

ROMANS: TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

(Romans 9:30-33)

I love a good buffet. Brazilian Steakhouse buffet even better. I never leave thinking, I could have eaten more. =meat sweats. This month, you may feel like you have been dining on an all-meat buffet of rich and difficult theology in Romans 9. Maybe you feel like you'd like to have a nice salad ☺ -I've never even thought that way

Where have we been in Chapter 9?

Theme of Chs. 9-11: **God's sovereign faithfulness in His redemptive purposes first to the Jews and now to the Gentiles too:**

1. Paul is burdened for his fellow Jews hoping to be saved via works righteousness/Law/Jewish
2. Paul teaches Jews God is sovereign, flipped Script, what was expected: **A.** Salv.=Jesus/Nazareth
B. God's mysterious planned revealed, in Jesus, God wants Gentiles as part of Kingdom/Family
3. Paul spends rest of this chapter demonstrating/illustrating God's prerogative/sovereignty
=We are reminded as Believers in 2024:
A. As our Sovereign God, He alone has the right to decide who He'll save or pass over. Already co
B. We are not the center of our own salvation, but God is. Based on His mercy & grace alone.

-Why is the concept of God's Sovereignty over salvation so challenging for us? Impugns our control, our sense of justice (from our limited perspective); it doesn't seem fair or loving. B/C = OUR lens. We are US focused. Biased. God teaches us that He has given this universe to the Son, Jesus as King. That we live in a Kingdom (The Kingdom of God) **Jesus is our King.** As Americans, who overthrew a King of England (248yrs ago) and live in a free democracy, a Republic – Kingship is foreign and distasteful. Today 70%world live under a dictator Plus 43 monarchies (sovereign states) in the world (monarch=single ruler).

As believers, we are SUBJECTS of the King, We live breathe and exist at His pleasure, and for His glory alone. We would do well to remind our hearts that the King is sovereign, and gets to make all the decisions, and we, as His subjects are blessed to be counted as a part of His kingdom; We are to be reminded of His kingship and Lordship over every part of my life and heart as it should. A king is not focused on my rights, my desires, my ideas of justice, or what I think is best. The king is focused on truth and justice, and His will. He gets to show mercy upon those He chooses & rule in justice for others. The king has the right to choose who he wants; **He's the king.**

Romans 9:30-33 -Let's finish Paul's ending thought in this chapter. (Ch. 10 continues thought) "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness [by the Jewish Law], attained righteousness, but the righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ however, Israel, pursuing a **law** of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. ³² Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *they could* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, And the one who believes in Him will not be put to shame [disappointed]."

-Paul ends his thought with *true* salvation: How are people saved (Jew & Gentile)? =*through faith*
-Paul reminds Jewish readers that God's progressive Revelation plan to reveal Jesus as Messiah was like a "stumbling block" to Jews (**unexpected messiah: poor, Nazareth, not religious, killed**) =Jesus was a stumbling block (**rock that trips you up so you fall: fall up stairs; root in path; rock**) to the Jews bc His message of grace meant that "all their good works" are nullified as a *means* of salvation; =works righteousness is as worthless as being a Gentile w/out the Law =**only GRACE**
*Salv. by grace alone, faith alone offends OUR sense of self, self-righteousness, control, pride!
-**BUT** WHOEVER believes in Jesus as Messiah, will not be disappointment =way of salv./et. Life!!

Listen to God's heart toward us all. Even though He is sovereign, He is loving, merciful, gracious: Though ALL stand condemned ALREADY (Jn 3:18) & are all depraved & deserving of hell as rebellious sinners, GOD **takes NO pleasure in the death of the wicked** (Ez. 18:32) & **is patient toward us, not willing for any to perish but for ALL to come to repentance** (2 Pet. 3:9). -***Jn 3:16**

God demonstrates that He is Sovereign over Salvation AND that Humans (who are already sinful and condemned), are to respond to His grace and loving offer of salvation:

John 6:37 “All those the Father gives me *will* come to me, **and** *whoever* comes to me I will never drive away/turn away/cast out/reject.”

Martin Luther: “It is not wise for the novice/new Christian to meddle too much with divine purposes and mysteries. Nothing has a greater tendency to confound the understanding and harden the heart than to take strong meat too early. Let us not talk about these matters too early. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out. **Let us rejoice however that the great truth of divine grace is written in the Word and revealed in Christ!**”

APPLICATION

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

*This is a glorious mystery; biblical tension; *may* hurt your mind or your heart.

-The Good news is that bc **we don't know** who is elect/predestined from eternity past -all we can do is live in the here and now. We don't have to stress about it. We can't change it. **Love our family**

We have been called to believe God:

A. To trust His Word (even **difficult truths & confusing texts & paradoxes**): Sovereignty, Elect vs. Justice

B. To trust God's heart (believing God is also merciful, loving, and beneficent) toward ALL

C. To passionately share the gospel with ALL peoples/nations offering a genuine gospel salvation

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.**”

-John 6:37 “Whoever comes to me I will never send away”

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

A. accepting Christ as Savior; (responding to God's genuine offer of salvation) by Faith....

B. living holy lives pleasing to the Lord in worship;

C. knowing we cannot lose our salvation b/c we did not earn our salvation! (Jn 10:28-30) &

D. 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)

E. This pleases God: to trust Him, to love Him, to obey Him, to worship Him, to share/show His love to a watching world

The glory of Christ is on full display, to God's elect, by choosing to take us *from* fallen clay to vessels of mercy according to His sovereign will. This produces a longing in our hearts to **WORSHIP Him & lead people to know the glory of God in Christ. 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.**”**