

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Romans 9

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today – about the Gospel of Grace

That are justification, our sanctification and our glorification – it is all a work the God He has done, is currently doing and will do.

All by grace

Unmerited

Underserved

Unearned favor that is coming out of this letter and into our lives.

That is what the first 8 chapters in this letter were all about.

That the believer – because of the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross and His resurrection – as we lean on the Holy Spirit, we can walk according to the Spirit (not the flesh) and live a victorious Christian life –

Where we know Him and because we know Him – (we have experienced His grace and mercy and love)

we will make Him known to others.

That is His will for all the believers.

That is why we are here this morning.

That is how God uses us to share the good news.

And people will either receive the good news or they will harden their hearts against the good news.

Paul has seen this as God called him and prepared him to share the gospel of grace to the gentiles –

And as we find ourselves in ch 9 – Paul turns his attention to his fellow Jew –

He has questions of his own.

In his heart – he wants to know why have his fellow Jews not received the gospel of grace -

He anticipates them asking – as they hear this letter,

What about us?”

What about God’s promises to us?

Has God forsaken us?

And so, we have seen over the last few weeks – Paul attempt to answer those whys as he addresses God’s election and sovereignty as they are still tied to His amazing and abundant grace.

He has compassion and mercy on who He chooses to have compassion and mercy.

He is perfect

He is good

He is God

And we are not –

By the way – our study in Job on Wednesday – we are dealing with the same thing Paul talks about here in Ch 9

All these things happen to Job and he and his friends take it upon themselves to explain why?

And God shows up near the end and never answer the why – He just reveals Himself and pretty much say, Job – I am God and you are not and Job, you can’t possibly understand.

We may not like that answer –

Because we want all of our whys questions answered

Why is this happening to me?

Why is my friend suffering?

Why is so and so's marriage falling apart?

But the sufficient answer that the bible gives us is that even when we don't know why – we can trust that God is good.

That is the answer that nobody wants to hear – but,

That church – that is the biblical answer.

Let's pray...

Read Text

[Rom 9:19-23 NKJV] 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed [it], "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 [What] if God, wanting to show [His] wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

Over the last few weeks – we have been looking at God’s sovereignty and His election.

We have seen how God chose Israel as a nation over other nation,

And last week, we saw how God choose Isaac over Ishmael

And Jacob over Esau.

Paul has used these biblical illustrations to demonstrate His election and sovereignty.

But one of the things that we have to grasp is that it is a two-sided coin.

You have God’s sovereignty/election – but you also have man’s responsibility.

Keep your finger in Romans 9 and go to Acts 2

[Act 2:38-39 NKJV] 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

That’s God’s election

Now, go up a few verses to verse 21 in Acts 2

[Act 2:21 NKJV] 21 And it shall come to pass [That] whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'

That’s man’s responsibility

So we have God's choice and at the same time - whoever calls

God chose to condemn Pharaoh and Egypt – as Pharaoh hardened his heart to God's will.

But God also chose to show mercy and compassion to the Children of Israel when they worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness.

So Paul anticipates the response that all of this is unfair –

“How can God create me a certain way and then condemn me for creating me that certain way?”

How can God choose to harden the heart of Pharaoh and then condemn him

In other words – if God makes these choices – then how can God hold someone responsible.

How can he condemn me?

How could God be judging us when we can only do what He has purposed for us?

Let's look at our text -

[Rom 9:19 NKJV] 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

Is God unfair?

Will God condemn the righteous with the wicked?

Turn with me to Genesis 18

Because Abraham answers this question for us.

Here in Exodus 18

Abraham and Jesus are walking toward Sodom

And the Lord tells Abraham –

Abe – I am going to tell you what I am about to do.

I am going to condemn Sodom and Gomorrah

[Gen 18:23-25 NKJV] 23 And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 "Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare [it] for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 "Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

In his statement – Abraham was right on

God is just

God would never condemn the righteous with the wicked

So the problem is not God – it was Sodom and Gomorrah problem –

it was a Pharoah problem – Pharoah was the one who hardened his heart first

God did not create man - rebellious.

God does not manipulate man

We are not robots

Man hardened his own hearts against the things of God

Man chose to walk in rebellion to God's will

And the result is that he is lost because he is a sinner

Man made the decision

It was not because of anything that God did.

Paul is not questioning God's sovereignty here – he is rebuking this attitude that God is somehow unfair.

[Rom 9:20 NKJV] 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed [it], "Why have you made me like this?"

Paul's response –

Actually – he doesn't even answer the question about whether or not God is fair –

He simply responds -

Who are we to question God on anything.

We were created from the dust.

Shall the creation question the Creator?

But we want to know whys.

We sometimes feel that we deserve a little bit more than that.

Who is Paul to tell us - Who are we to question God on anything.

We think we deserve the answers

We think that we are entitled to the answers

And if God doesn't give us the answers in the way that we think it is sufficient –

Our response is - I don't like this God or I don't believe in this God.

Think about it – in the Garden of Eden – the serpent –

How did he tempt Eve,

He said

[Gen 3:5 NKJV] 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,

We all have a little god complex in us

We need to know

But when we abide in Him and we lean on the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us –

We begin to grasp that we don't need to know because He is the Potter and we are the clay.

