

Title: God Be Merciful To Your People

Text: Romans 9:27-29

Introduction

Attention - *A guy had his picture taken. He was very upset with the photographer and very upset with the picture. He rushed back into the photographer and said, "Look at this picture of me! This picture does not do me justice!"*

The photographer looked at him and said, "Mister, with a face like yours, you don't need justice, you need mercy!"

That's exactly the situation we are in. We don't need justice, but we need a whole lot of mercy. - Tony Evans, Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes from More than 30 Years of Preaching and Public Speaking (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 211.

Need - We all need mercy - more than we realize!

"Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve."

Paul quotes another Old Testament prophet to prove his theological point in [Romans 9:27-29](#)...

Romans 9:27-29 ESV

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." ²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

The MacArthur Study Bible Chapter 9

Isaiah prophesied that the southern kingdom of Judah would be conquered and scattered—temporarily rejected by God—because of her unbelief. Paul's point is that the scattering Isaiah described was only a preview of Israel's rejection of the Messiah and her subsequent destruction and scattering.

Textual Idea: Paul quotes Isaiah to show that if it were not for the mercy of God, God's people, the Jews would have no chance of survival whatsoever.

And this is a truth you and I, as followers of Jesus, must come to terms with.

The Jews did not deserve salvation

The gentiles did not deserve salvation

You nor I deserve salvation.

Main Idea: God's Salvation of His People is by His Mercy Alone!

Interrogative: Okay, what do we need to know about this "merciful salvation?"

Transition: Three powerful realities regarding God's Merciful Salvation!

And the first is...

1. **God's Merciful Salvation is For a Few (vs. 27)**

Romans 9:27 ESV

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

The last time we talked, I mentioned that there are two people groups in God's economy. The Gentiles and the Jews. Well, allow me to amend and clarify that statement. There are actually three people groups: The Jews, the Gentiles, and the CHURCH (which is made up of Jews and Gentiles).

Verses 24-30 reveal the beautiful reality that God's people, the church, are comprised of Jews and Gentiles alike.

Verses 24-26, the quote from Hosea was about the Gentiles being brought into the category of God's people. This was a challenging thought from the Jewish perspective, considering they believed salvation was only for them.

In verse 27, this verse, Paul gives another challenging statement for the Jews. What is the statement Paul gives? Salvation is not only available for the pagan Gentiles, but **not all Jews will be saved!**

Wow!

But remember...

The Jews did not deserve salvation

The gentiles did not deserve salvation

You nor I deserve salvation.

The Jews especially had to come to grips with this. Salvation for everyone, even the Jews, has always been about faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 15:6 ESV

⁶ And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Salvation has never been about following the Law

Galatians 2:16 ESV

¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

So, this verse is actually a fulfillment of God's promise to the Jews that they would be saved, even if only a remnant.

Let's review [Romans 9:20...](#)

Romans 9:20 ESV

²⁰ 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?"

By the way, this was prophesied by Isaiah, not Paul. Paul is quoting Isaiah to prove that only a remnant will be saved. In other words, this idea is rooted in the Old Testament.

Perhaps this is why Isaiah "cries out concerning Israel?"

Perhaps Isaiah was heartbroken and in disbelief that the vast majority would rebuff God's amazing offer of salvation to his people, and only a few would have ears to hear and be saved.

Yet, the fact that any Jew was saved was and is an act of God's mercy.

The Jewish nation, over and over again, deserved God's justice.

Read the Old Testament, and you'll discover how longsuffering and patient God is with His chosen people. He chose them and told them exactly what they were to do and not to do.

And time after time, they would promise to do what He wanted them to do and immediately do the opposite.

Every time they failed, God had every right to crush them and send them to eternal Hell-prison. But instead, we often see mercy instead of justice.

"Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve."

Elliot and mercy...

If you think that God should save all the Jews and if he doesn't, He is unjust; then you do not understand the doctrine of God's mercy.

God is under no obligation to save anyone. However, because he is merciful, He has a remnant of those who will be saved from eternal condemnation and spend eternity with Him!

