

## **Title: God's Glory Made Known To Us!**

**Text: Romans 9:22–26**

### **Introduction**

*I have a difficult question to ask you this morning.*

*If God is powerful enough to eradicate evil, why doesn't he?*

We all struggle with the problem of evil. Not just Christians, but all faiths. All belief systems - even atheism must answer the problem of evil

Why doesn't an all-powerful, all loving God stop evil? It's a great question with troubling implications. And, if we are going to be honest, we all wrestle with this when we think about it.

Paul deals with this question as he moves into the next part of the rhetorical argument he is working through in [Romans 9](#).

What is the argument? After Paul argues the point that God has mercy on whomever He wills and he hardens whomever he wills, Paul then gives an argument from his detractors. Look at verse 19?

#### **Romans 9:19 ESV**

*<sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"*

In verses 20 and 21 he goes on to say...

#### **Romans 9:20–21 ESV**

*<sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?*

Well, Paul, in today's passage continues dealing with the same argument.

And he is proving a very significant point. God is not the evil despot He is accused of being.

No! In fact, He is a God not only of powerful wrath, but of great patience!

God puts up with so much from His creation. If I were God, this world would probably be a floating charcoal briquette by now!

But not our God!

And His extreme patience must be taken into consideration when trying to understand the eradication of evil and evil people...

This leads us to the main thought for this morning...

**Main Idea: God's Patience with "Evil People" is Glorious !**

How so?

Transition: God's Patience with "Evil People" is Glorious for three reasons...

Let's take a look at the first reason...

### 1. God's Patience with "Evil People" Shows Off His Character (vs. 22)

#### **Romans 9:22 ESV**

*<sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,*

Paul starts his argument here with a hypothetical, theological question.

*"What if God"* - He is leading his readers down the difficult path of attempting to understand the mind and rationale of God Himself. A task, in some regards, that is impossible because, *"Who can know the mind of God ([Romans 11:34](#))."*

But in this journey down this path, Paul accentuates qualities or characteristics about our God that, if understood, should cause wonder, awe, and wholehearted worship, not the blame being ascribed to Him.

*"What if God..."* (Who has the right to do anything He desires)

**Desiring to show his WRATH** - *"punishment...from God, referring to divine judgment to be inflicted upon the wicked."* - Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

**Desiring to show his POWER** - *the mighty, spoken of God, the Almighty. The expression "I am strong [dunatós]" means "I am able, I can";* - Spiros Zodhiates,

**Endured with much PATIENCE** - *to be long-suffering. Forbearance, long-suffering, self-restraint before proceeding to action. The quality of a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so* - Spiros Zodhiates,

These are characteristics of our God! Not all of His characteristics, but some very important ones - especially for the context of this passage.

The New American Standard Bible helps us understand the context a little better by reflecting the proper word order in the Greek.

#### **Romans 9:22 NASB95**

*<sup>22</sup> What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?*

In other words, God has held back! He, at any moment could have poured His wrath out.

He could have made his power known - even on a more grand and glorious scale than Noah's flood or the Egyptian plagues...

God, at any point could crush and destroy His creation because we (his creation) have chosen to live in a way that is contrary to His holiness.

*"...has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction..."*

*κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν*

*Passive: 'having been prepared for destruction'*

*Middle: 'having prepared themselves for destruction'*

### **The NET Bible**

tn Or possibly "objects of wrath that have fit themselves for destruction." The form of the participle could be taken either as a passive or middle (reflexive).

Honestly, this is the great challenge of this passage.

Verse 22 says nothing regarding whom prepared them for destruction, Paul simply states that God

*"has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction."*

I prefer the middle voice rendering - *"having prepared themselves for destruction."*

This places the onus squarely on the creature where it belongs and frees the blame from God creating those who are, as Calvin says, *"Doomed from the womb."*

The middle voice translation is the position John Stott takes...

