

## Romans 9:25-33

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[0:00] So we are continuing and going to finish now chapter 9 this morning, Lord willing, that I don't fall over on the stage.! And so let's begin this morning by reading together, beginning in verse 25, and we'll go through the end of the chapter.

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. 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 sand 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 become 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.

[1:16] 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 prayer. Father God, we thank you for the precious gift of your word. We thank you that you inspired Paul to write these words to the believers in Rome.

And that they were recorded and preserved throughout bloody, bloody years of history. And many attempts to eradicate Christianity from this world.

That these words have survived and have been brought to us for our good this day. We pray, Father, that you will be generous to us by your Spirit.

That we might hear and understand the value found in these verses this morning. And we pray this in the precious name of Christ. Amen.

[2:14] So, Paul has been building a case from the beginning, just to remind you again where we've been. It's difficult often to fit our text into the proper context if we don't talk about it.

So, he's built this case from the beginning of Romans that our justification before God, our right standing, is by faith alone. That it cannot be attained by works.

Whether a Jew who has the law and works at it that way, no matter how zealous they were to attain justification by the works of the law, they were not able to.

Or a Gentile who doesn't have the law, but yet we have the law of God on our hearts. And therefore, we are just as guilty before him for transgressing that law.

So, all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, chapter 3. Right? And therefore, all of us need a Savior. All of us need a way back to God.

[3:12] The only way that could be accomplished was through the blood, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. There must have been a payment for sin. For God to be fully just, all sin must be punished.

And for the sins of the church, they were punished in Christ. He took the wrath of God on our behalf. And we turn to the more practical part of these doctrines.

And he gets us into chapter 8. He begins to talk about the internal struggle that happens as we still carry on the baggage of our flesh. It's still difficult to live in this life. We have the Spirit of God abiding within us.

And yet, it still is so hard. But once we're regenerate believers, we don't just snap our fingers and things start working for us, do they? We still have to battle and struggle with our flesh.

And beyond that, there are exterior issues happening to us. Because we're Christians, the world hates us. And we're going to suffer. If you live a godly life, you will suffer for your faith.

[ 4 : 16 ] And more, we'll suffer just in this world because it's fallen. It's not the way God intended it to be. There's sickness and pain. We're going to suffer.

And then Paul encourages us. Verse 28. I hope you're familiar with this. And we know that for those who love God, all things work for good. All things.

The momentary trouble of this world is not to be compared with the future glory. And he drives in a more pointed way the doctrine of election.

See, verse 29 of chapter 8. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of a son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And a question then arises, both in his mind, and I'm sure in the minds of many people he has talked to, well then what about the Jews?

What about the Jews? We understood them to be God's people. We thought they were God's chosen people. But look at the scores of them that are rejecting the gospel. Look at how many of them have totally turned their backs on the coming of the Messiah.

[ 5 : 29 ] The one that they are eagerly waiting for. And yet, they've rejected him. And he laments that in the beginning of chapter 9. He says that he himself wished that he could be accursed, cut off from Christ, for the sake of his brothers, for the Israelites.

They're the ones that have received all these privileges, verse 4 and 5. All these blessings of God. All these things that were meant to show them the Christ. That they might receive him when he came.

Why haven't they? Verse 10 and 11 gets into that. So, it seems so random at this point that he unpacks the doctrine of election for us in chapter 9.

He deals with some of the objections to it. But it's not at all. Because the question for these early Christians was, weren't the Jews God's people?

Weren't they his chosen? Weren't they the elect? And look what's happened. So, it would seem that their disbelief discredits the gospel.

[ 6 : 28 ] If they were God's special people and they're not receiving it, then hasn't that somehow discredited the gospel? The gospel that's been carried now to the Gentiles as well? So, we've looked at the chapter in that light.

Beginning in verse 6. That the large rejection of the gospel by Israel does not discredit the gospel. In fact, it's consistent in verses 6-13 with God's promises.

And we saw together how the promises he made contained within them his sovereign grace. So, we look at Jacob and Esau. Before they had done anything good or bad, God said, Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated.

Second half of verse 11. In order that God's purpose of election might continue. Not because of works, but because of him who calls. And the following week, it was last week, we looked at how their rejection is consistent with God's person.

Verse 14-24, Paul uses three first-person direct quotes from God as he asks these questions. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part?

