



## Sermon Text: Romans 9:14-18

Sermon Date: November 8

We returned to Romans 9:14-18 in order to examine verses 17-18. Pastor Justin opened his sermon with numerous passages concerning God's perfect sovereignty in every aspect of life. He wanted to show that Romans 9 is not an anomaly that is foreign to the rest of the Bible's teaching. God's sovereignty is shouted from every page of Scripture. As one theologian has said, "In the total expanse of human life there is not a single square inch of which Christ, who alone is sovereign, does not declare, 'That is mine!'"

As we re-entered the stream of Paul's argument, Pastor Justin called on us to remember two truths we had seen in previous weeks. First, we need to remember **Paul's argumentation**. Paul offers no human, philosophical argument; instead, he simply points to God's revelation of Himself in Scripture. Second, we need to remember that **salvation is all about mercy**. Justice is the last thing we want. By definition, no one has any claim to mercy; thus, God is not unjust to give it to some and not to others.

Pastor Justin pointed out two principles that Paul emphasizes in his appeal to God's interaction with Pharaoh.

1. **God's highest priority is his own glory.** God raised Pharaoh up and hardened his heart so that he wouldn't listen, so that he could "show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." In Israel's salvation, God had a bigger agenda than merely Israel's deliverance. He worked in such a way so that His glory and fame were magnified.
2. **God is free to harden whomever he will.** This is the conclusion Paul reaches in verse 18. Just as God is free to give mercy to whomever he desires, he is also free to harden (render obstinate and stubborn) whomever he desires. He is God.

As a clarification, we must remember that Romans 9 does not blot out everything else that the Scripture teaches. Unconditional election does not negate the truth that we make choices in this life and that we will be held accountable for them. It doesn't eliminate the necessity of faith for salvation or disobedience for damnation. No one, we must remember, will stand on the precipice of Hell and say, "I don't deserve this." God is sovereign AND humanity is responsible. Both truths are Scripturally taught, so both truths must be wholeheartedly affirmed, even if we can't comprehend fully how both are equally true.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?**
2. **Are you struggling with our passage in Romans 9:14-18? What are you struggling with?**
3. **When grappling with difficult (even frightening) theological truths, it is important to remember who God is. What are some attributes of God that can help us trust Him in these difficult texts?**