

Romans: The Glory of the Gospel Part 23

God's Sovereign Plan – Romans 9:1-29

Mosaic Rockford - Dave Spooner – March 11th, 2018

Intro:

- We ended chapter 8 with the profound theological truth that because God is for us, no one can condemn us, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, and nothing can defeat us. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Nothing can stop God's sovereign plan of salvation for His children. Their names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. The Lord knows those who are His and He is working His plan through the passing of time until the final judgment when He will then make all things new.
- In the next chapter, Paul then communicates his heart for his people, the Jews, and how God's plan for salvation relates to God's redemptive history through them and to us all.

The children of the promise

Rom 9:1-5 ESV

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 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. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- Paul, knowing God's promise and His plan, responds with "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" for the unsaved in his family, the Jewish people. He feels this so strongly that he wishes that he was "accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his brothers according to the flesh" – he would give up his salvation (if that were possible) so that they would be saved. Talk about love! Lord help us to have that kind of love for our family, and for our tribe.
- Then Paul goes on to describe all that the people of Israel have been given by God. They were adopted by God, they have seen His glory like no one else, they have been given the covenants, they were given the law, they had the right and privilege of worship of the one true God. The promises that God made, He made to them. They have the patriarchs of the faith, and from the Jewish line came Christ who is God overall and forever blessed. The people of Israel are blessed above all others and have been given so much because God chose to do so.
- Even though they have been given all this, some of them still rejected Christ causing them to remain under the wrath of God. So, did God not keep his promise that all Israel will be saved? What happened here?

Rom 9:6-9 ESV

But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, 7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." 8 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. 9 For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son."

- Okay, so did God's word fail? Did He not deliver on what He promised? God's word did not fail, people failed to understand what God had actually said. They thought that if you were born an Israelite, then you were automatically included in the children of God. What they did not understand is that you needed to be born as a "child of the promise" that is supernaturally born because of God – the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Isaac being the physical result of the promise – he was born through faith by supernatural means).
- We are "children of Abraham" because we are children "born of the promise" and therefore we are counted as His "offspring" or God's "children". So, it is not the physical children of Abraham that are considered "children of God" but those who are born because of the promise of God. This is why Jesus used the term "born again" (you must be born again to enter the kingdom of God John 3:3) and the New Testament uses the language of adoption into the family of God.
- Next Paul continues with the theme of salvation and God's call and working in it by using the example of Abraham's and Sarah's son Isaac and his wife Rebecca's twin boys.

Saved by the call

Rom 9:10-13 ESV

And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 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 his call— 12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

- Paul continues to point out God's role in salvation by the example of these twin boys, Jacob and Esau who were physical early descendants of Abraham (Abraham was their grandfather). These two boys had the same parents and were in the womb together. So, they come from the same physical descendants. And according to tradition, the older son was to carry the family mantle, gain the inheritance and have God's special blessing. And with these twins, Esau was the first born and Jacob the second born.
- However, before these twins were born, before they had done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, God called Jacob and not Esau. So, what does this mean?
- We are not chosen in God because of our goodness or anything that we have done. God does not say that "I want that person in the family because they are so special or so good or have some great characteristics". So, it is by no means that we have earned our spot in the kingdom of God. God chooses who He chooses because He is God and He is sovereign, and He does what does because of His wisdom and mercy.
- Now, did God "hate" Esau in the way we normally think of the term "hate"? Because are we not to love everyone? God did indeed bless Esau and show love and kindness to him (as we are to love all people as well), however in terms of salvation – Jacob was chosen and because of that choice, Esau was not chosen and therefore "hated" in the sense of not being chosen as a child of the promise of God.
- So, God is the one who is doing the calling of people to himself to be a part of His kingdom; because He is the sovereign God of mercy – not because of who we are but because of who He is.

The sovereign God of mercy

- So, after hearing these things of how God works His plan for those He foreknows, those He predestines, those He calls, those He justifies and those He glorifies, squarely putting Himself in

the driver seat of eternity, people then say well that is unfair . . . who does He think He is? The Holy Spirit then addresses that objection in the next section.

Rom 9:14-18 ESV

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 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." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

- God is a God of mercy and compassion. Everyone by our own merit is deserving of God's wrath. But because God is merciful He spares people by providing His Son to take our punishment upon Himself. God has mercy on whomever He wills and hardens whomever He wills. The same sun that melts snow also hardens clay. And in His wisdom, He does this to show His power in us and that in so doing God's name might be proclaimed in all the earth. There is a divine agenda and purpose in His plan. He is the one who is in charge, we are not. He is the Lord, He is supreme, and He is the way of salvation and all people will give an account to Him.

Rom 9:19-24 ESV

You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 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?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? 22 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, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— 24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

- So, then the argument is, if God is sovereign and chooses in terms of salvation, why are we held responsible – because who can resist His will? And the response is – He can do with us what He wants, because He created us, and it is His right to do so. He will do what He will do, and we are to trust His plan, His heart, His wisdom and purpose in it. (This is similar to the response that Job receives from God from his questions). Paul then argues that God does this to show both His justice and power so that the vessels of His mercy will know how truly wonderful the riches of His glory is and then share His glory with us. So, we will know what we deserve, and understand how truly great the glory of God is and how incredible it is for Him to share it with us and glorify us in Him.
- And God has chosen people for Himself from not only those who are of Abraham's physical line, but those who are not of His physical line as well (Gentiles). These things we stated and revealed through the prophets of the Old Testament. Which Paul then cites in the next passage.

Rom 9:25 – 29 ESV

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.'" 26 "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.'"

27 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, 28 for the Lord will carry out his

sentence upon the earth fully and without delay." 29 And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

- These passages give further proof of God's plan stating that we would all have met the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah if God did not save some of us. And He choose people from every tribe, nation and people group. So now knowing all this, how should this work out in our lives?

Our participation in His plan

- We don't know who God has chosen in terms of salvation, so we pray and we preach, we witness and we evangelize to everyone everywhere at all times with every means possible. (parable of the sower and the seed).
- Those who are chosen will respond. Because as we will see in the next chapter, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:13). Sometime people respond on the first hearing, and sometimes on the 101st. We are responsible and privileged to pray and preach and produce good works. God uses people to do His sovereign work. He is the one who is working, and He is the one who transforms hearts and minds. We still have to go, we still have to disciple, people still have to respond, and some will do so and some will not. We don't know until the end who will respond and who will not. Those who do respond, will bear fruit of this by how they live their lives and who they become like. When it comes to salvation, we are saved because of what He has done for us. When it comes to reward – we are rewarded upon what we have done for others in response to His call.
- There are systems of theology that try to work out the realities of our expression and experiences in the will and working of God's plan.

Conclusion

- Know that God is working out His Sovereign plan, that we can trust His heart, and that He knows what He is doing. Trust Him, praise Him, thank Him, honor Him, love Him and glorify Him.
- I hope our hearts are moved like Paul's for those who have not responded to the Gospel. That we will give ourselves to God's work in spreading His Word to the world. That we would pray, that we will give, that we would go, because of God's great love and mercy.
- Gideon's at the back of the service
- Prayer

Questions for the week ahead

1. What from the passage for today was helpful for you?
2. What from the passage for today was challenging for you?
3. What are you going to do in response to this passage?