

Romans 9:14-24

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[0 : 00] All right, and amen. Please have a seat and take with me, if you will, as your copy of God's Word.

We certainly have been excited as we've studied through it over the past year. I'm not really sure how long we've been doing this for now. And we've been brought now to three chapters, which I've shared with you previously.

At moments in the past weeks, I kind of wish didn't exist in the Book of Romans. There have been times where I wish we really just could have skipped to Chapter 12 and kept going on.

But to be faithful to the letter itself, to not allow the enemy to dictate for us what we teach on on Sunday mornings, here we are.

And we're dealing with some weighty truths, some things in Scripture that can be hard to understand. As even Peter wrote of Paul's writings, there are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction as they do the other Scriptures.

[1 : 28] And so as we approach things like this, we must do so reverently and humbly and maybe with a bit of fear that we handle them properly.

And so we've been looking together in Romans up to this point. We've seen Paul make this great case for justification by faith alone, that there's no thing that a human can do before God because we've all sinned.

We've all fallen short of the glory of God. And it's by faith in Jesus Christ that we have right standing before Him. And that now we have the Spirit of God which abides in us, that helps us in our trouble, in our distress, in defeating sin.

And yet, that struggle exists. That even as Christians, delivered from the bondage of sin, we still carry the weight of our flesh. And we strive against it by the Spirit within us.

Not only that, but from the exterior, we're going to experience trouble. Chapter 8, verse 18, Paul says, For I consider that the suffering of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us.

[2 : 42] And so He's lifted our eyes heavenward. He's looking and casting an eternal perspective so that as we struggle with the indwelling nature of sin and with the persecution of the world, even just the illness and the calamity that comes with the fallen world, we might look to eternal things.

And then we're going to read, beginning in verse 28 of chapter 8, through the end of chapter 9. I hope that you'll follow along with me. I'm using an ESV, so I'll try to read slowly for you in case you're not.

But let's begin in 8, 28. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He also called.

And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

[3 : 51] He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, For your sake we are being killed all the

day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No. In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

[5 : 08] They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever.

Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham, because they are his offspring.

But through Isaac shall your offspring be named. This means that 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 this is what the promise said, About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.

And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls, she was told, the older will serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means.

[6 : 17] 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 will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, Why have you made me like this?

Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory? Even us, whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles. As indeed he says in Hosea, Those who were not my people, I will call my people. And who was not beloved, I will call beloved.

[7 : 28] And in the very place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sands of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay. And as Isaiah predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is a righteousness that is by faith, but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

Join me in a prayer over our time together. Father, I pray that you will bless the preaching of your word, and I pray that it will be faithful to the text's meaning.

[8 : 35] I pray that my study, Lord, and the words that you are filling me with, that I pray will come out clearly, will point people to the great truth of the majesty of God and the purpose of salvation to this world.

I pray, Father, by your spirit, you will help us to hear and understand and apply and to rightly understand these truths so that we will be wise as we handle them.

And I pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So I've broken for you down beginning in verse 6, the end of the chapter, the chapter into kind of four sections, and we're dealing with them in three weeks. to say that the large rejection of the gospel by the nation of Israel does not discredit the gospel because the unbelief of Israel and therefore the subsequent salvation of Gentiles is consistent, number one, with God's promises.

We talked about that last week, verses 6 through 13. It's consistent with God's promises. Number two, that it is consistent with God's person. We'll look at that together today.

[9 : 50] And then three and four, which we'll look at next week. That it's consistent with God's prophecies and with his provision. And so together today, let's look at how the rejection of the gospel by the Israelites and therefore the inclusion of the Gentiles, God's sovereign plan, is consistent with God's person.

Let me draw you to the second half of verse 11. This promise has been given here by God to Rebekah for Jacob to be the one who's loved.

The promise is carried through. And then Paul writes, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls.

The promise was carried by Jacob and the acting that he's referring to, that it not being by works, is simply them being born. Jacob and Esau were twins.