*So God's two actions, summed up in verse 18 as 'showing mercy' and 'hardening', have now been traced back to his character. It is because he is who he is that he does what he does. And although this does not solve the ultimate mystery why he prepares some people in advance for glory and allows others to prepare themselves for destruction, yet both are revelations of God, of his patience and wrath in judgment and above all of his glory and mercy in salvation. - The Message of Romans 12. Israel's Fall: God's Purpose of Election (9:1-33)*

Side Note - regardless of the position you take...

*Passive: 'having been prepared for destruction'*

*Middle: 'having prepared themselves for destruction'*

...it doesn't much matter for the believer or the unbeliever.

Remember, this portion of chapter 9 is dealing with God's side of the salvation. And we must rest in the mystery of how God handles this and trust that He is GOOD and JUST and will ALWAYS do RIGHT.

Paul is still answering the rhetorical *"blaming God"* question back in verse 19. *"Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"*

In verse 20 he says, *"Who do you think you are to question God?"* The molded will not talk back to the molder and say, why did you make me like this.

The potter, according to verse 21 has the right to do whatever he pleases with His clay and the clay does not have any right to impugn the motives of the potter.

This is the point, isn't it? God's character is on full display.

God is a God of wrath and power. And the fact of the matter is, one day His cup of wrath will overflow and pour out. He will meet out His justice powerfully and you nor I will have any say in the matter.

In reference to the cup of His wrath...

#### **Obadiah 15–16 ESV**

*<sup>15</sup> For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head. <sup>16</sup> For as you have drunk on my holy mountain, so all the nations shall drink continually; they shall drink and swallow, and shall be as though they had never been.*

#### **Revelation 14:6–12 ESV**

*<sup>6</sup> Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. <sup>7</sup> And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water." <sup>8</sup> Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality." <sup>9</sup> And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." <sup>12</sup> Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*

This is what God promised to do and will do.

This promise is His wrath on full display.

This promise will show His power in ways that you simply cannot understand.

The writer of the Battle Hymn of the Republic attempted to capture the situation when he wrote...

#### **Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord**

*He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.  
He hath loosed the fateful lightening of His terrible swift sword.  
His truth is marching on.*

However, this day has not yet arrived. It will, as sure as I am standing here. God will have His day. God will exert His rightful justice.

While [Psalm 115:16](#) is true for now...

**Psalm 115:16 ESV**

*<sup>16</sup> The heavens are the LORD's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.*

The day will come. The DAY OF THE LORD when He will take back everything and after great tribulation, will create a new heaven and a new earth for all of His children to enjoy with Him.

Why does God wait?

He is waiting for **YOU**...

**2 Peter 3:9 ESV**

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

God desires for you to fully repent and follow Him. And it is only by His merciful patience that He hasn't pulled the trigger to usher in His wrathful end. He will - not sure when - but He will.

*I was saved in 1991. I shutter to think of the ramifications of not repenting of my sin and trusting Christ. What if the Lord had returned prior to the date of my salvation? He owed me nothing, but I am so thankful He was exceedingly patient to bring me into His family!*

Why is it important for you to know the characteristics of God Paul describes here?

Because people, including followers of Christ need to understand that God is not just a God of love, but a...

God of **wrath** - he punishes sin.

He is a God of unimaginable **power** -

He is a God of great **patience**

SO WHAT? What should I do now that I know this?

Change the way you view God to more accurately reflect the God of the bible and not the god of your imagination. We all do this. We desire to make God into an image that is palatable to our tastes. We simply cannot do this because it places us as the authority over God.

*"God made man in His own image and we've been making Him in our image ever since." - Tony Beckett*

**Review** - God's Patience with "Evil People" is Glorious!

- Because it shows off His character

**2. God's Patience with "Evil People" Makes His Glories Known For His Own (vs. 23)**

Take another look at verse 22...

**Romans 9:22 ESV**

*22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,*

But look at the other side of Paul's theological coin...

