1. **Grace & Election : God’s Salvation & Divine Sovereignty**

**{Romans 9:14-29}**

**Introduction:** Last week we began a new section, chapters 9-11. It focuses on a Christian understanding of salvation history with God as the Sovereign Lord. OT references reveal Paul’s deep reverence for God’s word. Jewish national leadership viewed Paul as a traitor and Paul’s letters would seem hostile to the Jews. Also rumors floated that Paul spoke against Moses (even among Christians). Here Paul discloses his strong loving heart for the lost nation of Israel. He gives clear evidence of his faithfulness to Christ, the Holy Spirit and God’s sovereign fulfillment of Old Testament promise.

1. **Objection # 1 :** It is unjust for God to elect people to salvation according to His purpose.

***14.*** *What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part?*

**1st Response:**  *“By no means!”* Paul refers back to God’s choice / election of Moses and Israel. (vs. 15-16)

Israel was chosen by God out of all the nations, to be His unique people and receive the promise land.

Moses was chosen by God to lead Israel out of slavery in fulfillment of that promise.

1. The Sovereign God giving a portion of humanity His mercy harkens back to God’s revelation to Moses just prior to receiving the second set of tablets for the 10 commandments (Ex.33:19).

**18** *Then Moses said, "****Now show me your glory****."* **19**  *And the LORD said, "I will cause* ***all my goodness*** *to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence.* ***I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion***. (Ex. 33:18-19)

***15.*** *For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have*

*compassion.”* ***16.*** *So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.*

God agreed to show Moses His goodness yet preserve his life. This happened after the golden calf had been

destroyed, 3000 Israelites had been killed by Levite zeal, and a plague attack because of Israel’s sin.

Glory’s meaning here is two-fold: (1) It is first and foremost the manifestation of God’s splendor and greatness

 (2) But it is also revealed in the eternal destiny of God’s elect

***23.*** *In order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory*

**b.** Paul builds upon the previous argument in Romans 9:6-13 that God chose Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

(children of the promise) in contrast to Ishmael and Esau (children of the flesh).

**2nd Response:** God revealed that Pharaoh together with Egypt were sentenced to death – reprobate (vs. 17-18)

***17.*** *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in*

*you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.* ***18.*** *So then he has mercy on whomever he*

*wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.*

God’s purpose includes both those chosen for salvation as well as those prepared for destruction.

As God is Sovereign, His compassion and mercy are given according to His own discretion and pleasure.

***22.*** *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience*

*vessels of wrath prepared for destruction*,

**3rd Response:** We learn from the O.T. illustration of the potter and his clay. As the potter makes vessels for different purposes, so God make humans for different kinds of purpose. Moses and Israel are in contrast to Pharaoh and Egypt who become the prime example of those who receive shear justice alone. (v.17) Through both groups God demonstrated His power (as the Almighty, the Omnipotent Sovereign), and caused His name to be proclaimed in all the earth (as Just, Holy and yet the Merciful Savior of His people).

***20.*** *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder “Why have you made me like this?”* ***21.*** *Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?*

**Remember:** *“God’s promise and sovereign purpose have not failed”* (v. 6)

Paul teaches that it does not depend on human will (v.16), but it does depend on God’s will (v.18),

 and upon God’s mercy/compassion (v.15).

**Definition**:

**“Mercy”** is God not giving us what we do deserve, and instead being gracious to us

**“Grace”** is God giving us what we do not deserve, when in reality we deserved His judgment, shear justice.

These two work to complement one another according to the compassionate will of God.

**B. Objection # 2 :** If this teaching is true, then it destroys human responsibility.

***19.*** *You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”*

 Can we claim to know better than God? --- Ah, so foolish! --- so arrogant! --- so defiant!

1. From a human standpoint God’s election seems arbitrary and unfair.

 But from the divine point of view, do we have a right to challenge or counter God’s will? (vs. 20-21)

***20.*** *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”*

The answer is found in the relationship of the Creator to His creation. It has its locus in the very nature

and character of God Himself.

