

Romans part 48

“Waiting On Slow People”

Good morning, it is so good to be back with family, last week we were in Spokane helping a church that is going through a transition, as I sat with the leadership of that church I was again reminded how good God has been to LCF in our own transition. God has given to us a young couple who love Jesus, already know and love this community and we get to, together take LCF into the next season of growth and fruit!!

In the coming months, we are going to have a lot of times for celebration of what God has done and what He is going to do. Right in the middle of all the partying, we are going to celebrate Easter, this will Tims first Easter and we want to make it the best, a good idea is to start right now thinking of and praying for the people you want invite to Easter church, we can pack this place out with people hearing about what Jesus did for them...

I want to point you to a couple of things, ladies, there is still time to register for the retreat coming up, talk to my wife for more information, but this is one you do not want to miss out on.

We are ending our fast next Sunday with a soup potluck, boy this church can make some killer soups, but we need you to sign up so we know you are coming.

Then finally, we have a new Thursday nigh small group here at the church starting this Thursday at 6pm right here. We will meet in the annex, and we are going to do a dive into the book of Hebrews...

So with that said, let's go to;

Romans 11:16-25 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that

you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.”

²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

²⁵ For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

In our journey with Jesus and our walk of faith, we will come to times where it just seems easier to just give up and not follow Jesus. Maybe we get disappointed, we face friends and family pressure, maybe we prayed and didn't get the answer we wanted...

Or maybe you have tried to share what God is doing in your life and the ones you care about don't see to want to hear it.

The book of Romans was written to the churches in Rome, and to fully understand what is going on, you have to get the context of what the times were like and how closely it parallels us right here and now.

After Jesus resurrection, there was initially a tremendous number of Jews that began to follow the church, but after a short time religiosity began to creep in and the Jewish believers began to think that gentiles could not be saved and they rejected new followers of Jesus. Then they decided that if gentiles were going to give their life to Jesus they not only had to have faith, but they also had to follow the Jewish laws and traditions.

Then there was a great revival among the gentiles, the jews began to reject the message of Jesus and the gentiles began to outnumber the jews.

So let's unpack this passage and get something out of it.

Vs 16 keep in mind, that even if you have chosen Jesus and others have not, and just because someone has not yet chosen Jesus does not mean He doesn't love them as much as He does you, He will continue to reach out to them...

The thing that Paul was saying here was that mankind was blessed because of God's promise to Abraham. Think about this, people around you, even if they do not know Jesus are blessed just because you are living for Jesus! Our living for Jesus has an effect on those around us, I am blessed because I am in covenant with God and people around me are blessed around me.

But in **verse 17**, Paul explains that the Jews knew better than all others just how good and faithful God was. They were the covenant people and they knew and understood but now they were choosing to reject the messiah they were pulling themselves out from under the blessing of God.

When we know the truth of Jesus and choose to turn away or reject, we are removing ourselves from the very covering and protection of Jesus. Before you know Jesus, you have an excuse, but once you have known the love and grace of Jesus and choose to reject or walk away...

But by the time Paul is writing Romans, **vs. 18, far** more gentiles were followers of Christ than Jews and what was beginning to happen was that they were now turning on the Jews and teaching that they had replaced the chosen ones of God. But Paul was reminding them that not to get proud...

Through the next few verses, Paul is reminding the readers to not think that God had chosen them over His covenant with the Jews before them, the gentiles were grafted in, their salvation still has its roots in the promise to Abraham.

So I guess at this point you could say, “so what, why does this matter to me?”

If you think about it, we have this thing that sneaks in that allows us to claim that God must love us more than He loves others that don’t choose Him, we are “living for Him and He must love us more. We’re not bad, we don’t do bad things...”

But just like you and I have been pursued by Jesus, He is pursuing the ones around us that haven’t made a choice for Him.

Question: are there people in your life who you are praying for to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior?

In **verses 19-22** Paul cautions against thinking that somehow God loves those that have made a decision more than those that are no there yet, and remember, most of the proof that a person had chosen God was on their behavior, circumcision, diet, sabbath...

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²⁰ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. ²² Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

God is pursuing...

So I am going to give you some very practical ways to trust God when He seems to be taking too long, whether it is someone you are praying for, or something you are praying for. But for a moment, let’s focus on the people in our lives we are wanting to come to Christ...

- **Remember God's promises.** Did God make promises to you? Are there promises in the bible that apply to your situation?
- **Remember the blessings you have already received from that person.** Have you ever had relationships that ended badly? But in spite of that, can you remember some good benefits from that relationship? There was no hope for the Jews...
- **Resist the temptation to feel superior.** Vs. 19 ¹⁹ **You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."** here is the fact, no matter what I think I have going for me, I am saved by grace and grace alone, I simply repented and trusted.

Religious pride is a poisonous temptation, I can easily find myself looking at others with a sense of moral superiority.

- **Do not forget, I didn't earn or deserve anything.** Vs 20 ²⁰ **Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.** If we are going to reach people for Jesus,
- **Focus on me!** Vs 21 **For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.** Where I need to put my attention is on keeping my own heart pure, focusing on Jesus, not the people around me.

Each one of us is on a faith journey, we get to walk a walk of faith for a lifetime,

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling Philippians 2:12

He doesn't mean to try to earn it, he means don't grow lazy, nurture and guard your faith...

- **Don't lose hope.** Vs. 23 **And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.**

The thing I want to remember is this, God has a plan for me and the people I care about, God doesn't have a calendar or a watch; He never gives up on His people who have chosen Him and those who have not yet chosen Him. My role is to contend, pray, live life in such a way that people are drawn wanting to think and talk about Jesus...