[ 7 : 41 ] And he answers emphatically, by no means. No, no, no. But then God's response to that. We want to fully understand how the justice of God works.

We want to totally unwrap that and understand it in entirety. But God's simple response to that is, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

And we talk about how God is God, and you are not. You are a created thing, a pot later on.

And how is it that you as a pot would ever question the potter, the creator? We know that there is a tension in the scriptures between God's sovereign election and man's responsibility.

I will never deny that we must believe. Repent. Turn from our sin and believe. Know that there's nothing good within ourselves.

[ 8 : 41 ] There's no possible way that we can ever have a right relationship with God apart from Christ. We must believe that. The Bible teaches it to us very clearly.

And so it seems to be a paradox. It seems to be inconsistent. You'll hear me call it an apparent paradox, because it's not.

I don't understand why it's not. But God said it, and therefore I believe it. I hope that over the past couple of weeks you've positioned yourself humbly under the word of God.

Let it come down to you as his words, the creator God, to a created thing, and begun to try to see how this doctrine will work into your life and then spill out of it.

So, we're going to deal with the last two ways that Israel's large rejection of the gospel is consistent. [ 9 : 43 ] It's consistent with God's prophecies, and it's consistent with God's provision. So first, let's look at how the unbelief of Israel is consistent with God's prophecies.

And we find this in verses 25 through 29 of chapter 9, where Paul quotes from my favorite prophet, Hosea. You see there in verse 25 and verse 26.

So let's turn to the book of Hosea together. We're going to take a little jump away from Romans for a bit. Spend a little time in Hosea to understand this passage, this incredible commentary on this Old Testament prophet.

Hosea's ministry was in the latter half of the 8th century. There's some debate about how long exactly it was. The book itself is a little bit ambiguous as to the starting and stopping point.

Somewhere between 35 and 66 years are the guesstimates of how long Hosea ministered. It's important to know, though, that it was during the most turbulent time in Israel's history, just prior to Assyrian exile.

[ 10 : 50 ] And it's also important to know, in a moment, you'll understand why, but it's important to know that he was a contemporary of Isaiah. His ministry started a bit before, I think 15 to 20 years before Isaiah came onto the scene.

But they were both together ministering to Israel at the same time in the latter half of the 8th century. And Hosea had a very unique calling.

Many of the prophets were asked to do interesting things to display God's gracious call to his people. Hosea's, I think, most of all.

He was called to live a real-life pageant out in front of Israel as God told him to go take a wife of Hordom, a harlot.

One who either was that before he married her or who, in marrying her, he knew she would be unfaithful to him. And it was meant to be a picture of how Israel is with God the Father, with their holy husband.

[ 11 : 56 ] So let's look together at verse 2 of chapter 1 in Hosea. When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, Go take to yourself a wife of Hordom and have children of Hordom, for the land commits great Hordom by forsaking the Lord.

So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Deblame, and she conceived and bore him a son. Now this is probably the only child that he had biologically.

We know that because of the language that she conceived and bore him a son. The others were not. She conceived again, verse 6, and bore a daughter.

It doesn't say bore him a daughter, it just says bore a daughter. So more than likely, these were children of unfaithfulness. And he has three. He has a son, and then a daughter, and then a son. And God gives them prophetic names that meant something significant. The first was Jezreel, which means to scatter. The second was Lo-Ruhamah, or no mercy.

[ 13 : 14 ] And the third was Lo-Ami, meaning not my people. It seemed like such a miserable home. This must have been... People must have looked at this situation and just shook their heads at it.

But they should have, right? They should have looked at this situation and recognized that this was a picture of who they were. That they had been betrothed to God, and yet they betrayed Him.

They went out and sowed their oats and had children, spawned sin. It was meant to be disgraceful and look despicable.

So he has these three children. And then verse 10 says, Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered.

And in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, it shall be said to them, Children of the living God. That's verse 26 in chapter 9, right? That's what he's quoting. You are not my people, it shall be said to them, Children of the living God.

[ 14 : 26 ] So it continues to play out. There's some action on Hosea's part. His wife actually leaves him, and he does some things that God orders him to do, some ways in which he protects her. And the whole thing is meant to be a picture of the way that even when we're unfaithful to God, he continues to be faithful to us.

Hosea finally goes on God's command in chapter 3. We won't be reading this today, but he finally goes, as God commands him, and he buys her out of the slave market. She has gotten herself into a situation where she now owes so much money that she's being sold as a slave.

