

God's Mercy

Romans 9: 1-5; 14-16: 31

"¹ With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. ² My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief ³ for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ! if that would save them. ⁴ They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. ⁵ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

Paul discusses the question of **"if the Lord has failed the Jews,"** and His answer was, "No, He hasn't" The Jews rejected Him. Paul says, just because you belong to the group of children, does not make you a child of the parent. In this case, belonging to the Jews doesn't make you a child of God.

The question came about concerning who God loves and doesn't love. So, let's skip to those verses 14-16: **"¹⁴ Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! ¹⁵ For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose." ¹⁶ So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it, nor work for it."**

Mercy - what a wonderful gift God created for mankind. In this passage, found in chapter 9 of Romans, Paul speaks of the wonder and power of God, to do as He determines should be done. Thus, as God acts, He does not need man's approval, or, man's permission, to do what he deems is right. God acts, and does so, for the betterment of all those whom He has created.

Paul makes the statement then, **"Is God unjust?"** Answering himself, he says, **"Not at all!"** (v.14) It is God's sovereign choice to do what He pleases, and what is the best for all involved. What does it mean when we say that it is His **"sovereign"** will? Sovereign speaks of **"One who has supreme authority, within a certain sphere."** God is sovereign in this universe, and all that is contained within it. He is the Creator, and as such, He has complete authority and control.

There are a multitude of facts Paul has written in this chapter. He speaks of issues such as, **"Who are God's descendants?"** He made it very clear when he said, **"Just because they are descendant of Israel, doesn't mean they are all Abrahams children."** Or, for those of us who are worshiping Him today, **"Just because people attend the church, it doesn't mean they are all Christians."**

Paul continues to say, **"It's not the natural children who are God's children, it is those who are of His promise. Those who respond to His call, and live by His Word, with the Spirit of God leading in their lives."** In fact, Paul states that even before Jacob and Esau were born, God knew and told them who was going to serve whom.

This leads the conversation to the question, ***“What then shall we say, Is God unjust?”*** Paul’s answer to these people is of the utmost importance. Not only for them, but for us as well.

Illustration:

Snoopy was listening one day to Lucy, who has no sympathy for those who think everybody else is trying to put them down. Lucy says: “Sooner or later, Charlie Brown, there’s one thing you are going to have to learn. You reap what you sow! You get out of life exactly what you put into it. No more, no less.”

Snoopy pauses for a moment. Then the thought crosses his mind: “I’d like to see a little more margin for error.” The truth is, there is no margin for error, other than the love of God, filled with His mercy for mankind.

First) Is God unjust?

Paul answers that question by saying: ***“Not at all! For he said to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’”*** (v.15)

Jesus said, ***“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*** MAT 9:13 What is this mercy Paul speaks of which comes to everyone through God, which Jesus says each of us are to pursue? It is ***“The MERCY of God.”*** The mercy of God is something He dispenses, when He chooses, to whom He chooses and without explanation to anyone, least of all, His creation. It is His prerogative to give it out as He sees fit, and to withhold it, as He sees fit. His absolute sovereign will, to be administer to His creation, as He deems right and necessary.

This is one reason why I keep saying that ***“control”*** by any of us, is an illusion. There is only one being in control, ***God!*** There is only one who is sovereign, ***God!*** Is He unjust? Does He dispense mercy and compassion? ***YES!*** The argument Paul makes in this passage deals with the Gentiles coming to Christ, while so many Jews are still wonder lost in the world. That didn’t set well with many of them.

Was this because the Gentiles deserved this grace? NO (*God chose to give it*)

Was it because the Jews did not deserve the grace of God? NO (*They rejected Him*)

Was it that God loved them more than the Jews? NO (*He loves all of us – equally*)

It was because of His mercy and His Grace, that God reached out to the Gentiles, that includes us, and offered hope to all who would receive Him. The same hope He tried to give to the Jews, but they rejected Him.

Some people who know Jesus intimately, have been asking, ***“When will Jesus return and take us home? Why is He so slow?”*** He is not slow in His returning to claim His children, He is demonstrating mercy upon mankind. In His mercy, He wants as many people as possible, to accept Him, follow Him and love Him. ***Praise God for His slowness,*** for His mercy, so that our loved ones might find the Lord before it is too late. ***Is God unjust? NOT at all... He is filled with love and MERCY for us, mankind.***

Second) So, on whom does this all depend upon?