Esau was the firstborn. And in so doing, he should have received the favor. He should have received all of the blessing as the firstborn, as these two are twins.

[10 : 59] But God, so that his purpose of election might stand, gave the promise to Jacob. And we talked last week at length about the doctrine of election.

And today we get to look further at how that is consistent with God's person himself. And we see in our text today, verses 14 through 24, two objections.

So Paul's laid this case for God's sovereign election of his people. That not all Israel is Israel. That he is saving now the church, which includes us. And there are objections that come up in people's minds.

I would imagine that Paul has taught this now a number of times. And these have been common questions. I would propose that it's even questions in his own mind that he's had run through his mind and he's had to deal with with the scriptures.

I remind you in chapter 9 that he uses 12 Old Testament quotes, nine of which are first person God. We know that all of the Bible is inspired by our Lord.

[12 : 05] All written by him. But there are cases in the Old Testament where God actually speaks. It's the record of his voice and what he actually says. Nine of them are first person God.

Why? This is what I want to say to you to preface all of this. Why does Paul use these particular Old Testament quotes? It is to quiet us.

God himself has spoken on these matters. We will not understand all of it, this side of glory. The more I think about that, I'm not even sure we'll understand it, the other side of glory.

We may not care to understand it because we'll be in the presence of the Almighty. But this side of glory, we certainly will not completely wrap our minds around God's full sovereignty and control.

What Paul is telling us is listen to what the Lord says of these things. So the first objection in verse 14.

[13 : 13] What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? And Paul's answer is the most emphatic no he could give in the Greek language.

You could probably think of some English versions of the most emphatic no that could have been given. It's meginnoito. It's impossible. No, no, no. King James has rendered it.

God forbid. It would be blasphemy to say such a thing. This by no means is forceful. No. God has sovereignly chosen who will be saved.

Does that make him unjust? No, no, no. Exactly what Paul is saying. And then he quotes verse 15. He quotes what God says to Moses.

I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. But before we deal with what's happening with that Old Testament quote, let's look together just at a few texts.

[14:17] Genesis 18.25. Abraham says, Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?
Zephaniah 3.5 says that God does no injustice.

Malachi 2.17. Listen to this. You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, How have we wearied Him? By saying, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them.

Or by asking, Where is the God of justice? Malachi says, You have made God grow tired of you because you keep asking, How is that fair?

As we look across the world, we want it to be a certain way. God doesn't seem to be working things out the way we think it should be done. Where is the God of justice? Malachi says he's growing weary of those questions.

Paul says to us, God's character is not only defined by justice. What if it was? What if God was only completely just?

[15:28] And He is. But what if He was only completely just? And this is the proper perspective we need as we read through this. The original audience of this letter would have had it read to them much the way I read beginning in verse 28.

And that took a while, didn't it? But it would have been read to them beginning in chapter 1, verse 1. It would have been a grand sermon. It would have taken hours to sit and listen to. But they would have just recently heard in chapter 3, verse 10, there is none righteous, not one.

No one seeks after God. No one does good. Paul has clearly laid that case for us that by no work that we can do will we be justified before God.

And it comes to here. They have no room for self-righteousness at this point. Right? They are lamenting their own condition.

They know that apart from God's work in their life, they are totally and utterly lost. If God were fully just, if that was all of His character, all of us would be damned.

[16:40] All of us are guilty in the original sin, and we ourselves have committed so much sin. All of us deserve damnation.

It's ours. We bought it with our sin. And that's the condition that we read about the glorious, sovereign election of God to us.

When we begin to think that we deserve things, look at me and my great life. we begin to read these things in a much different perspective, but we are, were enemies of God apart from Jesus Christ.

Praise God that Jesus' character, God's character is not just wrapped up in His justice. Psalm 37.6 says, He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noonday.

So God is righteous, perfect, and holy. Psalm 97.2 Clouds and thick darkness are all around Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

[17:50] And then add to that Psalm 33.5 He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. Psalm 89.14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.

Steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. So God, being fully just and righteous, must punish sin.

There is no sin ever committed, ever has been, being committed, ever will be committed, that will not be punished by God. So for those of us that our end is not destruction, full and final, eternal punishment for our sin, who was punished on our behalf?

Jesus Christ. Because God is fully righteous, fully just, and yet He is love. He has shown some mercy.

We did not deserve it. You cannot think that way. You have become a God in your own mind if you think you deserve the favor of God.

[19:11] Verse 15. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. We often don't understand New Testament text because we don't understand our Old Testament.

We don't know where Paul is quoting from in this case. We know he said it to Moses because he says that. That might be the extent of our understanding.

The original reader knew exactly what he was talking about. He knew the story and the condition, the case for this language. In Exodus chapter 33 is where this comes from.

We see the people of Israel having been led out of captivity in Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, Pharaoh's army destroyed.

They camp at the base of Mount Sinai and Moses goes up on the mountain. While he's up there, in this brief time he's up there, they get bored and they say, where has Moses gone?

[20 : 19] Where's our leader? This man that represented God. And so what do they do? They melt down all their gold and they build a golden calf. Moses gets news of this.

God informs him of it. He pleads their case. He goes back down the mountain. This is when he breaks the tablets. He's so angry. He breaks the Ten Commandments at this time. God commands that 3,000 men be killed as a punishment for this sin.

But he doesn't destroy all of Israel. Moses goes back up on the mountain. A couple of weeks ago we talked about the parallel between Paul's lament for Israel that he desired that he himself could be cut off from Christ in order that Israel would be saved.

And that was reflective of what Moses cried out to God. Moses said, leave me behind. If you're not taking your people, leave me behind too. You can count me accursed if you're not going to save your people.

God promises him that he'll go with him. He'll deliver the people to their final destination to the promised land. And then in verse 18 of Exodus 33, Moses says, please show me your glory.

[21 : 36] Moses is amazed already at what God is doing. He says, please show me your glory. And God says, I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you my name, the Lord.

And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. God is incredibly significant. Think of where we are.

We're on the very tail end of this story of Israel betraying God, deserving destruction. Not that they had ever deserved to be let out to begin with, but certainly now, God could have punished them.

Moses pleads with God, and God adds to his name, the Lord, I am, and says, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

What a great comfort this would have been to Moses. It didn't cause Moses to ask questions.

Moses didn't go, wait a minute, but how was that fair?

[22 : 42] He said, good. I am glad that you are the Lord, and for some reason you are on our side, because we do not deserve it. When this name was originally given to Moses, chapter 3 of Exodus, verse 13, then Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name, what shall I say to them?

It's the first giving of this name. God said to Moses, I am who I am, and he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you. God also said people of Israel, the Lord, same Hebrew word, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. This is the name that the Hebrew people won't say, Yahweh.

It's called Y-H-W-H in the Hebrew. This is that name, and it contains in it so much amazing truth, but essentially what God is saying is that I am God, and you are not.

I am God. I answer to no one. Everything answers to me. I like this. Everything plugs into God. God plugs into nothing.

[24 : 09] He is self-sustaining. He is self-existent. all power in the universe is in him. And so this God says to Moses, I will declare before you my name, the Lord.

I am. And I will have compassion, on whom I will have compassion, and I will show mercy, to whom I will show mercy. It's not really a complete answer to the question, is it?

It's not. If you think as logically as I do, it's not a complete answer to the question. Is there injustice then on God's part?

Paul says no. Couldn't be. That's impossible. You want to know why? Because God says this is how he functions. Because God is just, and we know that to be true. So if God's doing this, it's not unjust.

That's the answer that we're given to this question. And it's yours to choose what you do with that. I hope that you humble yourself to that reality.

[25 : 17] I hope that you won't stand in judgment over it. So verse 16, he goes on, so then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, for this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on

whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

That's interesting, he actually juxtaposes Pharaoh against Moses. Again, contextually, think of the story. So we have Moses, the adopted brother of Pharaoh, both leaders of large groups of people, both murderers, Pharaoh, many Israelites were murdered under his hand.

