



Welcome to Grace Communion International

August 16, 2020

SERMON

GOD MERCIFUL IN HIMSELF



SCRIPTURE READING

**ROMANS 11:1-2a; 29-36
(ESV)**



“1 ¶ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

Romans 11:1-2a (ESV)



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“29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.”

Romans 11:29-36 (ESV)



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“32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

33 ¶ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?””

Romans 11:29-36 (ESV)



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“35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (Ro 11:35-36 ESV)

Romans 11:29-36 (ESV)



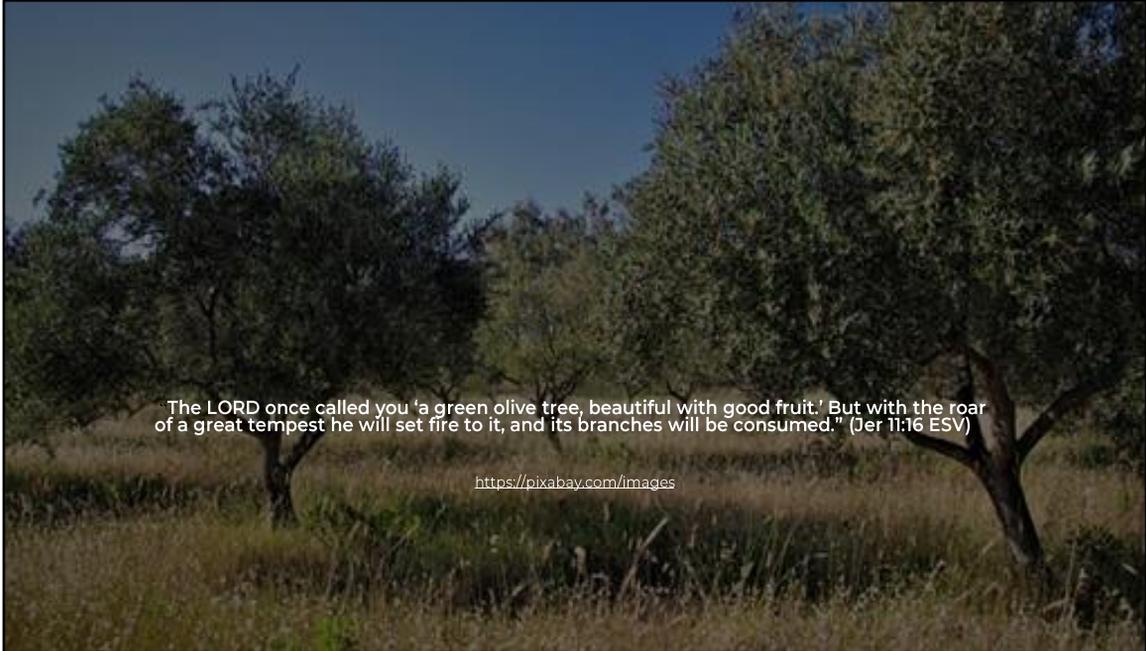
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THESE ARE THE HOPEFUL AND ENCOURAGING WORDS
OF OUR LORD

THANK YOU SO MUCH THAT YOUR PROMISES ARE
TRUSTWORTHY, RELIABLE, IRREVOCABLE,
UNCHANGABLE!

AMEN





In this section of Scriptures, Paul firmly states that God's people will not be forever lost in spite of their disinterest in Jesus. He is clear, that by "**no means**" God rejected his people even if for now, they were cut off due to their lack of faith.

He tells the Gentiles how blessed they are to be grafted as a wild olive shoot. In the reality of their time, physically speaking, grafting a wild olive branch to a cultivated olive tree was never done.

Paul begins by using his own example. He is a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin. God is working powerfully with him.

Paul explains to the Gentiles beginning in verse 13, that in God's economy, the rejection of his chosen people Israel means the reconciliation of the world.

In verse 15, Paul writes the following: **"For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" (Ro 11:15 ESV)**

He points out the fact that God is the one in charge. He is the one who makes every branches holy. He is the one who gives branches life. Symbolically, God is the trunk of the tree. Consequently, the Gentiles are to remain faithful. If they don't, they would also be cut off. God is the one doing the grafting. (Next slide)

“17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.” (Ro 11:17-18 ESV)

God supports the Gentiles



19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe.