**Romans 9:23 ESV**

*23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—*

The backdrop of sin makes God's ways stand out more brightly in contrast.

God has put up with the sinful vessels of wrath - those who are going to be eternally destroyed - for a purpose.

What is this purpose?

The purpose for his patience with the vessels of wrath is to make something known. To make something clear and obvious.

What is God making clear and obvious?

***"The riches of His glory for vessels of mercy..."***

What does this mean?

God has put up with sinful humanity to MAKE KNOWN the RICHES OF HIS GLORY.

Not just for anyone, but for...

***"...vessels of mercy..."***

If you are in Christ, that's you!

Another mystery point - He prepared you (the text is clear) beforehand for glory!

Before what?

**Romans 8:29 ESV**

*29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

God has known you all along and prepared you for his mercy!

He does not give you what you deserve, but instead he gives you glory!

I believe *"for glory"* means eternal LIFE with Him!

So, get the picture so far?

God has put up with sinful humanity to see you come to faith and thus pour His merciful glory over you!

**Diamond on the black velvet cloth.**

God has prepared for Himself a people. A people that will be with Him for ever in glory! His glory! Can you imagine?

**I Can Only Imagine - MercyMe**

*I can only imagine  
What it will be like  
When I walk by Your side  
I can only imagine  
What my eyes would see  
When Your face is before me  
I can only imagine  
Yeah*

*Surrounded by Your glory  
What will my heart feel?  
Will I dance for You Jesus  
Or in awe of You be still?  
Will I stand in Your presence  
Or to my knees, will I fall?  
Will I sing hallelujah?  
Will I be able to speak at all?  
I can only imagine  
I can only imagine*

SO WHAT?

If you are “in Christ” you are a “vessel of mercy!”

Do you know what you deserve?

And yet God the Son left heaven, lived a sinless life, died a horrific death, bore the wrath of God on your behalf, and was raised from the dead.

Why? To make you a vessel of mercy so you would not need to endure His wrath.

The benefit for you? You get to know the riches of His GLORIES for all eternity.

**What should this cause you to do?**

- Be in awe of God and worship HIM daily!
- Evaluate your trials and challenges in light of eternity.
- Rest in your future because of what Christ accomplished for you in the past. This promise is a great cure for anxiety!

**Review** - God's Patience with "Evil People" is Glorious!

- Shows off His Character
- Makes Known His Glories for His Own

### 3. God's Patience with "Evil People" Creates More "Mercy People" (vs. 24)

#### **Romans 9:24–26 ESV**

*<sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" <sup>26</sup> "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"*

This is one of the most beautiful verses in the Bible.

*"even us who he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?"*

There is one human race - this thought should end racism for Christians. One race one blood.

However, from God's perspective, there are two people groups.

**Jews** - Those God called out to be his people, starting with Abraham way back in the Book of Genesis.

**Gentiles** - AKA, Pagans, Greeks, the world, are those in need of redemption (or those who are the recipients of redemption).

The Jews grand mistake was to believe that salvation was only for them. They, after all were God's people. They were the ones that God contacted first and created a people out of them. It is understandable to think they could come to this conclusion if they were not careful in there reading of the Holy Scriptures.

But Paul doesn't let the Jews off the hook here. He quotes two Old Testament prophets. Hosea and Isaiah. We will look at Hosea this week and Isaiah next time.

Hosea says some very merciful words...

#### **Romans 9:25–26 ESV**

*<sup>25</sup> As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" <sup>26</sup> "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"*

Isn't God's call beautiful?

God is all powerful, none greater than He.

And if he decides to call sinful, rebellious people to himself, it is a breathtaking event.

#### **Psalm 40:2–3 ESV**

*<sup>2</sup> He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. <sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.*

The Jews thought they deserved this call. They did not.

**Deuteronomy 7:7-9 ESV**

*<sup>7</sup> It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,*

And it was through this people that He chose that he would produce the Messiah that would not only offer redemption to them but to all of humanity.

