

# SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

## *In The Grip of God's Grace*

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

### **Romans 9:14-33 - "Election, Israel's Past (Pt. 2)"**

Romans 8:9-33, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."*

Romans 9-to 11 form Paul's vindication of God's Sovereign elective purposes in salvation.

In Chapter 9, Paul is answering anticipated questions an objector might have about God.

Why?

Paul asked four questions, then answered them vindicating God's character and actions:

1. God's Faithfulness (vs. 1-6) – first questions (vs. 6)

Verse 6 – has God's promise failed?

2. God's Righteousness (vs. 14-18) – second question (vs. 14)
3. God's Justice (vs. 19-29) – third question (vs. 19)
4. God's Grace (vs. 30-33) – fourth question (vs. 30)

Today, we look at questions 2, 3 & 4.

#### I. Question 2 – Is God Unjust or Unrighteous? (vs. 14-18)

Romans 9:14-18, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."*

God's promise has not failed (vs. 6). But is not God's purpose, according to election, unjust?

For God to choose some and pass by others doesn't seem right.

Paul's answer is in verse 14, *"...God forbid."* Or, not at all!

J.B. Phillips – "do we conclude that God is monstrously unfair?"

Paul say's 'no way, it's impossible!

J. Vernon McGee – "If you do not like what God does, perhaps you should move out of His universe and start one of your own, so you can make your own rules."

Notice that all of Paul's life questions are answered in the scriptures (vs. 17).

1<sup>st</sup> Answer – vs. 15-16 - What God said to Moses (Exodus 33:19)

Exodus 33:19, *"And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."*

God deals savingly with sinners not on the basis of justice, but mercy.

(vs. 16) *"..willeth,..."* – man's desire; *"...runneth,"* – man's effort

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Answer - vs. 17 – What God said to Pharaoh (Exodus 9:16)

Exodus 9:16, *“And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”*

Footnote – God spoke to Pharaoh yet to Paul, what scripture says, God says! (vs. 17)

Who hardened Pharaoh's heart?

John R.W. Stott – God's hardening of Pharaoh was a judicial act, abandoning him to his own stubbornness.”

Illustration: The same sun that melts wax hardens clay.

Paul sees God's word to both Moses, and Pharaoh, as complementary and sums them up in verse 19 – *“Therefore...”*

God is not unjust – all have sinned, no one deserves to be saved, and it's a wonder and a mystery of God's mercy, that some are saved.

If you are lost God is not to blame.

If you are saved it's God's great mercy.

God is NOT unrighteous!

## II. Question 3 – Why does God still Blame us? (vs. 19-29)

Romans 9:19-29, *“Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.”*

If salvation is due entirely to God, is it fair of God to hold us accountable, when He makes all the decisions, who can resist Him?

Paul gives three answers to this charge:

1. Who are we to argue with God? (vs. 20-21)

Paul answers the question with two more questions.

Footnote: Don't press the clay – for human beings are not merely lumps of inert clay. To liken humans to pottery is to emphasize the disparity between us and God.

The Bible also teaches that we were created in the image and likeness of God.

So, we are rational, responsible, moral and spiritual beings.

God does not create sinful beings in order to punish them. But He does have the right to deal with sinful beings according to His good pleasure, either to pardon or punish them.

2. God has His purposes (vs. 22-23)

a. (vs. 22) God bears with great patience the objects of His wrath.

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

God keeps the door open

b. (vs. 23) Notice the contrast in verse 23 – the vessels of mercy

*"...which he had afore prepared unto glory..."*

But in verse 22 – the vessels of wrath

*"...wrath fitted to destruction..."*

3. God foretold these things in scripture (vs. 34-39)

God's way of dealing with Jews and Gentiles was another illustration of His purpose in election clearly foretold in Old Testament scripture.

God's purpose for both Jew and Gentile is salvation by grace – the only way to be saved!

### III. Question 4; What then shall we say? (vs. 30-33)

*Romans 9:30-33, "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."*

In verse 30, Paul asks: in light of all these arguments in defense of God, and in light of the small remnant in Israel, who believe, and the majority who don't believe.

What conclusion should we draw?

1. He begins with a description of the topsy-turvy situation (vs. 30-31)

Notice that not only did the Gentiles not follow after righteousness, they followed after sin and unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-32)

2. He gives an explanation (vs. 32)

Why has this happened?

"they" are responsible

Paul's testimony (Phil 3:4-9)

*Philippians 3:4-9, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in*

*him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*

Application: Like the Jews of Paul's day, people today still stumble over the cross.

Why?

The cross undermines our self-righteousness!

The cross is proof that we can't save ourselves.

Humble yourself and be saved – pride or stumble

### 3. He ends with a Biblical confirmation (vs. 33)

*Isaiah 8:14, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."*

*Isaiah 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."*

The rock or stone is Jesus Christ

Two options:

1. Believe on Him (stand on Him)
2. Stumble over Him

Romans 9:6-29 – Paul explains why anybody is saved; it is the Sovereign election of God.

Romans 9:30-33 – Paul shows us why anybody is lost, and the explanation of that is their own responsibility.

John R. W. Stott, *ROMANS: God's Good News for the World*, IVP; pg.278

Few preachers can have maintained this balance better than Charles Simeon of Cambridge in the first half of the nineteenth century. He lived and ministered at a time when the Arminian-Calvinist controversy was bitter, and he warned his congregation of the danger of forsaking Scripture in favour of a theological system. 'When I come to a text which speaks of election', he said to J.J. Guernsey in 1831, 'I delight myself in the doctrine of election. When the apostles exhort me to repentance and obedience, and indicate my freedom of choice and action, I give myself up to that side of the question.' In defence of his commitment to both extremes, Simeon would sometimes borrow an illustration from the Industrial Revolution: 'As wheels in a complicated machine may move in opposite directions and yet subserve a common end, so may truths apparently opposite

be perfectly reconcilable with each other, and equally subserve the purposes of God in the accomplishment of man's salvation.