21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.” (Ro 11:19-21 ESV)

They are to take their calling seriously



The apostle Paul tells the Gentiles in Rome that they stayed grafted to the olive tree because of their faith in Christ faithfulness.

We must always remember that it is not our faith which saves us but the faithfulness of Christ on our behalf. Our communion with Jesus is based on faith in him. Even our faith in him is a gift, just as the gift of repentance is to be received.

He also lets them know how privileged they were to be grafted in as God's people!

They were to stand in awe, in reverend fear of God. They were grafted in because of his grace and not because anything they had done or merited.

For this reason, they were not to think that they were superior to the Jews. Because they were grafted in at this time and the Jews stayed trapped in unbelief did not mean that God had rejected them.

The apostle Paul gives a very clear affirmation that God has never rejected his people!

We are to learn from this because we are Gentiles. We were grafted in the symbolic olive tree by God himself. The one who makes us holy is Jesus. He is the root who supports us!

“Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.” (Ro 11:22 ESV)

**THE IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING
IN THE FAITH**



Mr. Gary Deddo, president of Grace Communion Seminary, tells us frequently rather than asking the questions of the why, where, when we are always to ask the **"who"** question first.

In other words, when we come to Scriptures inspired by God, we are to think of the author of these scripture. Who is He? What is He like?

What does it mean the kindness and severity of God?

(Quote from Karl Barth)

The freedom of God is such that His grace and condescension to man can, may and must have the meaning and effect of making man's sin and guilt and object of divine compassion, so that he hate sin and for this very reason love the sinner, pitying sinful and guilty man even as He opposes him, and in this pity entering into dealings with him. And this pity is no mere sentiment, but power and deed. We are assured of this by the fact that it is not too light a thing for God to turn favourably to man in this way, and indeed to be open to man in this way, to be for Him the One who is merciful, even prior to his creation and any turning to him, from all eternity. (From: Church Dogmatics Volume II.1 The Doctrine of God page 372 by Karl Barth)

THE KINDNESS AND SEVERITY OF
GOD



In other words, even if God opposes man in his sin, it is not for his undoing but to give life. He makes man realize that the way of man is devoid of life and cannot give life. To receive life, man must turn to God.

Sin is not a new thing to God. He witnessed the horrible tragedy of sin shortly after Adam and Eve rejected his authority in their life. Their family became fractured. Cain killed Abel out of jealousy and envy. Abel was tragically the first martyr. Suffering as a consequence of sin had entered the world in a big way.

In Job, chapter 24, we read of the sin's existence in his society. You will notice that we could right the same words to describe our contemporary society.

"12 From out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded cries for help; yet God charges no one with wrong. 13 ¶ "There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths. 14 The murderer rises before it is light, that he may kill the poor and needy, and in the night he is like a thief. 15 The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight, saying, 'No eye will see me'; and he veils his face. 16 In the dark they

dig through houses; by day they shut themselves up; they do not know the light. 17 For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.” (Job 24:12-17 ESV)

At times, God may appear to be inactive but he is never inactive.

We need to realize that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is merciful within himself (idem).

God's mercy never depends on us. It is in his character to be merciful. He is merciful toward sinful humanity. God opposes sin. In his freedom, he lets us live the consequences of our sinful ways. Writing to Christians in the first century the apostle

Peter wrote the following: **“9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1Pe 2:9-10 ESV)**

We see that God reversed the status of those he called. Those who are not his people become his people in communion with him through faith. God came towards us in the person of Jesus to meet us in our darkness and sinful ways. The following are some Scriptures that show God's character – his mercy and love.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1Pe 1:3 ESV)

GOD'S MERCY IN JESUS



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“he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,”
(Tit 3:5 ESV)

IT IS ALL OF GOD



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“7 For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you.

8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD, your Redeemer.

9 “This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you.

10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.” (Isa 54:7-10 ESV)

GOD'S EVERLASTING MERCY



There are times where God may hide his face. God hates sin but his love towards people never ends and never stops.

The covenant of peace prophesied in Jesus will not fail. Our participation in our communion with God, united to Christ in the Holy Spirit, is that we stay faithful to him. God can be fully trusted with what he says.