“It does not, therefore, depend upon man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.” (V. 16)

I can hear the words of many saying things like, **“Uncle Jim, Aunt Clara, Brother Billy, stop playing Russian roulette with your souls.”** God is merciful, and His love endures forever, however, there will come a day when time will run out. When that day comes, we dare not blame God for our stubbornness, our hard heartedness, or for rejecting Him. For He stands at the door knocking, we have to open the door, and let Him in!

We dare not look to God and wonder why the one next to us is the way he or she is, for the Word of God says, **“Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?”** (v. 21) Focus on Jesus, for God’s mercy has been offered to everyone, no matter who we are, how we are living, or what we may have done. Yes, that means even you and me!

Paul tells us that God reveals to His children what He deems they need to understand, for His glory, with patience and love, knowing that some may be slow in answering. Paul is telling us, we need Him, and it is up to each of us to ask Him in our lives as Savior. ***That the Mercy we need, and struggle seeing, is right here, right now!*** Now, when we accept His Mercy, we need to understand that life may not always turn out as we think it should. We may find ourselves deluged with all kinds of circumstances, situation and trials, so, no matter what, trust in God. Be assured, He knows what He is doing and why. His Mercy depends upon our willingness to follow Him and stay the course no matter what.

Illustration:

At times I have wondered, why all these cancer patients we know, or have known... Why did they have to battle this illness? If I knew that answer to that question, I would be in heaven right now. I do not know why?

But this I do know, “Nothing comes upon God’s children, that he is not already aware of, and has set in place His answers, whatever those may be. His mercy and grace, is already in action for the good for those whom He loves, and are called according to His purpose. Romans 8: 28, ***(Ray Wolf’s favorite passage) “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to HIS purpose.”*** It is not a promise that life will be easy, it is the promise that everything we face or deal with, has a purpose in our lives. That in the end, our travel through these moments will be reveal and it is for our good.

Third) God with us, who can be against us...

In chapter 8, near the end of the scripture, after speaking of living in the Spirit, and the future Glory He will reveal to us, we read this passage, ***“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*** ROM 8:31

Paul reminds us how that when God is absent, ***“Unless the God Almighty has left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gamorrah.”*** (v.29)

we will find ourselves in a very bad place. However, **“when God is with us, who, who can defeat us?”** No one! *(He does not leave us - we leave Him)*

When we leave God out of the picture, not even considering His mercy or love for us, then we die to Him, we sever ourselves from Him, and the very things we call decent in this world. We are placing ourselves in the wrong place in this world. I think we can see this taking place all around us. In any of our neighborhoods, our communities, and in this world today? This is a warning not only to the church at Rome, this is a warning unto all of His people, for generations to come. **Do not leave God out of our lives...**

To us, to the Lord's church today, He is saying to us, keep our hearts and lives in tune with God, so that He might protect, provide and guide us, when we need Him most. Stop concentrating on the world, and start focusing on Him!

It is not that God is unjust, not at all. It is that God will not accept wickedness, evil and sin, as the way of life within His church or children. At the same time, God hears the cries of His children, and when He acts, He acts with justice, love and count on it, **mercy**, for all those who are His.

That means we will receive far more than we might desire, deserve or can expect. He does what is best for everyone whom He loves and cares for.

(He gives us mercy – as we are called to give to others)

Illustration:

A high school basketball player's mom passed away on the day of a game. He made it to the game and his coach invited him to sit on the bench. But he wanted to play.

Since he arrived late, putting him in the game was a technical foul and the other team would shoot two free throws. Knowing the situation, the other team refused to shoot the free throws. But the officials persisted.

The coach asked for a volunteer to shoot the shots and the captain raised his hands. His first shot went about two feet, his second went about one foot.

As it turned out, the other team showed mercy to this player by sharing his pain with acts of kindness.

Praise God from all blessing flow! For His mercy is greater than anything man has ever known. So let me ask, **“Have you experienced His mercy?”** I know that many of you have, yet, some of you may not have, as of yet. So, to those people, why not? What is holding you back? Our God desires to demonstrate His mercy to everyone, if they will accept it.

***Is God unjust? Not at all!**

***Who does it depend upon? God Himself – and our willingness to look for Him.**

***God is with us, no one can defeat us...**