

Monday, September 28, 2026

When in Romans part 27

The Fuel of Hope: Unbreakable Promises (Romans 9:1–9)

Summary

What does it mean for God's word to be truly unbreakable? That question sits at the heart of Romans 9, where Paul wrestles with one of the most painful realities of his life: the people he loved most, who had received every spiritual advantage, covenant, and promise imaginable, had rejected their own Messiah. Facing this grief, Paul addresses a crucial underlying question: Has God's word failed?

Paul's answer is a resounding no. He reveals that not all who are descended from biological Israel belong to the "true Israel" of God's promise. True faith has never been about physical lineage, heritage, or human effort, but about God's sovereign grace and choosing. Just as Abraham and Sarah tried to manufacture God's promise through Hagar and produced only conflict, we often fall into the trap of trying to "help" God fulfill His word in our own timing. This sermon reminds us that God has never once needed our assistance to keep His word. His promises are not suggestions or goals, they are absolute certainties. Because God's covenant was true for ancient Israel, we can walk with total confidence knowing that every promise He has made to us in Christ remains completely intact, secure, and unbreakable.

Scripture Focus: Romans 9:1-9

"I am telling the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience assures me in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, my fellow countrymen who are Israelites. To them belong the adoption as sons, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. It is not as though the word of God had failed, for not all those who are descendants from Israel are truly Israel, nor are the children Abraham's true descendants, rather, 'Through Isaac your descendants will be counted.' This means it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God. Rather, the children of promise are counted as descendants. For this is what the promise declared: 'About a year from now I will return and Sarah will have a son.'"

Theme & Key Points

THEME: Despite human rejection or our attempts to manufacture outcomes, God's sovereign word never fails, and His promises are secure for the true children of promise.

- **One Continuous Biblical Narrative:** The Bible is not split between an angry Old Testament God and a loving New Testament God; it is one unified story of God redeeming a sinful people to Himself through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, for His glory.
- **Grief Over Rejection (vv. 1–3):** Paul models Christlike love by carrying unceasing anguish for his fellow Israelites who rejected Jesus, showing that gospel-centered concern grieves deeply for those far from God rather than harboring bitterness or moral superiority.
- **Privilege Without Faith is Not Enough (vv. 4–5):** Israel possessed every spiritual advantage: adoption as a nation, the divine glory, the covenants, the law, temple worship, the promises, and the human lineage of Christ Himself, yet many still missed salvation because physical lineage cannot replace personal faith.
- **The Distinction of True Israel (vv. 6–8):** God's word has not failed simply because many rejected the Messiah. Biological descent ("children of the flesh") does not guarantee a relationship with God; only the "children of promise," chosen according to God's sovereign grace, constitute the true Israel.
- **God Does Not Need Our "Help" (v. 9):** Abraham and Sarah's attempt to fulfill God's promise through Hagar produced Ishmael and brought ongoing conflict. God fulfills His promises in His own way and timing (Isaac), proving His word is completely self-sustaining and unbreakable.

Discussion Questions

- **One Story of Redemption:** Pastor Chris emphasized that the entire Bible is "one continuous story" of God's redemptive plan. How does viewing the Old and New Testaments as one unified story change how you read passages like Romans 9?
- **Recognizing Spiritual Advantages:** In verses 4–5, Paul lists the massive spiritual heritage and privileges Israel received. What spiritual advantages or blessings have you grown up with or experienced, and how do we guard against relying on our heritage rather than a living faith in Christ?

- **Handling Unanswered Promises:** Sarah and Abraham tried to "help" God fulfill His promise by turning to Hagar, resulting in conflict. In what areas of your life are you tempted to take matters into your own hands rather than waiting on God's timing?
- **Understanding "True Israel":** Paul states in verse 6 that "not all who are descended from Israel are truly Israel." How does understanding the difference between biological inheritance and spiritual promise reassure us that God's word never fails?
- **Resting in Unbreakable Promises:** If God's promises to His covenant people could fail, our own security in Christ would be in jeopardy. How does knowing that God's word is 100% reliable give you confidence when facing uncertain life situations this week?