And he goes and he buys her for a great price. A huge price. When you read this, it just lifts off some things. We don't really know how much that was. But the people in Israel understood the price he paid for her was immeasurable.

And it's a picture of God buying us out of the slavery market of sin with the immeasurable price of Christ. It's such a cool, such a cool story.

So I want you to go back and read it at some point later on. But look with me in chapter 2, at verse 14. God says, Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her.

[15:38] And there I will give her vineyards and make the valley of Accor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. And then skip down to verse 21.

And in that day, I will answer, declares the Lord, I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth. And the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the soil. And they shall answer Jezreel.

The same name of the first son, right? Which means to scatter, but it also means, in Hebrew, to plant. To sow. So he flips the meaning of the word.

Jezreel. In verse 23, And I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on no mercy. And I will say to not my people, you are my people.

And he shall say, you are my God. And there's the paraphrase in verse 25 of chapter 9 in Romans. And you are welcome to flip there again if you'd like.

[16:37] But verse 25, Paul quotes, As indeed he says in Hosea, Those who were not my people, I will call my people. And her who was not beloved, I will call beloved. Remember our no mercy, our character, his daughter, Lo-Ruhamah.

This can also be translated as beloved. So Paul is quoting the same, but using a different meaning of the Hebrew word, a different, a synonym, so to speak, of the Hebrew word.

And Paul gives us incredible commentary on this. So when we're reading this, the Israelites are being prophesied to by Hosea, and we're thinking, okay, so God is speaking to the Israelites.

They have been, they've betrayed him, but yet he is God, so he's calling them back to himself. He's going to love them just the same. He's a faithful God, gracious and merciful. His loving kindness never ends.

This is what they're reading here, but Paul expands it for us, doesn't he? Because what did it say in Romans chapter 9, verse 24? After he has gone on to talk about how some vessels are prepared for destruction and some are prepared for mercy, to be this display of God's glorious grace to the vessels of mercy, it says, even us, Paul says, even us, wretched, wretched sinners, whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles.

[18:06] And so here we see Paul's commentary on Hosea is that when God says, those who are not my people, I will call my people, it's this great expansion of the gospel beyond just the original people of faith, the Jews, to the Gentiles.

The one full of the Spirit reading Hosea would have said, that's awesome. He's not just talking about Jews. He's talking about the world. The gospel now is going to go forth from just a people to the people, to peoples.

peoples. This should cause us to rejoice the doctrine of election. Seeing that the Jews have rejected the gospel doesn't discredit it at all.

Because God is sovereignly working and calling His people. Right? Verse 6 of chapter 9, 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 who are children of Abraham are because they are His offspring.

But through Isaac shall your offspring be named. So we are Israel. We are the descendants of Abraham by the Spirit.

[19:26] That is awesome, awesome truth. And it goes on in verse 29. And as Isaiah predicted, concerning the people of Israel.

Right? I just lost my place in my notes. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel. Excuse me, in verse 27. And as Isaiah cries out concerning Israel.

So he has now talked about the gospel expanding to the nations. And now he's saying, but as Isaiah cried out concerning Israel, though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

Where is that language familiar? We were just there in Hosea, weren't we? Do you recall Hosea said that the people of Israel should be numbered as the sands of the sea? Do you recall that Hosea was ministering to the people of Israel a bit prior to Isaiah coming on the scene?

So Isaiah takes this language and clarifies for us. Gives us some greater understanding in Isaiah chapter 10 verse 22 and 23. For though your people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.

[ 20 : 35 ] And he's talking about return from Assyrian exile. Destruction is decreed overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts will make a full end as decreed in the midst of all the earth.

And as Isaiah predicted, verse 29, If the Lord of hosts had not left his offspring, he would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah. Also could be translated survivors.

So we see that the gospel has expanded, it's gone out, gone to all the world, and yet has not rejected the Israelites. Has not rejected the Israelites.

Paul himself, an Israelite, had received the gospel of grace. God has not turned his back on his original special people.

Just that the promises were not what they thought at first. People have always come to God by grace alone, through faith alone.

[ 21 : 40 ] Always. And now, in Christ alone. The people of old were justified before God because of their faith. They didn't even understand how it was that God would fulfill his promises, but they believed that he would.

