

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 4

Sermon Title: Week 8: The Glorious Mystery of God's Mercy

Date: 02-24-19

- **TODAY! Wrapping up R9-11.**
- **SO MUCH we have covered! HUGE issues, questions hard to answer... R9-11 is avoided, because it is difficult to understand, but it is RICH with truth we need to hear, because it all directs us to the MIRACLE- the great mystery- of God's mercy and his grace.**
- **Paul ends by reminding us that GOD IS GOD, and to come before him is to recognize that HE IS CREATOR, we are the creation, without him, apart from him, we are NOTHING, and apart from His mercy and grace, we have no hope. To recognize God as present to us, personal to us, to really consider this, is mind-blowing, awe-inspiring, and calls us to an attitude of worship, awe, surrender, and love.**
- **NOW- as you know (if you've tracked), much of Pauls discussion here has revolved around the question of ISRAEL- specifically, why didn't Israel receive Jesus as the messiah? So, since we are bringing this to a close, I thought I would START with some context...**

† Israel and a brief history of time

- **BC 1950** Abrahamic covenant (unconditional): Through Israel, the entire world will be BLESSED.

Genesis 12:1-3

- **BC 1450 (forward 500 years)** Mosaic (old/conditional) covenant: "Keep the law, and you will be blessed."

Deuteronomy 11

Law intended to bring Israel to faith, but instead it lead them to seek righteousness by their own works instead of by faith.

Romans 9:31-32

- Abrahamic covenant leads to CHRIST. Israel rejected Christ as messiah.
- Through Paul, God sent the Gospel to the GENTILES.

Present Time- Paul tells us...

- Through witness of the Gentiles, Israel will become 'jealous' for the Gospel, ultimately leading to Israel's turn back to Christ. This will usher in a great spiritual renewal, described as *Life from the Dead*. (11:15)
- **This brings us up to date, as Paul continues his discussion of Israel using example...**

† Israel and the example of the Olive Tree

- **Imagine two olive trees- one cultivated, chosen and pruned for purpose of producing high quality olives- Israel: Other, wild olive tree- gentiles. Paul envisions God as a gardener, known practice of grafting branches from one tree into another...**

Romans 11:17-21 *If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith.*

- **Simple , but very important point Paul is making...**
- **When Israel didn't believe in Jesus as messiah, God did not just uproot the tree, and start with another. NO... I'm doing my work through this tree! BUT, I'm going to break off all the dead branches- representing the Israelites that didn't believe Jesus- whose hearts were hardened because of unbelief.**
- **IN THEIR PLACE... I'm going to take some of these wild olive branches, and graft them in. This represents GENTILES- you and I.**

- **PAUL EMPHATICALLY SAYS to gentiles... DON'T GET COCKY! Don't think that since the Gospel has come to you, that you somehow are more deserving, or of a higher quality than the Jews.**
 - **YOU have been made part of the story God began through Israel, they are still the root, it is God's work through them (nourishing sap) that now has given life to you, and supports you.**
 - **THEN Paul brings a strong caution..**
- Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either*
- **MUST LOOK AT THIS CLOSELY. Paul's emphasis here is on God's work through NATION of Israel, and the GENTILES as a large people group.**
 - **Israel had missed the Gospel because of unbelief. When the gospel came to the gentiles, they responded in FAITH- they did believe!**
 - **We can infer from the text that over time (20 years now), there had already started an attitude that looked down upon the Jews for their unbelief. PAUL WILL HAVE NONE OF THIS. THEY FELL because of UNBELIEF. If you- as a group- turn away from Faith, you- as a group, will not be spared, just as unbelieving Israel wasn't spared.**
 - **FRIENDS! If this makes us uncomfortable, IT SHOULD. This is not a picture of an individual losing their salvation, but it is a picture of GOD turning away from a society and a culture that continually rejects God.**
 - **IT IS ONLY BY GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE that Israel had the opportunity to receive NEW LIFE... and it is only by God's MERCY AND GRACE that the people of our country, or any nation, may receive NEW LIFE.**
 - **Paul continues this thought, and he does so by turning our faces to the very face of God.**

✠ Consider... God

Romans 11:22-24 *Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³ And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.*