You remember that the reason Moses fled Egypt was because he killed an Egyptian who was being harsh to one of the Israelites. Both murderers neither deserved the favor of God, and yet one did, and the other was destroyed.

To what end? God's glorious, magnificent name. That it would be proclaimed, that he might show, exhibit, and we're going to get here later, his wrath to the world for sin as well as his mercy.

[26 : 41] Now, Paul does not deny the necessity of faith on our part. Now, see, Romans 1, 16 and 17, kind of the whole thematic verses for this book.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who, what? Beliefs. To the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. So, our salvation is necessitated. There's necessity for faith.

Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, Paul writes, For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Is faith required on our part? Absolutely. Who works the faith? God Almighty, to His glorious praise. The second objection, that was amazing, the second objection, You will say to me then, why does He still find fault?

[27 : 53] For who can resist His will? How many of you, please don't raise your hands, but how many of you, when first dealing with God's election, ask this question.

Maybe not in this exact phrasing, but ask this question. I did, but I wrestled with it. I can remember the first time I read Romans chapter 9, with that question in my mind, and I came to this point, I was so elated, because I thought the answer, like the real answer to the question, was right on its heels. I thought, here it is, I'm going to work it all out now, I'm going to totally understand the universe, after I read the rest of chapter 9. We don't get the answer, do we?

Why does he still find fault for who can resist his will? And I love Paul's writings. I think if you read Paul's writing, dramatically, you'll, you begin to kind of feel the sarcasm sometimes, the rhetoric, because his response is, but who are you, oh man, to answer back to God?

Will what is molded say to its molder, why have you made me like this? Now, the evil is not in asking the question. It is okay to ask questions.

[29 : 14] It is okay to wrestle with doctrines. Please seek out the truth. the problem is when we answer back to God.

When we stand in judgment over him. Talking back. Have we all gotten popped for talking back to our parents? You know the difference between answering your parents, having a conversation with them, and talking back.

Much different. That's what Paul is correcting here, that we would talk back to God. And he uses this analogy. And it's not a specific text that he's quoting, but there are a number of times the same analogy is used throughout the Old Testament.

So I just want to show you a few. Isaiah 64, verses 6 and 8, says, We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

[30 : 25] Don't you catch all that? All of us are utterly sinful. No one comes to you, no one turns to you of their own accord, because you have hidden your face from us. But now, O Lord, you are our father, we are the clay, and you are our potter.

We are all the work of your hand. Jeremiah 18, verses 1 through 6, Arise and go down to the potter's house, this is God talking to Jeremiah, and there I will let you hear my words.

So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel, and the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hands, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done, declares the Lord? Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

So in the positive, God can take us, who are utterly spoiled by our sin, and he can rework us. He can change us because we are pots.

[31 : 31] He is the potter. And then the most striking one, back in Isaiah, chapter 45, verse 9, it says, Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots.

Does the clay say to him who formed it, what are you making, or your work has no handles? Are we, those people, woe to him who strives with him who formed him, who answers back to God? What are you making? Or, your work has no handles. If you're one of these people, as I have been, so I'm not standing in judgment over you, I have been arrogant, I have stood in judgment over God's word, he's calling you really silly.

Does a pot ever say to the potter, how come you haven't given me a handle? It would be insane for something like that to happen, right? Paul is pointing out the insanity of you standing in judgment over almighty God.

So he says, has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump of clay one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

[33 : 00] So he makes a statement in a rhetorical question. God, desiring to show his wrath, made known his power with much patience. He made vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

glory. This is us, even us, even us, whom he called not from Jews only, but also from Gentiles. Remember where Paul is in the book, right? We talked about how it seems really random at the beginning of chapter 9 that Paul laments over Israel. Those who were given many of the blessings, the privileges of God, that they had turned their back on the Messiah.

He laments over that. They're his people. Right? Don't we do the same sometimes when we approach the doctrine of election? We lament over those who are not saved.

