

Children of the Promise

When in Romans part 28 - Pastor John Kupitz

Sermon Summary

In this continuation of our *When in Romans* series, Pastor John Kupitz tackles one of the most complex chapters in all of Scripture: **Romans 9:6–29**. Navigating the deep waters of God's sovereignty, human responsibility, and divine mercy, Pastor John clarifies that Paul's ultimate point is not to spark abstract theological debate, but to demonstrate that **God's word has not failed**—even when many of His covenant people rejected their Messiah.

Tracing biblical history from Abraham to the prophets, Paul shows that God's promises have always been fulfilled through a **remnant of faith**, rather than mere biological descent. Using visual illustrations from Genesis (Ishmael vs. Isaac, Esau vs. Jacob), Paul proves that God's election and mercy are rooted entirely in His sovereign grace, not human effort, merit, or lineage. As Gentiles who have been adopted into God's family through Christ, believers are now **children of the promise**. Far from fueling spiritual pride, this truth calls us to profound humility, deep gratitude, and heartfelt lament for those who have not yet received the Gospel.

Key Scriptures

- **Romans 9:8, 15–16:** *"It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring... For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human desire or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."*
- **Romans 9:23–24:** *"What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared beforehand for glory—even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?"*

Sunday, October 4, 2026

- **John 1:12–13:** *"To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."*

Main Takeaways

- **God's Word Has Not Failed:** Israel's widespread rejection of Jesus does not mean God's promises fell short. God's true covenant people have always been defined by faith and divine promise, not ethnic inheritance alone.
- **Mercy is a Gift, Not a Right:** God owes no one salvation. His mercy and election are grounded in His sovereign love and purpose, leaving no room for human boasting, self-righteousness, or judgment of others.
- **Believers are Children of the Promise:** Through faith in Jesus, believers from every nation, ethnicity, and background are supernaturally adopted into the true family of God.
- **Sovereignty Demands Humility and Grief:** Understanding God's electing grace should never produce arrogance; instead, it produces deep gratitude for our undeserved salvation and heartbreaking lament for those who reject Christ.

Personal Discussion Questions

- **Undeserved Mercy:** Pastor John shared that God's sovereign mercy cannot be earned or predicted by human standards. How does this truth challenge the way you think about the blessings and grace God has given you in your own life?
- **The True Family of God:** In Romans 9, Paul explains that God's covenant family is defined by faith rather than biological descent. How does seeing "Israel" as a spiritual family of promise change the way you read the Old Testament?
- **Grace Over Performance:** Using Jacob and Esau, Paul shows that God's choice comes before any human action or merit. What does it mean for your

Sunday, October 4, 2026

daily walk to know that your standing before God is rooted entirely in His choice rather than your performance?

- **Sovereignty & Responsibility:** We see the paradox of God's sovereignty and human responsibility in the story of Pharaoh. How do you personally navigate the tension between God being completely in control and humans being responsible for their choices?
- **Comfort in the Potter:** Modern readers sometimes find the "potter and clay" analogy difficult, yet ancient believers living under Roman rule found it comforting. How does keeping cultural and historical context in mind help you receive hard or uncomfortable passages of Scripture?
- **Eliminating Spiritual Pride:** The sermon emphasized that being a "child of the promise" leaves zero room for self-righteousness. In what areas of life are we most tempted to feel "better than others," and how does this passage speak to that temptation?
- **Kingdom Over Country:** Pastor John highlighted that no single modern nation is God's chosen people, because the family of God transcends all national and ethnic boundaries. How should this reality shape the way Christians view national identity, politics, and patriotism?
- **Lament for the Lost:** Paul felt deep grief over friends and family who rejected the Messiah. Is there someone in your life whose rejection of Christ causes you similar heartbreak? How can we follow Paul's example in praying for and engaging with them?

Small Group Questions

- **Warm-Up:** Pastor John mentioned that Romans 9 is notoriously complex. When you encounter passages in Scripture that are hard to understand or make you feel uncomfortable, how do you typically process them?
- **Children of the Promise:** Read **Romans 9:6–9** and **John 1:12–13**. What is the difference between being a "child of the flesh" and a "child of the promise"? How does Isaac's supernatural birth foreshadow our own spiritual rebirth in Christ?

Sunday, October 4, 2026

- **Earning vs. Receiving Grace:** In **Romans 9:10–16**, Paul uses the example of Jacob and Esau before they were born to show that God's choice is not based on human works or merit. Why is our human nature so desperate to "earn" God's favor or prove that we are better than others?
- **The Potter & The Clay:** Read **Romans 9:19–24**. Paul uses the illustration of a potter and clay to address our objections regarding God's fairness. How does recognizing God as a loving, perfectly just, and wise "potter" change how we surrender to His authority in our lives?
- **Shifting from Pride to Gratitude:** How does realizing that your salvation rests entirely on God's sovereign mercy eliminate spiritual pride or self-righteous judgment toward non-believers?
- **Application & Prayer:** Paul carried deep grief and heartbreak over his friends and family who rejected Jesus (Romans 9:1–3). Who in your life currently needs the miracle of God's softening grace? Spend time praying for their hearts together as a group.

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: Children Born of God

- **Read:** Genesis 21:1–7; John 1:12–13
- **Reflection:** Just as Isaac was supernaturally conceived when humanly impossible, our spiritual life in Christ is a miracle of God's grace—not a result of natural descent or human effort. You are a child of promise because God spoke life into your heart.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Thank God for the miracle of your spiritual rebirth and praise Him for initiating your salvation.

Day 2: Undeserved Mercy

- **Read:** Romans 9:10–18; Ephesians 2:8–9
- **Reflection:** God's grace to Jacob was not because Jacob was righteous, nor was His choice of us based on our performance. Mercy, by definition, cannot be earned. Remembering that we contribute nothing to our salvation except the sin that made it necessary leads to true humility.

Sunday, October 4, 2026

- **Prayer Prompt:** Ask the Holy Spirit to root out any subtle self-righteousness or spiritual pride in your heart.

Day 3: The Loving Potter

- **Read:** Isaiah 64:8; Romans 9:19–24
- **Reflection:** It can be unsettling to consider our human limitations before an Almighty God. Yet, our Potter is not a cold tyrant; He is the loving Father who gave His Son for us. Trusting the Potter means surrendering our demand to understand everything and resting in His goodness.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Pray for a surrender of your will to God's ultimate authority, trusting His wisdom over your limited perspective.

Day 4: Called Out of Darkness

- **Read:** Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:25–26; 1 Peter 2:9–10
- **Reflection:** As Gentiles, we were once "not my people," outsiders to the covenant promises of Israel. Yet through Christ, God has called us His beloved sons and daughters. We have been grafted into a global family that transcends earthly borders.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Praise God for adopting you into His global kingdom family and giving you an eternal inheritance.

Day 5: A Heart of Compassion for the Lost

- **Read:** Isaiah 10:20–23; Romans 9:27–29; Romans 10:1
- **Reflection:** Paul's study of divine sovereignty didn't make him cold or distant; it filled his eyes with tears for those walking away from the Messiah. A true understanding of grace breaks our hearts for those who do not know the Savior.
- **Prayer Prompt:** Lift up specific family members, co-workers, and neighbors by name, asking God to soften their hearts to receive the Gospel.