

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

Romans 9:1-18 (Exodus 33:12-23)

Heavenly Father, pour out Your incredible mercy on those who do not yet know You as You have been fully and savingly revealed in the Person and work of Your Son, our King, Jesus. Empower us by Your Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Your undeserved mercy with others, and, above all, we give You thanks and praise for Your mercy in loving us and enabling us to receive Your promised inheritance of rest and reign through Jesus Christ our Lord Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit; One God, now and forever. AMEN.

As I was prayerfully studying this passage in Romans, I was made aware of some cardiological concerns in one of the students with which I work. As I talked and prayed with this student's mother, God's mercy, on the child and this family, was central to my petition and my hope. As a parent, when we see our own children suffering, we wish we could take that pain on in their place. Most of the time, however, we simply cannot, and our only resource is to come before God pleading for and trusting in His mercy. While we know that in all things Gods works for the good of those who love Him, and we recognize that there are many things others must painfully endure, out of our love and care for them, we still desire deep down that we could bear their suffering in their place. We want to save them, if we could, even bearing their hurt for them. This is how the Apostle Paul is feeling as we begin looking at ***Romans 9.***

1. Paul's Anguish (Verses 1-5)

- a. Paul's love for "those of his race", those descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel, is a result of the overflowing grace of God in Him. This is the love of Christ in the Apostle by the Holy Spirit that desires the best interest

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

of others and desires to bear the curse they deserve in their place.

- i. But Paul, like Israel (as we will see) along with all of humanity, deserves to be cursed and cut-off. So, the Apostle's substitutionary sacrifice would not deliver the people of Israel from the punishment they deserve. Only Jesus' sacrifice can accomplish that, and, most of Israel rejected the only remedy for their just condemnation.
- b. Paul grieves over the majority of Jews who, at his time, rejected the Gospel of Jesus, which is nothing other the very culmination of all the blessings they had received as God's chosen People indicated in *verses 4-5*.
 - i. Does the Jews' rejection of the Gospel mean God's Word has failed? ***Romans 9:6a***
- c. No. Paul does not blame God. Actually, Paul points out that only a remnant of those descended from Israel were truly Israel. It has never been the case that being a mere biological descendent of Abraham guaranteed that one was a recipient of God's promises. This always depended upon...

2. ...God's Sovereignty (Verses 6b-18)

- a. God's Promise was to Isaac but NOT Ishmael (*verses 6b-9*)
 - i. Ash, "Not all who have the privileges of the people of God really belong to the people of God" (p. 62).
 1. This applies to Christians today as it did to Jews then. For example, Ishmael received circumcision as did Isaac, but Isaac was the one called by God to receive God's promise to be heir of the world.
 2. **READ *Romans 2:28-29; 4:11-17*** *God, in His sovereignty and according to His promise, does this.*
- b. God's Choice of Israel (Jacob) but NOT Esau (*verses 10-13*)
 - i. Isn't this unfair, for God to choose one over the other to be the recipient of His promises? No. **READ *Romans***

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

9:14. Why not? **READ Romans 9:15-16.** God is not unjust! God is merciful and compassionate...on whomever He chooses.

c. God's Mercy

- i. As stated earlier regarding Paul's desire to be accursed for his people; we all deserve to be punished for our rebellion against God. Therefore, none of us can serve as a sufficient substitute for the other. The amazing thing is that God, in His sovereign choice, has mercy on some of us. Paul emphasizes this regarding Israel in these *verses 15-16*, which quotes *Exodus 33:19*. This is a passage immediately after Israel creates and worships the golden calf. This idolatry proved that the Nation of Israel did not deserve to have a relationship with Yahweh. Israel deserved the same judgment that Pharaoh received, but, instead, Israel received God's mercy.

1. **READ Romans 9:17-18**

- a. God's sovereignty and authority over His creation allows Him to freely have mercy on whomever He chooses as well as harden the hearts of whomever He chooses.

God's Sovereign Mercy is very Good News; especially for us who are Gentiles. Just as God graciously chose Jacob over Esau, He has now chosen some of us, Gentiles, to be inheritors of the world. Objecting to God's sovereign choice as to who will receive His promise and characterizing Him as unjust fails to acknowledge that no one deserves to be His heir apart from Christ Jesus. Instead, what we, all of humanity, deserve is condemnation for our hard hearts that rebel against God; a condemnation which Jesus bore for us as our substitute. Christ alone was a sufficient sacrifice because of His sinless love for us and for

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

His Father. Because of God's mercy through the Cross of Christ Who bore our suffering in our place, we may be heirs of His promise by faith.

The truth is, as we have previously considered, mere possession of the 'oracles of God' containing God's promises (*Romans 3:2*) and all the benefits that come with those promises (*Romans 9:4-5*) do NOT mean we automatically receive His promises. Being the right ethnicity, being baptized, being a minister in the church mean nothing. We must recognize our need for God's mercy in choosing us to be the recipients of His promises. We have no right to them. We have no right, by mere association, to be considered 'children of God' and heirs of the world. No. God must mercifully elect us to this calling, which He has graciously revealed to a chosen community of people throughout the history of the Bible. Being born into or growing up in the community of people that God has graciously chosen to reveal Himself to guarantees nothing. Rather, it should demonstrate that what is required is humble faith (believing loyalty) to God's promises, and God alone enables such faith out of His mercy through His sovereign choice, something which we should be grateful for; because, if left to ourselves, we would never choose Him.

Over the years when we assemble together, many of us have prayed for God's mercy on our family and friends; for our Lord's mercy in their illnesses, relationships, and salvation. As Christians, however, we understand that the most basic need for those we love who do not yet know their own need for Jesus' suffering in their place, is for them to receive God's mercy and to be made alive to this reality for their eternal salvation. Do we have Paul's anguish over our family and friends who reject the Gospel? We should, but we also must realize that our suffering in their place cannot save them. They need to recognize Jesus' suffering

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

PASTOR MARC D. WILSON, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, LAS CRUCES, NM

in their place for their hard-hearted rebellion that deserves to be punished. And, in God's mercy, we can be instruments of that grace to our family and friends. While we cannot save people, we can point them to someone who can save them. Jesus Who already bore the punishment we deserve in our place out of God's mercy toward us. We share God's mercy revealed in the Gospel with those who are lost, and we pray for His mercy for their salvation. In God's grace, we may see His mercy work in their lives and become Christians; believers in the Gospel, all by God's mercy. Or, they may become hardened and reject the Gospel; maybe even become outward opponents of it. Either way, God is sovereign, and even the hardening of some will bring glory to Him. Most of all, we should always give thanks and praise for His underserved mercy toward us.

AMEN