1. **Divine Mercy** expresses the goodness of God and brings illumination to human life, by giving a portion of humanity a new nature, the new heart.
2. **Divine Justice** expresses the righteous judgment of God, leaving human nature in its blindness and allowing a portion of humanity to freely choose to disobey with all the consequences that entails.

**“God’s wrath** is not vindictive, not unholy, nor filled with bitterness or malice. That kind of hatred is condemned in His

holy word. There is a holy jealousy that upholds God’s honor. Holy hatred belongs to a reality utterly different from ours.” (Unknown Source)

**C. Further Old Testament** **Evidence:** Support from Hosea and from Isaiah (25-29**)**

Both of the objections that Paul seeks to undermine are exposed because they are disrespectful, ignorant and arrogant. Paul finally turns to three O.T. texts to set the boundaries of God’s salvific work.

1. Paul uses Hosea to set the stage for the clear demonstration of God’s gracious mercy. This reveals Salvation to be a total work of God’s Spirit alone as Hosea was called to take a faithless wife and then later to bring her back into a restored relationship.

***25.*** *…… “Those who were not my people I will call my people, and her who was not beloved I will call beloved.”*

***26.*** *And in the very place where it was said to them, you are not my people, there they will be called sons*

*of the living God.’*

 Hosea was told to name his first son Jezreel a name that indicated a coming judgment upon Israel.

Hosea’s 2nd child, a daughter, was to be named Lo-Ruhamah “no longer loved” or “no mercy” and Hosea’s 3rd child, a son, was to be named Lo-Ammi “not my people”

Then, God turned the tables, loving the unloved and showing mercy to those without mercy.

1. The second passage from Isaiah reveals that election is not based upon outward calling, but that there has always been a remnant that God kept faithful to Himself, while the rest were reserved for judgment.

 ***27.*** *……. “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,*

***28.*** *for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.”* ***29.*** *And as* ***Isaiah*** *predicted,*

 *“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.”*

**Rom 11:5-8**

**5** *So too, at the present time there is* ***a remnant chosen by grace****.*

**6** *And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.*

**7** *What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but* ***the elect did****. The* ***others were hardened****,*

**8** *as it is written: "****God gave them a spirit of stupor****, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day*."

The question here is not “Why are only some saved?” The question really should be **“Why are any saved?”**

Without the electing power of God at work, none could or would be saved from God’s judgment.

**Remember:**

 The Elect don’t get what is deserved – God’s judgment

 The Elect do receive what is not deserved – God’s mercy & grace

 As to election, it is God’s free choice that grants us saving grace, according to His good and secret purpose.

Regeneration precedes faith as the Holy Spirit does the work of salvation in a human life. Without the regenerate heart, we remain objects of wrath, unpardoned and fit for God’s just punishment.

And as mentioned above, God does all this ……

***23.*** *in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory –* ***24.*** *even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles…*

 Both the vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy will bring glory to God, a glory that manifests His ultimate

splendor for all ages, working out “***everything in conformity with the purpose of his will***…..”.

**Eph 1:4-5,11**

**4** *For he chose us in him* ***before the creation of the world*** *to be holy and blameless in his sight.* ***In love***

**5*****he predestined us*** *to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--*

**11*****In him we were also chosen****, having been predestined according to the plan of* ***him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will***,

**In summary**: We must appreciate the great heritage that we have been given: we have been adopted as God’s children. Natural descent does not secure a place in the Kingdom of God. We are to be assured that God’s promise and sovereign purpose never fails. If we belong to Christ then we are children of the promise, true children of God. We are not to doubt the goodness of God in His mercy, nor the perfect justice of God in His holy wrath. For God’s election is not determined by the will of man, but by the eternal decree and divine counsel of God Himself.

**Discussion Questions:**

**1.** Do we know who we are in Christ, understanding our privileged relationship with the Sovereign God?

**2.** Do we carry in our hearts an attitude of eternal gratefulness in His presence for divine mercy and justice?

**3.** Are we truly concerned that any and all who we meet might know Him too?