God has compassion on sinners. His ultimate demonstration of his mercy is found in the incarnation of Jesus.

**Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf;
that we might become the righteousness of God in him.
(2 Cor. 5:21 ASV)**

**ULTIMATE DEMONSTRATION OF
GOD'S MERCY TOWARDS US**



This is an amazing scripture about God's love and mercy. It's not something that can be arrived at by philosophy, science or reason. It is a revelation from God.

The implications of this verse are enormous. We can only begin to understand and to fathom the deep, deep love of God for us. Because God cannot lie, we can accept this truth with confidence and faith!

We have revolted against God. We have sinned against God. We have suffered and we are still suffering the tragedies of sin. However, even before we could regret our sins and repent of them, God has taken care of this from eternity in the person of Jesus. It became actual and definite in his death on the cross and resurrection.

These are things again that are really difficult to understand and grasp, but it is the truth. (next slide)

“17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,
18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,
19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake,
21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”
(1Pe 1:17-21 ESV)

Jesus the Chosen One From
Eternity



God knew from all eternity that he would have to intervene for us and on our behalf in Christ to give eternal life to all those who would accept his gift in faith.

“even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love” (Eph 1:4 ESV)

Chosen in Him



The triune God knew from the beginning that he wanted human being to share in his relationship of love in Christ. Because Christ was the chosen one to come to the earth in our broken incarnate flesh, it is in him that we were chosen.

Do we know exactly how God works all of these things out? No we don't.

We just know of God's desire that he wants everyone to come to repentance as we read in Timothy. **1Ti 2:4 Who wants all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

That is definitely God's desire as we also read in 2 Peter 3.

As we read this, we need to realize that Jesus has taken the responsibility for our sins upon himself. He has suffered great grief, pain and sorrow on our behalf more than we can ever imagine. He has taken all of our arrogance, selfishness, sinful anger, envy, hate, resentments, violence, pride and all our most grievous sins and all the sin of the world upon himself. **He came to take away the sin of the world!** God knows suffering. God is one. When Christ died on the cross, God was not aloof, distant or indifferent.

Because God loves us so much, and because he sheds his love in our hearts, our desire is to please him by avoiding living the way of sin. Instead we are to live in his righteousness and holiness. This is what grace teaches us!

Karl Barth says it very well.

“The merciful God has taken action on our behalf both in freedom and in power. In freedom: for our sin and guilt were not his and did not have to become so. Because this is so, faith believes in God's grace and election in virtue of which we receive what we have not deserved. But also in power: for he has really taken to himself and remove from us our sin and guilt.

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II.1 The Doctrine of God pages 374-5)



Therefore faith is joy and gratitude, and assurance which can no longer look back, only forward. In freedom and power, awakening humbled but assured and unshakable faith, He took our place because He was God's eternal Son, because it was manifest in Him that God's eternal being is mercy, because there is nothing more real and true behind and beyond this substitution, because this substitution is the very essence of God's own being, of his divinity, for which we must glorify Him in joy and gratitude if we are not to sin wantonly against him, if we are to let God be God.

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, II.1
The Doctrine of God pages 374-5)



“For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.” (Ro 11:32 ESV)

Nothing Is Impossible for God!



This is why the apostle Paul was assured that God had not rejected his people. That is why he said, "**by no means**" has he rejected them.

Paul is clear that God has not given up on the Jews because of their unbelief. In a mysterious way, in God's working, there temporary exclusion meant that the Gentiles were included. The Israelites would be grafted later. In other words, we are not to limit God in his work of salvation. We are not to look at the unconverted with arrogance. We are to perceive them as potential future brothers and sisters in the Lord. O how great God is!

God wants us to grow in the obedience of faith. Having been called, we are not take our calling for granted.

As the author of the book of Hebrews says, **“35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. 37 For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed,**

but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.” (Heb 10:35-39 ESV)

The apostle Paul knew God's heart. Even at that, he was awed by God working the salvation of people, of all those who would receive his free gift of grace and faith!

This is why Paul could say the following with enthusiasm and adoration:

“33 ¶ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (Ro 11:33-36 ESV)



Let us pray!