Now we know exactly how he fulfills his promises in Christ. All the promises of God are yes and amen. So he hasn't rejected Israel.

Chapter 9, verse 6. Again, it's not as though the word of God has failed. Shepherds in these days were hired hands.

A shepherd never owned his own sheep. If you owned sheep, if you had that kind of wealth, you hired somebody to come along and tend your sheep for you. And if a shepherd was washing the sheep and didn't do his job as he should, and one of those sheep was carried away by a lion, some other threat, a bear, remember David slaying both a lion and a bear, one of the sheep was carried away, they would actually go after the remnant of that animal.

They would try to bring back some piece of the animal to prove to the one who had hired them that something had eaten the animal. Not that they were stowing away a special flock for themselves, cutting out a little of the flock and putting it over someplace for their own good, or not that they had slaughtered and eaten it themselves, but that something had happened and had carried that animal away.

[ 23 : 22 ] Amos 3, 11 and 12. Amos wrote, Therefore, thus says the Lord God, an adversary shall surround the land and bring down your defenses from you, and your strongholds shall be plundered, thus says the Lord.

As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued with the corner of a couch and part of a bed.

So, God will, in fact, Jesus Christ will, in fact, rescue a remnant of Israel to prove that they're his and that he did his job well.

Now, at this point, so many of us, so many of us want to say, but how is it fair? How is it fair? How is it possible that this is the God that we serve?

Isn't that the question that was asked in chapter 9, verse 19? You will say to me then, why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? Your perspective of you is so, so wrong.

[ 24 : 34 ] You have not yet come to grips with how holy God is and how very not you are. Mankind is utterly spoiled by sin.

We inherited it from Adam, that original sinner, we are the same. We are wretched before God apart from Christ. We are as filthy rags.

Ask me later, I'll explain to you what that symbol, that picture is of. Recognize that we were created in the image of God, yes, but that was spoiled.

world. A mirror meant to look at perfect, you've got all these mirrors in your house, they're perfect, glass, coated with silver on the back, no flaw in them whatsoever, but sin smashed that mirror to pieces.

We can only see a bit of the reflection of God and who we are apart from Christ. Christ, you have a high view of man if you question God's election.

[ 25 : 45 ] The question you should be asking is why would God save any of us? We have all rejected Him. We have all stood as His enemies.

He has set before us a path and we have said, no, I'm good. We have said as all sin begins with Satan, Adam and Eve, I want to be God.

I want to be like Him. I want to be the master of my own life and I will do things my way. We have tried to set up our own kingdoms within the kingdom of God.

Build armaments up and battle against Him. Why would He have mercy on any of us? Because He's God is the answer.

Because He's God and He loves us. That's what your mind should do. Your mind should be blown open by the doctrine of election to the goodness of God towards you.

[ 26 : 46 ] Right? Not His unfairness to others. If God were fully fair, none of us would be redeemed. All of us would be destroyed.

You hear that? Have you ever felt the weight of your sin? Read through the scriptures that men who have beheld God, who have looked at His holiness, what do they say?

Whoa, to me, Isaiah, I am a man of unclean lips. They fell on their faces recognizing how insignificant they were in comparison.

person. So do you have a higher view of yourself and of mankind than you should? Now in turn, we are humans.

Right? We should sympathize with those who are lost. We were once lost ourselves. And there's the great compulsion for gospel spread.

[ 27 : 49 ] There's the reason that we get out and we love people and we share the gospel with them and we serve their needs because we too were once sinners. Because we've experienced the great gospel of grace and we want others to experience it as well.

That becomes the compulsion. Election drives us to that. It doesn't make us proud. Rightly understood, election never makes you proud. Never causes you to sit on your hands thinking in some way you're God's special chosen one.

In fact, it should humble you. It should put you on your face. It should make you so appreciative that all you care about are the things that God cares about. Because he has loved you in spite of you, not because of you.

That is a proper view. If you walk out of here on any Sunday and you are not both abased and gladdened, we have failed to preach the gospel.

Let me explain. If you walk out of here proud of who you are, we failed to show you who you would be apart from Christ.

[ 28 : 56 ] But if you don't walk out of here gladdened in the good news of Jesus Christ, then we failed to show you how glorious you now are in Him. What you were was vile and spoiled.

