

ROMANS: TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

(Romans 9:14-21)

What is some of the hardest lessons in life you had to learn? Academic? Geometry/Calculus/English/Biology? Consequences to every action? Life is not fair? Some mistakes stay w/ you. You can't take words back. Toothpaste

*For some of you, this may be the most difficult sermon you have ever heard me preach
-It will upend your theology, how you think about God, His plan of Salv., justice, & Mercy, others
*18yrs ago – I had a crisis of belief in Romans Ch. 9. =It changed me (caused my view of God/Worship)

Theme of Chs. 9-11: **God's sovereign faithfulness in His redemptive purposes first to the Jews and now to the Gentiles too:** To Jews: God is flipping the script for what was expected:

A. They were the chosen nation by God to be a lighthouse to ALL nations. Salv. by *faith* in God
B. God revealed that salvation was NOW by *faith* in promised Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth
C. God further revealed that salvation was not for Jew only, but the Gentile also. =News/Flipped
=for the Jew, it seemed **unfair/unjust/unloving** = for God to change the process/program of salv.

*This new reality (Prog. Rev.) was difficult on Jews. Crisis of belief. Had to change theology/Truth

Rom 9:14-21 (Vs. 6-13: =The **Promise** came through Isaac, *not* Ishmael; then through Jacob, *not* Esau)

14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? Far from it! **15** For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whomever I show compassion." **16** So then, *it does not depend on the person who wants it nor the one who runs* [works toward mercy or favor], but on God who has mercy. **17** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very reason I raised you up, in order to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the earth." **18** So then GOD, He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. **19** You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" **20** On the contrary, who are you, you *foolish* person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? **21** Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use? Paul is reminding & illustrating to the Jewish reader what is true about God: **HE ALONE is Sovereign.** -**God has the divine right to choose Nation, People, or Individual & to Not choose X**

-Paul Illustrates biblically:

1. God is Sovereign (in control) of *who* or *how* He chooses to save/reject people (bless/harden)
-Vs. 15: "I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whomever I show compassion" – To Moses. "*God's sov. & grace are not only compatible, but inseparable*"
-Vs. 18: So then GOD, He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires
*In Egypt, God demonstrates *His* choice to have mercy on Israel & to harden Pharaoh =**Glory**
-John 12:40 "**God has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted.**" At times, God hardens the lost
-2 Thes. 2:11-12 "**For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,** ¹² in order that they all may be judged [WHO?] (those) **who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.**" =difficult, BUT rem. the lost are *already* condemned
2. If God is sovereign, then that necessitates His choice of how/who He saves is **NOT** dependent upon man's desires/actions/beliefs/wants/good works/righteousness/or faithfulness
-Vs. 11: "**So that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, NOT because of works, but because of God who calls**" Jacob/Esau in Utero
-Vs. 16: So then, *it does not depend on the person who wants it nor the one who runs* [works toward mercy or favor], **but on God who has mercy**

-God's decision. His choice. His election of some vs. others is based solely on *His* loving, gracious, sovereign will and good pleasure. God's purposes we'll never know. But is all for His GLORY! (God is all-loving, all-wise, gracious, righteous, just, holy, beneficent, and perfect. =His ways, will, and His purposes are inscrutable (unknowable). But as Sovereign, He gets to do what He wants.

So, what does that mean for us?

-If you were chosen, then how awesome for you. God's gracious choice of you (NOT b/c of YOU)

-If you were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, -Nation of Israel, & *now* if you are IN Christ Jesus =GRACE!!!!

-If you were not chosen, then your life still had value & serves a greater purpose for God.

God created you. God loves you. He gives you a genuine offer of salvation (we are accountable)

-2 Thess. 2:13 "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation, through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."

Key definitions in Rom. as applied to our lives, our theology, & our understanding how God saves:

-**Sovereignty**: The controlling power of God to oversee all aspects of Universe and Humanity

-**Election**: God's gracious choosing & adopting of certain Nations, peoples, & Individuals to save

-**Predestination**: occurs 6 times in the NT (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11)

Determining beforehand; Ordaining; deciding ahead of time. That which God foreknows, foreordains, and decides/chooses in eternity past – WILL come to pass in the future.

-Rom. 8:29-30 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son ...³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

-Eph. 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

Predestination is a biblical doctrine that in God's sovereignty He elects certain individuals to salvation. That means *if* God is choosing some to salvation, and not everyone will be saved (Mt. 7:14-21), then God must NOT choose everyone (=He passes them over) for salvation. =**difficult**

Objections to God's sovereignty in electing and predestining only some to salvation:

A. Unfair/unjust/unloving for God only to choose some and **not** others (everyone has value).

-Remember, God did *not* have to save anyone (He was not required to). We stand condemned!