Paul's in the same place. Paul's not high and mighty, casting judgment. God is God. God is wrathful. God judges. Right? Paul himself is broken over this.

[34 : 13] But like Moses, he ultimately has the right perspective. Verse 24, he says, even us. We're all aware of how filthy and vile we are.

Are we not? It's really easy, really easy to look at somebody else and think that they are polished and put together. To think that they don't sin. Look at them. They're phenomenal.

We do that. Very often we elevate people in that way. Christian artists. It happens all the time with them because they sing emotional songs about God. They must be perfect. Preachers, that happens a lot with.

I hope that I talk honestly about myself enough that you don't do that with me. I struggle with sin the same way you do. I need a gracious God to help me live every day the same way that you do.

God is so we should connect with that. Even us, the worst of sinners, he has called not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles.

[35 : 20] Praise him. Now let's be sure we pause here as we see the potter making objects of destruction and objects of glory to recognize that God is not the source of evil.

James 1.13 says, let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one. And Habakkuk 1.13 says, you who are of pure eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.

These are one of those apparent paradoxes of scripture. And I say that carefully because there are no paradoxes in scripture. There are no inconsistencies in scripture.

But it is an apparent paradox. For God to be fully sovereign over all things and control of all things, doesn't God then also have to be the creator of evil?

Would the scriptures say no? He is not. No. I have a little mind and I cannot work out that in its entirety. But I trust that the Bible is true and that it's sufficient, that it's enough.

[36 : 35] God has given me all that I'm supposed to know and I'm finally coming to a place in my life where I can just rest in that. I don't have to work it all out all the time.

I want to give you an example of a man in scripture that wrestled with the sovereignty of God. I want you to turn with me to the book of Job. We're going to start in chapter 32.

This is bringing us to a closing for those of you who are getting concerned about that. Now Job began his great struggle in the world in a very positive way.

We know Job had found favor in God's sight, which means when you read that in the Old Testament, that means God had given him grace. Read that properly. God had blessed him with many children and great lands.

The devil came to God and said, I see that Job serves you, but what if we stripped away the blessings? Peace by peace, the family was taken away, the land was taken away, his health was taken away.

[38 : 01] And he begins to deal with it in a very healthy way. But then his friends come to visit. Job in the book of Job has three friends that come to visit him to convince him that this calamity has been brought on him because of his own doing.

Because the way God deals with people is those who do right, he shows favor to, and those who do wrong, he does not. And there's this back and forth in the beginning, 31 chapters, back and forth between his friends and him, where they basically say, there is no way you are righteous in God's eyes, because he wouldn't deal with you this way if you were.

And Job responds, yes I am, let me tell you all the things that I do, let me tell you how I handle my affairs, let me tell you all these things. And he continues to build himself up as righteous in their eyes. And then a guy comes on the scene named Elihu, who I love, and I really wanted to name Judah Elihu, but we decided against it.

But Elihu comes on the scene and begins to speak some sense into the situation. And if you look in chapter 32, verse 2, it says that Elihu, the son of Baharel, the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger.

He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God. What Job was doing was he was making himself in the right at the expense of God's character.

[39 : 29] He was saying to his friends, no, no, no, but I am righteous. I am righteous. And then the nagging question beyond that is, why is God dealing with you in this way?

Why is it then that God is being unjust? Wasn't that the question they were asking? Is there no justice on God's part? If you're righteous in his eyes, why does he deal with you in this way?

The Lord, God, confirms that. That's what's going on in Job's heart in chapter 40, verse 8. He says, will you condemn me that you may be in the right?

So go with me here. Let's listen in on what Elihu said to Job beginning in chapter 34, verse 16. Chapter 34, verse 16.

This is phenomenal stuff. Elihu, six chapters, he speaks to Job, and then God picks up where Elihu leaves off and keeps after him. Chapter 34, verse 16.

