

Romans 9:1-29

Moving into a new section, chapters 9-11

Both Context and Content inform why Paul must address what he does next

Context:

- Jewish/Barbarian and Gentile/Greek audience
- Writes in a way that is meant to be engaging with antagonistic Jewish dialogue partner
- Jews at this time in history are very aware of the Old Testament

Content:

- Righteousness (required for salvation) is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Most Jews are not putting their faith in Jesus (at the time nor at the present)
- Our assurance is anchored in God's sovereignty.
 - God finishes what He starts

Critique (implied) that is being addressed:

If God finishes what He starts, then most of Israel wouldn't be lost. God started with them, but now it seems that His promises aren't coming to pass for them. – For the Jew, it is more likely that Paul just doesn't like Jews.

– God's word and, thereby, integrity is on the line. (Romans 9:6 is the lynch pin)

Verses 1-5

Paul defends his affections for the Jews. (verse 3 implicitly states that the Jews are mostly cut off)

Paul continues list of Jewish benefits that he started in 3:1-2

Verse 6

This is the major idea that Paul defends for the rest of the section

- That God has always made promises to a subset to the people with whom He is engaging.
- This subset is determined by God's selection, without regard to performance and not based upon merit.
- That God has the right to make such decisions.

Verses 7-9

If it's simply offspring, then Ishmael would be included, but he isn't. – God worked in a way that required His direct intervention. Children of Abraham are those whom God makes to be such, not those whom we will. Genesis 17:21

For more on this, see Galatians 4:21-31

Verses 10-13

Isaac and Rebekah have Jacob and Esau, again showing it is by God's choosing and not by our will or merit.

- God's promise: Genesis 25:23

Loved Jacob and hated Esau means chose Jacob and didn't choose Esau.

- Understanding language: Genesis 29:30-31
- Context of direct quote from Malachi, speaking of the people groups of Israel and Edomites

Verses 14-16

God's justice is not compromised by his compassion and mercy on those whom He chooses.

- Illustration of two partners in crime
 - Do not confuse justice with equity or fairness
 - We don't receive mercy, because we merit it, but because God chooses to give it to us.
 - We have no room for boasting Romans 3:27-28, 11:5-6

Verses 19-23

God has the right to do what He wills with whom He chooses, even use criminals for His purposes

- Illustration continued
 - *Note: I realize I'm leaving a lot of content on the table here, wait for next Sunday*

Verses 24-29

1. The people of God are those that are the subjects of His promises and not necessarily simply of lineage.
 - a. The promises of God are what determine outcomes.
2. God has the right to make these decisions
 - a. Sometimes this means God uses someone who is not chosen to bring about glory for Himself

Finally, God chooses some from outside of Israel (gentiles) and some from within Israel (the remnant)

So, God is sovereign and the gospel is a perfect continuation of the Old Testament scripture. Even Israel is an example of the very way God used Pharaoh.

Application:

We can trust God's promises, because He is entirely trustworthy and able to bring about His ends. He is sovereign.

- John 3:16 & Romans 8:1 – These are two great examples of promises to cling to.

What was true then is true now. Do not put your hope in your belonging to the right group of people. The people of God have never been a saving object and never will be. Belonging to the Christian community is not good enough. Do not cling to your performance or merit. We must put our faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

Questions:

Was there anything from the text or sermon that jumped out at you? What was it and why?

Are there promises from God, in His word, that you cling to? If so, which ones? Why is this one important to you?

When you think about yourself, either in the past or present, was/is there a time when you identified as Christian because you felt that you socially belonged to the community, but not because of your faith in Jesus? What is a good way to engage with people in this place?

Paul is engaging in something called theodicy (defending God's justice and therefore goodness). Do you find that people around you call God's goodness into question? What is their issue? How do you engage with them?