=No one deserves to be saved; we are all sinners (Ro. 3:23); rebellious against God in our hearts; we are depraved; enemies of God (Ro. 5:10); & God would be just to send us all to hell. *Even Loving*

-Our bent/heart is already condemned (Jn 3:18); & none of us want God anyway (Ro. 3:10-12)

*It is not unfair to grant to people what they deserve. = That's Justice! We **all** already deserve hell!

-**If** we demand from God justice, fairness – then we would get what we deserve (judgment/hell)

-*Rather*, God gives us mercy and withholds judgment from us (put it on Christ in our place)

-The fact that God saved anyone, **any of us**, is proof of God's extraordinary grace. =**Sent Jesus**

B. What about Man's Free will? Doesn't God's sovereignty negate man's free will to choose, reject The truth of God's sovereignty **and** Man's responsibility to believe and trust in Christ by Faith are not mutually exclusive: Both are taught in Scripture. Both are real. It is difficult/mystery/tension

-Dt 4:29 "But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him *if* you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul."

-The Bible clearly teaches that all who desire to be saved and trust in Jesus for salvation will be saved (Ro. 10:9-13). The Bible equally teaches that it is God who draws the hearts of men for salvation (John 6:44). God is sovereign in election. & Man is accountable to accept/reject gospel.

So, Paul anticipates our hearts' objection to God's sovereignty:

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? [with us? With the Lost?] For who has resisted His will?" How can God genuinely hold man accountable/responsible for his lostness? =The problem is we are judging God and His plan of redemption through our finite, biased, incomplete of the full picture, sin-tainted minds. We cannot perfectly perceive **What God is doing in redemptive history or why.** Today, this will remain a mystery to our confused hearts! -1 Cor. 13:9 "For now we know in part (our knowledge is partial)" =we see dimly on this side! -Job 36:26 "Indeed, God is great--beyond our knowledge; the number of His years is unsearchable." - Is. 55:9 "His ways are higher than our ways" -We will not resolve this tension!!

²⁰ On the contrary, **who are you**, you *foolish* person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? ²¹ Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use? Have you ever made ceramics? Potter's wheel? Shaped clay? Date night - uncomfortable. I made an ashtray. I don't smoke. BUT, what I made was MY decision. I could have made X or X =My choice. The clay didn't have a say at all at what it would become.

In the end, the Bible makes *no excuses* that God alone is the author and finisher (completer) of our faith (Heb. 12:2). The Bible does not try and hide the painful reality that all are not saved. That Salvation *is* limited, ALL are not chosen. The Bible plainly teaches that eternal hell and torment wait for the lost masses who are already justly condemned in their own sin & rebellion against God. Why? Men still actively reject God. **BUT You have a choice today to repent!**

APPLICATION

God is sovereign in election & salvation **AND** *for us*, we are called to obey, & accept Christ *in faith*

1. God never turns any away who call upon Him for salvation (Mt. 7:7-8; 10:32; Jer. 29:13; Jn 3:16) -Rom. 10:13 "**whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.**"
2. People must accept Jesus *by Faith* (of their own freewill) to be saved (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19)
3. People are *still* responsible, accountable to God for rejecting Jesus, rebelling against God (Jn. 5:40)
4. Because all people everywhere are sinful, rebellious, & haters of God, no one is wronged or treated unjustly (unfairly) when God condemns them & chooses not to save them. **Just!** (Ex. 34:7) If God were to only exercise His justice, no person would ever be saved. Rather, He also give mercy!
5. God never forces Himself on anyone; He does not force His will on those who do not want to be saved. And people who are lost don't want to be saved (they want to be their own god)
6. Though man can resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51), God's elect (those who will be saved) don't resist the Spirit when He regenerates/saves their lost, dark, & depraved souls (Titus 3:5)
7. We don't have to worry about election. We are not to stress out about predestination. (No human knows who will be saved before the fact). We *are* however to focus on accepting Christ as Savior; living holy lives pleasing to the Lord in worship; knowing we cannot lose our salvation; & faithfully sharing the gospel with everyone, everywhere since God uses the Church (YOU) to bring people to salvation through the gospel message (Mt. 28:19-20)

2 Thess. 2:14 "**It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"