What you now are in Christ is beautiful and perfect. It should abase and gladden every Sunday. And that's what gives us the motivation and the drive to keep going and loving and keep pushing and driving through this world where we will suffer if we live godly because we remember who we were and now who we are because of the great love of God to us.

That's what election should do. You know, many people who don't care for the doctrine of election who stand in direct opposition to it are those who have experienced Christians who do believe in the doctrine of election and live totally contrary to it.

Please don't be one of those people. People need to hear this truth for their good and for the great glory of Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 08 ] Romans 11, 1 through 6. I want to drive this point again that the Israelites have not been rejected. I ask then, and we'll talk about this in coming weeks, I ask then, has God rejected his people?

By no means. Again, that emphatic, strong, strongest Greek language, no, no, no, no, no, he's not. For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.

But what is God's reply to him? I have kept for myself 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. So too at this present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the base of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

So you see here, you have Elijah that cries out to God, destroy Israel. I'm the only one left that hasn't bowed the knee to Baal. You destroy them because they deserve it. And God says, wait a second, Elijah, I've actually preserved for myself a remnant.

[ 31 : 14 ] I'm still working with my people. So recognize that that's the truth. What does he say there at the end? If it's by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.

And so secondly, and finally today, the unbelief of Israel, their large rejection, is consistent with God's provision, his way of salvation.

That's what I mean by that. I had to get the P to fit in there. But with his way of salvation. And we see that in verse 30 through 33.

That's been a little while since we read it, so let's read it together again. 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 the 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.

[ 32 : 12 ] And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. There's a continuing drive throughout the book of Romans. Justification by faith, not by works.

Justification by faith, not by works. The law is a righteous picture. It's meant to be the way those of faith live. We can't do it apart from the grace of God.

It was fulfilled in Christ. Jesus starts the Sermon on the Mount out that way. Right? He didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law. It's in him is the yes and the amen.

Right? And the Jews were zealous in their pursuit of God, but they missed the point. Right? They missed the point. The law was meant to point them to Christ.

The sacrificial system, when they betrayed the law, was meant to show them the need of a final and ultimate sacrifice, but they missed it. Right? Their hearts were darkened and they thought somehow that they had the patent on God, that they owned him.

[ 33 : 19 ] They thought they were God's manager. They missed the point. So, it's by faith, grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone, forever, right?

As our song says. And so, they stumble over the stumbling stone. Isaiah 8, 14 and 15. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many shall stumble on it.

They shall fall and be broken. They shall be snared and taken. Also, Isaiah 28, 16. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am the one who's laid a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation.

Whoever believes will not be in haste or will not be disappointed or will not be put to shame. In all ways, that word can be translated from the Hebrew.

So, Christ himself is the cornerstone, the necessary element, the way that was laid out that all things be built around him.

[ 34 : 35 ] That's the purpose that the cornerstone served in building in this time. Extremely valuable. Without it, the whole building would fall. And Christ is that cornerstone.

Yet, for those who think they can reach God by works, as they're pursuing God in works, Christ is laid in front of them and they fall over him and they're crushed.

They're destroyed because they're works. That's ultimately what all of our works are going to buy us. But our faith in Christ buys us eternity with him.

Romans chapter 4. We're going to go back and I want to re-read to you the argument he makes concerning Abraham. So, so Abraham was given a command to get up and go, leave his people, to go to a promised land.

He was given a promise that God would bless the nations in him. It would seem in reading the narrative without any commentary whatsoever that it was Abraham's obedience, his working that was the value.

[ 35 : 41 ] Right? But it was his faith that justified him. It was his faith in believing in the promises of God. The working, the getting up and the going was the result.

It was the action. It was the evidence of his faith. His willingness to sacrifice his own son was the evidence of the fact that he believed God. He believed that God was going to bless the nations in him, that his offspring were going to be as the stars, but yet God was calling him to kill his only son. He believed that God was going to do the thing he said he was going to do, and therefore the taking of Isaac and his apparent willingness to kill his son at God's command was the evidence of the faith, but it was the faith that justified him.

So, look with me at chapter 4. What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due.

[ 36 : 52 ] And to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works.

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. Is this blessing then only for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised?

We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? Which is a work. You get that, right? Circumcision would be a work.

It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised so that righteousness would be counted to them as well.

And to make him the father of the circumcised who were not merely circumcised, but who also walked in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

[ 37 : 57 ] So you're catching that? Interject in there anything he did as a result of his faith. It wasn't his works that justified him before God.