5 Day Devotional Guide

DAY 1: ONE UNIFIED STORY

- **Read:** Matthew 5:17–18; 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- **Reflect:** It can be easy to view the Bible as a collection of disconnected stories or to view the Old and New Testaments as contrasting portraits of God. But Jesus made it clear that He came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them. The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is one progressive narrative of God redeeming a people for Himself. When we see Scripture as one story centered on Christ, every covenant, promise, and passage finds its true clarity and fulfillment in Him.
- **Question:** How can keeping the central story of Christ in mind help you better understand difficult passages in the Old Testament?
- **Prayer:** *Lord God, thank You for the unity and perfection of Your Word. Help me to see Jesus on every page of Scripture and to anchor my faith in Your overarching plan of redemption. Amen.*

DAY 2: PRIVILEGE IS NOT SALVATION

- **Read:** Romans 9:4–5; Matthew 3:7–10
- **Reflect:** The Israelites possessed an incredible heritage: national adoption, God's glory, the covenants, the law, temple worship, and the earthly lineage of Christ. Yet, as John the Baptist warned the Pharisees, having Abraham as a biological father was not enough to save them. Religious upbringing, church

attendance, and moral heritage are wonderful blessings, but they cannot save us. God desires a sincere heart transformed by faith in Jesus Christ, not a reliance on past privileges.

- **Question:** Is there any area of your spiritual life where you are relying on past heritage or external habits rather than a daily, active trust in Jesus?
- **Prayer:** *Father, thank You for the spiritual blessings and community You have placed in my life. Remind my heart daily that my salvation rests solely on the finished work of Jesus, not my own background or efforts. Amen.*

DAY 3: GOD'S WORD HAS NOT FAILED

- **Read:** Romans 9:6–8; Isaiah 55:10–11
- **Reflect:** When people we love walk away from faith or reject the gospel, it can make us wonder if God's promises have fallen short. Paul addressed this exact doubt by declaring, "It is not as though the word of God had failed." Human unbelief does not invalidate God's truth. God has always worked through a spiritual remnant—the children of promise—rather than mere physical lineage. God's purpose is never thwarted by human resistance; His Word accomplishes everything He sends it out to do.
- **Question:** When circumstances look like God's plans are failing, how can you anchor your mind in the truth of Isaiah 55:11?
- **Prayer:** *Sovereign God, when I feel discouraged by human choices and unexpected outcomes, remind me that Your Word never returns void. Help me to trust Your unwavering faithfulness. Amen.*

DAY 4: STOP TRYING TO "HELP" GOD

- **Read:** Genesis 16:1–4; Romans 9:9
- **Reflect:** When God promised Abraham and Sarah a son, years passed without fulfillment. In their impatience, they devised a human solution through Hagar, creating Ishmael and bringing strife for generations. Yet God remained faithful to His original word, bringing forth Isaac in His own time. We often make the same mistake when we try to manufacture God's promises through human effort or shortcuts. God never needs our scheming to keep His Word; He simply calls us to trust Him.
- **Question:** Are you currently trying to force an outcome in your life instead of patiently waiting for God's guidance and timing?

- **Prayer:** *Lord, forgive me for the times I try to rush Your promises or take matters into my own hands. Give me the grace and patience to wait on Your perfect timing, knowing You are always faithful. Amen.*

DAY 5: ANCHORED IN UNBREAKABLE PROMISES

- **Read:** Hebrews 6:13–19; 2 Corinthians 1:20
- **Reflect:** The ultimate comfort of Romans 9 is that God's covenant word is completely unbreakable. If God could break His promises to His people, we would have no certainty regarding our own salvation. But all of God's promises find their "Yes" and "Amen" in Jesus Christ. His oath and covenant are unshakeable anchors for our souls. No matter what trials, doubts, or hardships come your way, you can stand secure knowing that the God who spoke the promise has the power and power alone to fulfill it.
- **Question:** Which specific promise of God do you need to stand firmly upon as an anchor for your soul today?
- **Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, thank You that Your promises are not suggestions or possibilities, but absolute certainties. Anchor my soul in Your eternal truth and let Your faithfulness give me bold confidence every day. Amen.*