the command of rule in a moment.

As we continue reading, we encounter more examples of our generous God. “Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.’” ([Genesis 1.29](#)). Anyone excited for pumpkin pie or pumpkin spice flavored drinks or donuts? Seed bearing plants. Many of our foods are seed bearing plants and trees.

We thank God for His generous gifts of food.

In [Genesis 1.30](#), we read, “I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so.” From these opening pages we see a creating generous God.

[Genesis 1](#) concludes, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning—the sixth day.”

God looked over His creation and called it very good. Once He created humans, He called it very good.

God desires His children to rule. As we look at [Genesis 1.26-28](#), twice God calls His people to rule. In other translations, they use words like: have dominion, reign, rule, and be responsible.

I chose to start our series on these offering words with this word for rule. Our elders and deacons were meeting a few months ago. During our meetings, we were studying a book called *Reflect His Character* by Jim Estep, David Roadcup, and Gary Johnson. In the final chapter, they teach about stewardship and generosity. We talked about how God is the owner of everything since He is the creator. [Psalm 24:1](#), “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” Then, one of our leaders made the connection between God creating the world and God’s command for His people to care for the world from [Genesis 1](#). Then, I had a light bulb moment. Yes, exactly. God owns all. He has given us a beautiful world with instructions to steward this world well. We have a responsibility to the owner, God.

In [Genesis 1](#), we have unique truth describing God's relationship with humanity. In the ancient world, when Moses wrote down these words in Genesis, the world would have listened to other myths of the world's beginnings. These stories would involve chaos and conflict with the gods. These gods would have created humans, but not with dignity or in their image. In the other creation myths, humans would have been like slaves or servants to the gods.

In Genesis, God reveals something different about His relationship with humanity. He creates humans in His image and shares His authority with them.

In some ways, to rule and subdue the earth is to live our daily lives in a way that honors our loving and faithful Creator. He wants a world of families—be fruitful and multiply. He wants a world of order—rule and subdue. Pull the weeds, plant gardens, bear fruit, bless people. And it was very good.

Let's be honest. We don't always rule well. Like Adam and Eve, we reject the good gifts of God and define good and evil on our own terms. We turn the good gifts from God into deadly weapons. Death, disorder, and chaos result when we lose sight of our God-given mandate to rule and subdue the earth as God intends.

After generations of poor human leaders, God sent the perfect human, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul describes Jesus this way in [Colossians 1:15](#), "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Jesus was the perfect image of God for the world.

Near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, His best friends, the disciples were arguing about who was considered the greatest. Jesus confronted them with these words from [Luke 22:25-27](#).

Luke 22:25–27 NIV

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

The way to truly rule is to serve, caring for one another. Not in a forced enslavement, but out of a response to a generous God who gives us everything we need.

Our action step this week is ***Choose an area of your life to rule.*** Remember we don't rule by our own power. God rules us through His goodness, Christ's sacrifice, and the Spirit's presence. It is through His power we are able to subdue the world. What is something in your life that you want to tame? To allow Christ's rule to govern?

- Is there an enemy you need to love or forgive?
- Is there a mess you need to clean up—in your house, garage, yard, or soul?
- Do you need to reign in your spending so you can support God's kingdom work?
- Do you need to step up in your family, school, or workplace as a witness for Jesus?
- Do you want to be fruitful and multiply by investing in a relationship with someone to help them follow Jesus? In other words, do you want to take serious God's command to make more and better followers of Jesus?

The Bible closes with a picture of a new heaven and a new earth. It looks a lot like that garden of Eden. The curse is gone. The river of life is there. The tree of life is there bearing fruit every month. The leaves of that tree heal the nations.

Then we read [Revelation 22:5](#), "And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

My friends, since we will reign with God forever and ever, we probably should start now.