It was his faith. Ephesians 2, 18-21 Through him being Jesus, we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

I want to answer all of your questions. I have some answers to some questions, but there are so many that I cannot answer. How it is that this tension exists between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility is beyond me.

And let me tell you, it's beyond anybody who claims they understand it. No one understands it. The scripture doesn't speak to it in its completion. For us, it's to accept both of those truths.

[ 39 : 15 ] God sovereignly elects his people. He calls them. He regenerates them. He causes them to believe in him. Yet we are held accountable for our faith.

If we do not place our faith in Jesus Christ, we are condemned. But if we do, we are glorified. We hold the responsibility.

This doctrine is not meant to discourage your faith. It's meant to encourage it. If you have affections that are moving towards God, that's not natural. Your flesh does not desire God.

But if you're being moved towards him, you can rest that he is at work in your life. Repent. Believe. Do that for the first time today if you never have.

Do it again and again and again if you ever have. The answer to everybody, to all of our problems, is repent.

[ 40 : 19 ] Believe. Turn from your sin. Turn to God. He's the only one that can put us back in right relationship with him. We remind you that this doctrine does some very specific practical things for us.

Specifically, it serves as a comfort to our souls. I was just talking about this. Romans 8, 31. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

If we are gods, who can stand against God? It should comfort your soul in any trouble you may experience. Right? It could be the very words you need to speak to somebody around you that may be experiencing something difficult.

If God is for you, who can be against you? You are His. It should cause us to praise God. If we are humbled, properly humbled, because of who God is, we will be moved to praise Him.

If we understand who we are apart from Him, we will praise His name. Remember that Paul is moving this entire argument to the end of chapter 11 to this beautiful doxology.

[ 41 : 36 ] It's a glorious doxology. Oh, the depths 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 to Him and through Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. That's where your heart should be as you consider these things.

It should also encourage us to evangelism. I told you the story of how I'm trying to be a hunter a couple of weeks ago and I don't really I've not killed anything yet so I think I'm going to kill someone before I call myself a hunter.

But I've been trying and I've actually been hunting here on this property. There's some deer that move on it and I told you that if God guaranteed how something would happen like He said listen you go in those woods you're coming out with a deer I promise you this morning you're going to drag it out.

I would be so encouraged to go. But when I wake up at 5 o'clock in the morning wondering if I should get up and go I'm kind of trying to hack the stuff out of my lungs and trying to get ready for the day and get going and it's kind of like I really want to go sit in the woods for an hour before dark.

[ 42 : 58 ] I really want to go do that. If there was a guarantee that I'd get the deer that morning I would definitely go. This last Friday I was sitting in the woods and hadn't been sitting for more than 5 minutes.

I was sitting in a blind on the ground and I wasn't there more than 5 minutes and a buck walked out right next to me and I didn't hear it until it was right next to me so all I can figure is that it was bedded down in the ditch behind the tree I was sitting against.

I heard 3 steps and it was standing right here and it walked around in front of me I mean my feet were out straight in front of me and I probably could have scooted and kicked it. It was that close it was right there and I won't tell you the rest of the story for the sake of time I didn't kill the deer it was really dark and it got scared by a truck and ran away but if I could guarantee that again like if I knew that tomorrow morning when I'm planning on getting back out there that that was definitely going to happen again I would go right?

I'm motivated to see this happen I would sit down at the base of the tree with my bow drawn because that would have been an easy shot right? So knowing that God has people and God intends to call them and he's going to do it should motivate us to go experience him by seeing him fulfill his plan be part of his redemptive purposes chapter 10 verse 14 and 15 here's recall this isn't random this isn't like 10, 14 and 15 let's pull it out of its context what has Paul been talking about? he's been talking about the sovereign election of God right? that's it's consistent that some of Israel was meant to reject him so that the Gentiles can be brought in he says how will they call on him in whom they have not believed and how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard and how are they to hear without someone preaching and how are they to preach unless they are sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news Paul himself recognizes that God uses means for his end and guess what church we're the means God loves us enough to include us in his master plan it's glorious and all of these things are a result of our affections being moved towards God this great joy that we have as a result of God's unfounded love in our own being poured out upon us immeasurably for us that will motivate the proper living that we need to glorify him let's pray together

[ 45 : 28 ] God bless you God bless you God bless you God bless you