God chose Israel to bring forth the opportunity to produce **“Mercy People”** who were both Jew and Gentile.

**Galatians 3:28 ESV**

*<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Have you considered the fact that if you are in Christ, you are a **“mercy person?”** Have you also thought about the fact that the more **“Mercy People”** there are, the more glory God receives?

**So What?** What should you do with this profound theological information?

First, and most obvious – a question. Is God calling you to become a **“Mercy Person?”** You have, in a very real sense *“prepared yourself to be a vessel of God’s wrath.”*

How so? By the very fact that you break God’s commands, you have hatred in your heart, you don’t truly love God. These are indications that you are a vessel of God’s wrath.

What should you do about this?

Respond to His call! turn from your wicked ways and trust that Christ is your only hope of rescue from the wrath of God! By faith, put on Christ and be sufficiently protected from God’s terrible wrath.

His wrath is coming for this world, and it is coming for you. There is a way of protection for you.

Please, turn to Christ today!

But for those here that are believers in Christ, how should you apply the idea that God makes his glory known by creating more **“Mercy People?”**

**Second - live a life of praise because God calls you “His people.”**

### Third - Help in the process of making more "Mercy People."

#### How?

- **Pray** for the people in your life that need transformation from Children of Wrath to Children of God.
- **Pray for courage and love** to communicate the Gospel to them
- **Actually bring it up to them.** The more you love Jesus and the Bible, the more comfortable you will be in talking about Jesus and the Bible.

Folks, if you are a Christian, you are a minister of mercy with the message of mercy that transforms people from vessels of wrath to vessels of mercy!

Praise God that He can and will use you!

*Cavina's God-mother* - She spiritually raised Cavina! Wow! What a great investment this woman made in Cavina's life. One "Mercy Person" used by God to create another "Mercy Person."

Friends our God is amazing!

#### Review - God's Patience with "Evil People" is Glorious!

- Shows off His Character
- Makes Known His Glories for His Own
- Creates more "Mercy People"

#### Conclusion -

SO WHAT??

God is God and you are not. He does not need to explain Himself to you. The fact is (proved by this text) we can't intellectually handle all there is to know about God!

So, we can't "*answer back to God.*" We cannot blame God.

The potter can do with the clay whatever he sees fit! Making some for honorable use and some for dishonorable use. It is His prerogative and you have no say in the matter. You are not in any seat of authority to tell God what to do.

God has put up with people who are against him for generation after generation. He is very patient to put up with a creation, with a people who are constantly calling Him into question.

This is C.S. Lewis' accurate perspective in his book,

#### **"God in the Dock."**

*"The ancient man approached god or even the gods as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man, the roles are reversed. He is the judge and God is in the dock. He is*

*quite a kindly judge if God should have a reasonable defense for being the kind of God who permits war, poverty, and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that man is on the bench with God in the dock."*

Wow! God is so patient with His impenitent people.

Why is He so patient?

To make the riches of His glory known to you - His vessels of mercy.

Do you get the point?

God is patient with the unbelieving (those who are prepared for destruction) to make known his glory to the believing!

Do you remember the difficult question I started with this morning?

If God is powerful enough to eradicate evil, why doesn't he?

Well, hopefully now that we've walked through this passage, you'll know the answer...

Because if he were to completely eradicate all evil, he would have to eradicate all of humanity - including you and me!

But His plan is way better don't you think? He puts up with evil to have mercy on whom he will until He says enough.

**Romans 11:25 ESV**

*<sup>25</sup> Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

And when this time comes and it will come, God will begin pouring His well-deserved wrath on this world so that he can make all things right.

But remember, the reason you can have a relationship with God is because Jesus drank the cup of wrath so you won't have to! Place your faith in Him and allow him to bear the wrath in your place.

**Is there any better way for God to make His Glory Known to Us than through His merciful Gospel? No! There is no better way!**

**Connection Group Reflection Questions**