[40 : 37] If you have understanding, hear this. Listen to what I say. Shall one who hates justice govern? No. Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty, who says to a king, worthless one, and to nobles, wicked man, who shows no partiality to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands.

God, righteous judge, who governs. That's what Elihu is saying. Then chapter 36, verse 22. Behold, God is exalted in his power.

Who is a teacher like him? Who has prescribed for him his way? Or who can say, you have done wrong? The charge that Elihu brings to Job.

And then God gets on board. Chapter 38, verse 2. God says, Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Dress for action like a man. I will question you, and you make it known to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

[41 : 50] Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? Or on what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

You hear what God says to the man who questions him? Who are you, O man?

To answer back to God, what he says. Job responds, chapter 40, verse 3. Then Job answered the Lord and said, behold, I am of small account, and what shall I answer you?

I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer twice, but I will proceed no further. See Job's humility?

God says to Job, I am God, and you are not, and you are to be quiet. What's Job saying? Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And the Lord responds to him, chapter 40, verse 7, dress for action like a man.

[43 : 07] I will question you, and you make it known to me. God says, anyway, you're going to answer me just the same. Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you might be in the right?

Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? And he goes on for two chapters. And then Job, I would just be trembling.

God were speaking to me directly as he speaks to Job, but God speaks to us by his word directly. Right? Listen to Job's response.

Job 42, verse 2. I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know. Hear, and I will speak.

[44 : 06] I will question you and you make it known to me. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. Therefore I despise myself and repent. in dust and ashes.

So here's a man who questioned the sovereignty of God in all things. And there's where he ends up repenting in dust and in ashes.

Where are you in this today? Do you stand in judgment over God or do you humbly submit yourself to his word which has been brought down from above to you?

Are you talking back to God this morning? Or are you being quiet? I hope the latter of those two. Last week I told you that the doctrine of election was not meant to confuse us. It wasn't meant to make us feel that God's character has been destroyed.

[45 : 16] It's meant to serve as a comfort to our souls. As we walk through troubling times to know that God is fully sovereign over us, our life, our final salvation.

As I sin against holy God to know that I cannot lose my salvation because it's all of him, brings comfort to my soul. It should cause us to praise God.

We don't deserve his salvation. Church, do we believe that? If you believe that your final resting place was absolute and utter destruction forever, you bought it.

It was yours. But instead, Christ took it from you and he gave you his righteousness. If you believe that, it will cause you to praise him, question him.

And it's meant to encourage us to evangelism, to know that almighty God goes with us when we share the gospel, that he is in control of all things, and no one can stand against the church in the advance of the gospel.

[46 : 34] It is all God's doing. And all of these ultimately are a result of our affections being moved toward him. We will do these things.

We will automatically praise. We will go and evangelize. Our souls will be comforted when we are wrapped up in who God is. When we are pulled from this temporary place to heavenly realms and we understand who we are in Christ.

Charles Spurgeon wrote a sermon called Love's Logic. It was written on 1 John 4.19. This is actually our closing. So listen to this quote from that sermon quickly with me.

We love him because he first loved us. This is 1 John 4.19. Love to God, wherever it really exists, has been created in the bosom by a belief of God's love to us.

No man loves God till he knows that God loves him. And every believer loves God for this reason first and chiefly, that God loves him.

[47 : 48] He has seen himself to be unworthy of divine favor, yet he has believed God's love and the gift of his dear son, and he has accepted the atonement that Christ has made as a proof of God's love, and now being satisfied of the divine affection towards him, he of necessity loves God.

That is the place where Paul writes from. Not in a place of judging, not in a place of asking, is that not fair? But saying, I'm glad God isn't fair.

If God were fair, I'd be destroyed. But he loves me. And remember he's in the middle of his lament for Israel, and he's going to go on in the next two chapters to talk about how he still loves Israel.

And in all of this, at the end, this big dialogue, all of it, chapter 11, verse 33, he says, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways, for who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, or

who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid.
For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. That's
where he goes with all of this conversation.
[49 : 11] And that is certainly where we should go as well. Let's pray together.