



Sermon Text: Romans 9:14-18

Sermon Date: November 1

This Sunday we returned to Romans 9:14-18. Pastor Justin highlighted two big principles to draw from Paul's answer to the objection that God is unjust if unconditional election is true.

#1 – Justice is the last thing we want: It is important to see that Paul doesn't even speak about justice throughout the rest of the paragraph; instead, he focuses upon mercy. In verse 15,16, and 18 Paul repeatedly emphasizes God's mercy in salvation. Justice calls out for our death. In our sin we are all guilty before God. And it is the mercy of God that rescues us through the work of Christ on our behalf. Salvation is entirely unfair in that regard. We should wake up every day and praise God that He is profoundly unfair to us in Christ!

Paul's emphasis on mercy in salvation is an important reminder that Romans 9 is built upon the truth of Romans 1-8. Humanity's willful rebellion and sin, our universal condemnation, our inability to be justified by works of the law, and the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation are not erased because of God's unconditional election. God is sovereign *and* man is responsible. Our task isn't to remove the tension, but to worship God while upholding all He declares is true.

#2 – We have no claims upon God: Paul highlights this truth both positively and negatively. Positively he shows in verses 15-16 that God's mercy is utterly independent of our goodness. God doesn't show mercy because there is something within us that elicits mercy. He doesn't show us the mercy of election because there is something about us that separates us from others (like the adorable orphan boy that is chosen for adoption). God's mercy is utterly independent of our goodness. This is the principle Paul clarifies in verse 16, "so then it [salvation] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." God's sovereign choice of having mercy on those whom he has mercy is completely unconditional.

Pastor Justin ended by pointing out two effects God's sovereign freedom in election should produce within us.

1. **Silence all boasting:** Since God's saving choice does not depend upon us at all, but on God, who has mercy, then we have no grounds for boasting (except in the Cross). Self-righteousness, pride, and feelings of superiority should be forever cut off. We ought to be profoundly humble.
2. **Solidify our confidence:** If God's saving choice doesn't depend upon who we are or what we do, but on Him alone, then we are forever secure, because God is unchangeable. Unconditional election is the soil in which the triumphant confidence of Romans 8 is sown.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?**
2. **The truths of Romans 9 don't overwrite anything Paul taught in Romans 1-8. Why is it so difficult to uphold the tension of man's responsibility/divine sovereignty? What are some errors we should avoid?**
3. **How can you use Paul's teaching in Romans 9:14-18 to produce greater humility and confidence?**