And Paul is going to use this very common illustration that we find in the Old Testament -

[Isa 45:9 NKJV] 9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker! [Let] the potsherd [strive] with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or shall your handiwork [say], 'He has no hands'?"

[Isa 29:16 NKJV] 16 Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?"

[Jer 18:6 NKJV] 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay [is] in the potter's hand, so [are] you in My hand, O house of Israel!"

You see church – we have this misunderstanding that maybe we have a better understanding of our own circumstances than God does.

That God may be in the dark about certain things, so we have to help Him out.

Look at our prayers -

God I need You to do this because so and so is happening

He is the Potter/ He is Maker, we are the clay

The Potter is the one with intelligence

The clay is clay

The clay ultimately becomes whatever the Potter deems it to be

If the Potter wants to make a coffee cup out of the clay, the clay will become a coffee cup

If the Potter wants to make a vase from the clay, the clay will become a vase

And so what Paul is saying here is that because God is the potter and we are the clay – the clay doesn't have to understand what the Potter is doing.

[Isa 64:8 NKJV] 8 But now, O LORD, You [are] our Father; We [are] the clay, and You our potter; And all we [are] the work of Your hand.

we [are] the work of Your hand

SO – it is one thing to grasp that we are but clay in the hands of the Potter

The next step is – can we trust the process.

And that is process where He conforms us into the image of Jesus Christ.

This is the part that many of us struggle with.

We don't like the process.

It is too painful for some of us

It is not fast enough for some of us

But the key loved ones is that every single day – we have to submit ourselves to whatever the Potter wants to make.

This is where spiritual growth occurs

This is where transformation happens

Every time we chose to lash out at our brothers or sisters instead of love and serve them or we chose to walk against His will and chose to walk according to the flesh instead of the Spirit – we are resisting the hands of the Potter.

But when we are going through a difficult circumstance and we say – I don't understand what is going on but I am going to walk by faith and not by sight and place my trust in His goodness –

That is a way for us to learn how to surrender to the reality that the Potter knows what He is doing.

For homework tonight – read Matthew 26 –

When Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew records for us that three times Jesus prays the same prayer –

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;

Jesus knew the physical, mental and spiritual pain and anguish He was about to endure.

But Jesus surrenders to the hands of the Potter – each time He says nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

The potter knows what He is making.

He knows what He is doing in you and me.

And He is creating in each one of us unique things – if we are willing to trust Him and be the clay that hangs on the wheel and says – Whatever you are doing Lord – let’s do it.

I have found this in my own walk

All I know is that He wants to make me like Jesus and His ways are not the ways that I would have chosen

Some of the circumstances in my life – the people that He has placed in my life – I would have taken a totally different route

Because I don't know better than the Potter.

[Rom 9:21 NKJV] 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

God has the power to make us as He wills

What God in His sovereignty has done is portioned out to each of us a measure of our own sovereignty.

He gives us free will to choose.

Because of the Fall, we ALL start out as lumps of worthless clay.

If we respond in faith to God's gracious offer of eternal life in Christ, He molds us as Romans 8:29 says into a vessel of honor, one that bears the image of Christ.

He makes us into a vessel where the Holy Spirit dwells.

And as we discussed back in Ch 8 – as He is making us – He sees the finished work.

He no longer sees us a lump of clay

We have been glorified in His eyes

If we reject Him, then we become vessels of wrath destined for the furnace of eternal death.

[Rom 9:22 NKJV] 22 [What] if God, wanting to show [His] wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

The whole point here is that God is sovereign.

He is the King.

He may do whatever He pleases.

[2Pe 3:9 NKJV] 9 The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

I believe Paul here is still referring Pharaoh

Because the question might come up –

Why didn't God just wipe Pharaoh out from the start,

the first time that Moses and Aaron went to him and told him to let the people go.

but instead God kept giving Pharaoh chance after chance.

God showed patience to Pharaoh.

Giving him every opportunity to repent.

Now –

I had you make a note of two phrases in these verse.

prepared for destruction

He had prepared beforehand for glory

Remember, the last verse says that some vessels are or honor and some vessels are for dishonor.

Notice that Paul doesn't say that God prepared the vessels for destruction.

And the reason is because in their rejection of the gospel of grace – those individuals have chosen the path of destruction.

That is what the Greek word that is used here for prepared means –

That man has prepared himself for destruction.

[Rom 2:4-5 NKJV] 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart

you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

God is not responsible for sin

God is only responsible for grace

If any person goes to hell

And many will – in their rejection of Jesus Christ – that is what the bible says.

It will be because of their choice.

Judas – the one who betrayed Jesus, God did not create him to betray Jesus and go to hell.

Judas went there because Judas chose to betray Christ.

Regarding our salvation -

God is the one who prepared us for heaven

God is the One who elected us to conform us into the image of Christ.

[Rom 9:24 NKJV] 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Conclusion –

If God chooses to elect the gentiles

Who are we to question God on anything

So church –

God is His sovereignty has given us choice

I choose to yield to Him on this day

I choose to live for God this day

I choose to seek the Lord this day

I choose to honor Him

I choose to do that or not

Finishing Quote

We need to remember that we cannot train ourselves to be Christians; we cannot discipline ourselves to be saints; we cannot bend ourselves to the will of God: we have to be broken to the will of God.

He is the Potter – we are the clay

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

He is the Potter – we are the clay

I trust that You are the Potter

I trust what You are making here

I trust that You know how to make it right

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