Are you saved from God's eternal wrath?

Remember, you don't deserve that.

Don't live a life of penance; live a life of Joy.

You can't nor should you pay back God for His Merciful Salvation.

But living a life of joyful gratitude seems like a reasonable way to live for God!

Review:

God's Salvation of His People is by His Mercy Alone!

- God's Merciful Salvation is For a Few

2. God's Merciful Salvation is From His Wrath (vs. 28)

A priest and a rabbi from local parishes were standing by the side of the road holding up signs. The rabbi's read, "The End is Near!" The priest, on the other side of the road, held up a sign which read, "Turn before it's too late!" They planned to hold up their signs to each passing car. "Get a job." The first driver yelled. The second, immediately behind the first, yelled, "Leave us alone you religious freaks"! Shortly, from around the curve, they heard screeching tires and a splash followed by more screeching tires and another splash. The rabbi looked over at his companion and said, "Do you think we should try a different sign"? The other man responded, "Perhaps, 'Bridge Out' might be better"?

I realize I'll get lumped with the dudes who wear the **A-frame placard** on their chests that says, judgment day is coming, but it is! We are one day closer to the Lord pouring His wrath on the earth.

I'll stand with Isaiah and Paul when they say,

Romans 9:28 ESV

²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay."

What does Isaiah mean? Why did Paul quote this?

God's mercy is wonderful, and I am grateful to be a recipient. I know what I deserve, and I received mercy instead.

Isaiah prophesied that God would *"carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay."*

In other words, God's judgment (aka his sentence) will happen, and when it does happen, it will take place completely and quickly.

Until then, God is exercising His incredible mercy on the unjust!

Another rendering of this verse says,

Romans 9:28 NKJV

²⁸ For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."

In other words, when God says enough, it will be enough.

2 Thessalonians 1:5–10 ESV

⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— ⁶ since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰ when he comes on that day to be glorified in his

saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

One day in the future, God will say "enough" and cut things short. He will usher in the terrible day of His wrath.

And while the study of the end times is good, necessary, and even helpful - the main point that Paul is making here is that the Jews, in particular, will be saved from God's wrath without a doubt.

However, it will only be a remnant of the Jews that move into the category of the redeemed people of God.

Paul wants the Jews to understand clearly that they will face the wrath of God because they rejected the Messiah.

God's wrath is nothing to be toyed with.

"God's wrath is His righteousness reacting against unrighteousness." - J.I. Packer

The wrath of God is, according to John Stott, "His steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations." - John Stott

We dare not minimize God's wrath...

"Turn God's wrath into mere enlightened disapproval, and you also turn his love into mere humanitarianism. The "consuming fire" and the "perfect beauty" both vanish." - C.S. Lewis

We live in a world where everyone does what they want when they want, and how they want. They reject their Creator and live as their own ultimate authority. God, in His mercy, allows them to do this, but there will be a day when His mercy will be depleted, and his wrath will pour forth. And those who thought they were the ultimate authority over their lives will realize with great poignancy who the true Authority is and what He is capable of.

Don't trifle with God's mercy!

"The wisdom of God devised a way for the love of God to deliver sinners from the wrath of God while not compromising the righteousness of God." - John Piper

This "way" is the cross!

The most violent expression of God's wrath and justice is seen in the Cross. If ever a person had room to complain for injustice, it was Jesus. He was the only innocent man ever to be punished by God. If we stagger at the wrath of God, let us stagger at the Cross. Here is where our astonishment should be focused. - R.C. Sproul

Friends, God's wrath has been revealed.

Romans 1:18 ESV

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

God's wrath has been poured out on Christ...

John 3:36 ESV

³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

1 Peter 2:24 ESV

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

God's wrath will be poured out on this earth because of unrighteousness.

This terrible day of God's wrath will come, and when it does, there is nothing that can stop it.

I realize to the unsaved ear I sound like the crazy A-framed placard guy who declares to everyone who will listen, "Repent, the end is near."

