

February 3, 2013

The Gospel Story: Vessels of Mercy

A Study of Romans

Romans 9:1-29

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Opening Discussion

1. People tend to fashion God in their own image to create a god we're comfortable with or a god we can understand or explain. What might be some examples today?
2. Would you rather have a god who is explainable and predictable or a god who is mysterious and at times unpredictable? Why?
3. What is the basis of your security as a believer? Can you have security without Sovereignty?

Bible Study

1. Review Romans 8. How secure is the believer according to that text? Do the verses in Romans 8:29-30 describe a purely human transaction or the acts of a Sovereign God?
2. Read Romans 9:1-5. What did the Jewish people have because God has chosen them to be His people? How could they have all that and not believe?
3. Read Romans 9:6-13. What is the question at hand according to 9:6a? If nothing can separate us from the love of God what happened to Israel? What is the answer to this question according to the text?
4. Why did God choose Jacob and not Esau? How does this line up with 8:29? Was your salvation simply your idea or part of God's predetermined plan and purpose?
5. Compare Jesus' words in Luke 14:26. Did Jesus literally mean we should hate our family? Are these primarily terms of emotion or contrast? What did Jesus say about His choosing in John 13:18, 15:16, 17:6?
6. Read Romans 9:14-23. Is God unfair? Are people simply innocent bystanders that are chosen or rejected or are they as described in Romans 1,2? Is either God's justice or His mercy contrary to His character? Why or why not?

7. What would be the standard of fair or unfair other than God Himself? If God doesn't violate His own character what is there to object to? Do we really think as selfish, confused strugglers that we have a better idea of what is fair than a Holy God has?
8. According to 9:22,23 God prepared some as vessels of mercy and others prepared themselves as vessels of wrath. Even though there is a mystery to how all this works this we know, if we've trusted Christ as Savior you were chosen to be a vessel of mercy to experience the riches of His glory. What should be a proper response to this truth?
9. Compare I Timothy 2:1-7. Even though we cannot understand all the mysteries of how all this works, do you think God would act contrary to His own desires? Does God's election have to mean others have no chance of salvation? How would that line up with God's desire in Timothy?
10. Read Romans 9:24-29. Who is included in the promise of salvation? Did God promise all the Jews would be saved or just a remnant? Has God kept His promise?

Application

1. Can we maintain a view of the security of the believer without a strong theology of God's Sovereignty in salvation? What is the basis of our security if it isn't God's divine purpose?
2. Do we have to be able to explain all the complexities and mysteries of God to believe and trust in Him?
3. If God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world, can't we trust His mercy and compassion in the midst of truths that seems confusing to us?
4. Would you rather have salvation be purely a human transaction with no security or the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose filled with mysteries we can't understand?
5. What are some practical things you can do to remember these great truths through the ups and downs of daily life?