- **CONSIDER THIS GOD! IN HIS GRACE and MERCY, he invites all people to receive REDEMPTION... SALVATION. OWING US NOTHING, HE EXTENDS THE GIFT OF EVERYTHING- LIFE ITSELF in Christ.**
- **AND YET, God will not be mocked. There is a consequence to rejecting him.**
- **As I said, not about individual salvation... KINDNESS TO YOU- Gentile people who have been incredibly blessed to receive and be transformed by Gospel- by LIFE OF CHRIST IN US. But if we- as the gentiles, turn away from Gospel, we will face consequence of a society that turns away from God (Romans 1).**
- **AND YET, Paul returns to God's continuous offer of mercy... IF (when) Jews believe, they will be grafted back in. The transforming power of the Gospel will once again be theirs.**

²⁴ *After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!*

- **The natural progression of God's plan will be the restoration of Israel. It will happen.**
- **Principle: There is ALWAYS HOPE for those who turn to Christ. PAUL NOW TURNS TO...**

✠ Big Picture, Big Mystery

Romans 11:25-32 *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: (Isaiah and Jer)*

“The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

- **Israel turned against God’s plan of salvation**
- **Now, gentiles- world- coming to hear and opportunity to respond. Will come a time when the gentiles- not all individuals, but as a whole, will stop believing**
- **God will turn back to Israel, they will believe and receive. Whereas before a ‘remnant’ believed but the nation as a whole turn away, SO NOW even though some will turn away, the Nation as a whole will believe. This will fulfill OT prophecies**
 - **Deliverer from Zion- JESUS will turn Godlessness away from Jacob- ISRAEL- and fulfill God’s covenant to them that he WILL take away their sins... ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED.**
- **Now mystery kicks in....**

²⁸ *As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable.*

- **restating what he’s already said. Israel rejected the Gospel, and in a sense became enemies of God, but God used this to the benefit of the rest of the world.**
- **BUT, in God’s sovereign plan- his election of Israel as His chosen people, which began with Abraham and the patriarchs (first generations of Israel), STILL STANDS. GOD PURPOSES ALWAYS STAND (hope!)**
- **Paul restates God’s great plan one last time, now bringing us full circle back to the gift of God’s MERCY.**

³⁰ *Just as you (gentiles) who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their (Israel) disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.*

– **BOTTOM LINE!**

³² *For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*

- **IN OUR DISOBEDIENCE (unbelief), God has bound us over ‘imprisoned’ us in the consequence of our disobedience and unbelief- just look at world around you. THIS IS WHAT WE- HUMANITY- DESERVE. AND YET, GOD’S GREATEST PURPOSE is not that he may punish us all, but that He may have mercy on us all.**
- **TO ALL- unbelieving, disobedience, lost... God extends the invitation to BELIEVE, receive mercy, and enter into a NEW LIFE. THIS is the good news.**
- **WE ARE INVITED TO CHOOSE FAITH IN CHRIST... and we are able to choose, because in His sovereignty, God has chosen us.**

- **SO MUCH I DON’T UNDERSTAND! Paul felt the same! At this point, I can see Paul laying down his pen... everything he has said, and just stand in awe at the God that is beyond him, and is beyond us, but who loves us and gave himself for us.**

- **You see, in our flesh, the things we don’t understand about God tempts us to doubt. But by the Spirit, these same things will bring us to our knees**

† **Who is this God?**

Romans 11:33-36 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

- **Here, Paul worships God not because of what he DOES KNOW about God, but what he doesn’t.**
- **We can’t comprehend what he is doing!**

³⁴ *“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”*

- **Who are we to think that we can tell God how he should act? Who am I to think I could advise God on a best course of action?**

³⁵ *“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”*

- **God owes us nothing! We have nothing to give him but the very life that he has given us. Apart from his Grace we are nothing, but IN HIS GRACE we are children of the living God, alive, made new, with a hope of eternity beyond our ability to even comprehend.**

³⁶ *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

- **EVERYTHING is from him, everything lives by him, and everything has its end in him**
- **God is the originator of all creation, he is the sustainer of all creation, and he is the goal of all creation.**
- **HE IS GOD! And being God, the almighty, the creator, he comes to us, his creation, saying.... THIS NEW LIFE- my life- IT IS FOR YOU... TAKE MY HAND, trade everything you are, for everything I AM.**
- **Have you?**