But friends, this is the point, and maybe that guy isn't so crazy because the end is near, and everyone everywhere needs to repent.

What is holding God's wrath from pouring out on this earth at this very moment?

Mercy!

Review:

God's Salvation of His People is by His Mercy Alone!

- God's Merciful Salvation is For A Few
- God Merciful Salvation is From His Wrath

3. God's Merciful Salvation is By His Will (vs. 29)

Romans 9:29 ESV

²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

What is the difference between Israel and Sodom and Gomorrah?

What do we know about Sodom and Gomorrah?

What do we know about Israel?

Obviously, Israel is better than Sodom and Gomorrah because Israel was far more religious and righteous, right?

WRONG!

Have you read the book of Judges? Where everyone did that which was right in their own eyes?

Have you read the Old Testament?

Israel was not the bastion of righteousness God called them to be.

God placed His favor on Abraham and the nation of Israel for His good purposes and pleasure.

Paul's point in verse 29, as he quotes [Isaiah 1:9](#), was simple.

The only difference between Israel and Sodom and Gomorrah?

MERCY!

God's amazing and glorious MERCY. God grants undeserved MERCY!

God's mercy is His to give - period. He distributes it by His will alone as He sees fit.

I get the sense in these verses that Paul is emphasizing to the Jewish legalist that they are not as good as they think they are and don't deserve what they believe they deserve.

"O you self-righteous people, how can you talk about being saved? What saving do you want? You are as full of good works as you can be and your pride shines—how can you be saved? Those who are saved by Jesus are those who are in themselves lost, ruined and undone. Until you know your ruin, and confess your sin, it is not likely you will ever accept a Savior. While you feel you can save yourselves, you will attempt it; but when you can do no more, then you will fall into the arms of your Savior; and what a blessed fall that will be!" - Spurgeon

I don't think the Jews are the only ones that struggle with righteous pride.

If you are saved, it is not because you will it.

God came up with the rescue plan.

God came up with the Christ to save you.

God came up with the cross to bear your sin through Christ.

God came up with the resurrection, which beat the curse of death.

God came up with everything necessary for your salvation and redemption, not you!

If you are a follower of Christ, a true follower of Christ, you should be marked profoundly by humility.

The next time you feel like judging someone because of who they are or the choices they make, be careful first to remember the day you were born again. Remember who you were before salvation and what God had to do to save YOU from eternal condemnation.

Don't be like the Jews who thought they deserved salvation. You did not, and you do not.

Instead, remember that every breath you've taken before and since becoming a follower of Jesus is a result of divine mercy.

Review:

God's Salvation of His People is by His Mercy Alone!

- God's Merciful Salvation is For A Few
- God's Merciful Salvation is From His Wrath
- God's Merciful Salvation is By His Will

Conclusion

Christ's mercy is obtained by Christ's death on a cross, burial in the tomb, and resurrection from the dead.

Picture Christ's death on the cross in your mind. The bloodied Savior hanging on the tree. Why? Why would God the Son leave the glories of heaven to be despised and rejected by the ones He created? Why would he go through with this?

To provide salvation for the remnant of Jews that would be saved

To provide salvation for the gentiles that would be saved

To provide salvation for you!

This is all an act of **magnanimous mercy**.

"God's mercy is so great that you may sooner drain the sea of its water, or deprive the sun of its light, or make space too narrow, than diminish the great mercy of God." – C.H. Spurgeon

God withholding what you deserve (judgment) and withholding what you do not (heaven, a relationship with God Himself for all eternity, the opportunity to be eternally loved by God himself).

Are you born-again this morning? MERCY!

What if you are not born-again? Beg for His mercy...

Reiteration:

God's Salvation of His People is by His Mercy Alone!

- God's Merciful Salvation is For A Few
- God's Merciful Salvation is From His Wrath
- God's Merciful Salvation is By His Will

Our God is a God of mercy. Live as people of mercy –

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." – Jesus

Connection Group Reflection Questions