

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 16TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

RULER OF ALL (ROMANS 9:1-5)

AN ECLECTIC CHURCH

It's important to keep the context in mind. St. Paul is writing to house churches in Rome. They are mostly comprised of ethnic Jews who saw Jesus as the promised Messiah.

- At the same time the churches were filled with every sort of person, Greeks, Romans, pagans, slaves, rich, poor, orphans, and widows. This is what His Church should be.

"...MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS..."

Paul has been wrestling with a tension throughout the letter (and in many of his letters) and is addressing it here: **what does it mean to be the people of God?**

- **What is clear, however, is The Gospel has the power to transform any person or culture through the obedience of faith. That's true for us today as well!**

"...TO THEM BELONG THE ADOPTION..."

But, what about those who are ethnically Jewish? Paul says that if anyone deserved to be considered God's special people, it would be Israelites. God made covenants with them, gave them The Law, and a way of worship. Even the Messiah came through Judaism.

- **Certainly, this would make ethnic Jews the true people of God, correct?**

THE MESSIAH

Jesus was ethnically Jewish in flesh on Earth but was also God Who is King over all things, including death! Therefore, we understand Jesus as fully God and fully man. Jesus is unrivaled in history, because He is the incarnation of God in flesh.

- **Yet, if Jesus is not your King Whom you are fully submitted to, then He is not your Messiah, and He's not your one true God.**

"GOD OVER ALL..."

This is exactly why Paul is so distressed! He is sorrowful and anguished because many ethnic Jews have rejected Jesus as their King, and some even wanted The Law to be king.

- **Either you are submitted to God over all, or He is God over nothing! Is Jesus King over everything in our lives? If so, are we anguished for those who don't?**

SELECTED (ROMANS 9:6-13)

FAILED PROMISES?

The question Paul returns to, which is similar to chapter 3, is: did God break His promises to Israel, His elected people? The answer is clear, no, because being ethnically Jewish does not make you a true Jew.

- **Being the people of God, those who are called to change the world have more important identifiers than birth.**

CITING THE SOURCES

Like a good, faithful Jew, St. Paul turns to Scripture to prove His point. He cites 10 or more passages, the first 4 focus on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen and Mal).

- **These were imperfect people who were obedient to God's call and purposes. Not every person born of Abraham lived out God's will though, like the Edomites.**

"...FROM THE ONE WHO CALLS..."

God has a purpose and a direction for all of creation: to restore it all back to Himself (Rom 8). God elects and calls people to be a part of that plan. We must be obedient to that call.

- **Does God already know how we will respond, so that's who God calls? Or are we obedient because God elects us? I don't know. I just know we must be obedient!**

JACOB AND ESAU

Paul cites Malachi 1, which recites how God loved Jacob and hated Esau. This is not hatred as we think. Esau and the Edomites failed terribly. Israel needed to step up.

- **God's calling must result in further obedience of faith. From much expectation comes a greater weight. Are we living up to the call of Christ?**

RESISTANCE (ROMANS 9:14-24)

"IS THERE INJUSTICE WITH GOD?"

If the God of the universe has a complex plan for the world, and we don't know it all, is it unfair? Paul goes back to the story of Scripture (Ex 33) to answer with Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery. Moses asks to be shown as God's people. God responds, I will do what you ask because "I know you by name."

Worry fades with relationship.

- **Do we have a relationship with God?**

"I RAISED YOU UP..."

God's purposes and plans may not be fully known, but they will be accomplished. They do not depend on human effort or will. That's the point Paul is making. We can be a part of the plan willingly or kicking and screaming.

- **Paul cites Pharaoh as another example. Pharaoh mocked God. So, God used His hard heart for His glory and purposes.**

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

No one can resist God's will, but God wants to work with us to accomplish it. When Paul talks about the potter and the clay, he is referencing Jeremiah 18 proving his point:

- **Plan to destroy>repent>then God relents**
- **Plan to prosper>evil>then God destroys**
- **We can't fight God's plans, but we can join them. We can submit and work with God.**

"...RICHES OF HIS GLORY..."

God wants to use us for the redemption of the world. However, that doesn't make us better than anyone else. The Israelites forgot that. We cannot.

- **It should humble us and point us to a good Creator. Are we in a humble place, serving "the least of these?" Either we float in His will or get swept up in it.**

GOD'S PEOPLE (ROMANS 9:25-33)

NOT MY PEOPLE WILL BE MY PEOPLE

Paul continues telling the story of Scripture through the prophets. He quotes Hosea by reiterating God's promises and purpose of His covenant: the people of God will be numerous as the sand of the sea, and it will include non-Israelites as well.

- **God wants to redeem all creation and people, including you and me!**

THE REMNANT

God's promises in Scripture have been and will be fulfilled. Through Israel, all people will have the opportunity to be saved. Even if Israel failed, God used a small remnant.

- **God will always work through His people, even if it's the few. God uses a few and multiplies His redeeming work! It's the model Jesus set for us with discipleship.**

"...RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES FROM FAITH..."

God uses us through the obedience of faith. We cannot accomplish the renewal of hearts and minds by working toward it ourselves. It's futile.

- **It's submission and obedience to God's ways that helps us live our purpose. His ways are filled with righteousness, goodness, and peace. We long for it.**

THE STUMBLING BLOCK

The obedience of faith is only possible through the work of Jesus. St. Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah, saying: "the one who believes on him will not be put to shame." Not only will we be saved, but we will be an active part of God's redeeming plan.

- **God's renewal is only possible by believing in and submitting to Jesus. Yet, he can be a stumbling block. Where are we?**

SUBMITTED OR STUMBLING?

- **We know we are God's people when Jesus is King of everything, our finances, our children, retirement, and life pursuits.**
- **Have we submitted our lives to Jesus? Do we have a close relationship with Him? Does God have unlimited access and say in every part of our lives?**
- **Do we think Jesus is who he says he is?**

FLOWING OR FIGHTING?

- **We also know we are God's people when we have obedient faith. That's faith. We work with the flow and not against it.**
- **We saw it in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We saw it in Moses.**
- **Do we see it in ourselves? Are we listening and doing what God says? It starts with The Great Command and Commission.**

HUMBLE OR HAUGHTY?

- **We can be assured we are God's people when we are humble servants.**
- **Are our life and service more about us or others? Do we look to serve others, or do we close off to those around us?**
- **We have an important role in redemption.**
- **We can have assurance without fear when we are submitted, obedient, and serving.**