

Romans 11:1-16

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles from me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11. This morning we're going to be in verses 1 through 16 of Romans chapter 11.

We're just continuing to make our way through this great book of Romans as found in the New Testament. The letter to the church at Rome which Paul wrote to encourage a church which he did not know, that did not know him personally or at least by faith they knew of him just as he knew of them.

A church that was founded by someone we have no idea who it was, probably just a lay leader or a believer in Christ taking the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ back to Rome, starting a church, multiple churches there within the city of Rome.

And this letter would have been sent and circulated throughout those churches as Paul encourages them how to have a church built upon a sure foundation. We've looked at the foundational doctrines of our faith as found in the book of Romans.

And this morning we are just making our way, we've made it to the 11th chapter, so if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in Romans 11 verses 1 through 16.

[1 : 13] The Word of God says, I say then, God has not rejected his people, has he? May it never be. For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin.

God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left and they are seeking my life. But what is the divine response to him? I have kept for myself 7,000 men of whom have not bowed the knee to Baal.

In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.

Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. What then? What Israel is seeking it has not obtained. But those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened.

[2 : 12] Just as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day. And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a retribution to them.

Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever. I say then, They did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be. But by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make them jealous.

Now if their transgression is riches for the world, and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be? But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.

Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. If somehow I might move to jealousy some of my countrymen and save some of them.

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also.

[3 : 16] And if the root is holy, the branches are too. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we are so thankful for every opportunity we have to gather together to worship you.

Lord, to fellowship with one another. But Lord, to come and to hear your word. We pray, O God, that your word would speak to our hearts. We pray that it would resonate within our beings. Lord, that it would not be the word or the opinion of man.

But Lord, that it would be what it is, the very word of God speaking to each and every one of us. We pray that by the power and the presence of the Spirit of God, that we would come to an understanding of it. Lord, seeking to apply his truth to our lives, not just to gain information.

And we ask it all in Jesus' holy name. Amen. You may be seated. We are now making our way through the second session of the book of Romans.

Romans 1 through 8 kind of dictate the problem of man and God's solution to the problem of man. Namely, that no man is right. No, not one. None do good.

[4 : 16] Not a single one. That all of our righteousness is like filthy rags. And we cannot work our way or earn our way into God's favor. Now, God's response to that is to offer salvation to us free.

Paul lays out the implications or the truth of salvation by faith and faith alone. It is justification by faith. It is not a justification by works.

It is not being made right because of something we do. Rather, it is accepting the work which he accomplished. Coming into the middle section of Romans, Romans 9, 10, 11, we come to kind of the great illustration of God's dealing with his people, that is the nation of Israel.

We have been looking at how God is faithful. We find in Romans that once you are saved and redeemed, God keeps you in the palm of his hand. Paul says there is nothing that can take you out of his hand.

We call that the eternal security of the saints. That God has you, he holds you, and nothing can take you out of his hand. You are eternally secure. Now, the main argument to that would be in the days of Paul, what about the nation of Israel?

[5 : 23] Because according to that standard, it looks like God has failed the nation of Israel. We're looking at it thousands of years after the fact, and we're not seeing it kind of in the same light. Now, these people would have been very familiar with the fact that the Jewish nation, the nation of Israel, were God's chosen people.

They would have been very open about that, that we're God's chosen people. He called us to himself, and yet, if we look at the gospel, they rejected Jesus, they denied the Savior, and now it looks like God wants nothing to do with them.

The argument would be, if God couldn't keep them, then why can't I trust him to keep me? If God could not be faithful to the group of people, then why, Paul, can I trust that he will keep me?

How can I entrust my life? Because, friend, listen to me, we are basing our eternity upon that. We are basing our eternity upon the fact that if I accept Christ, if I place my faith and hope in Jesus Christ and in Christ alone, and if I accept the work which he accomplished on the cross, if I say that he died in my place, and I'm going to put my life in the hand of God, I'm saying, God, for all of eternity, I'm trusting that you will keep me.

Lord, I'm not going to try to earn my way there. I'm not going to try to work my way there. I'm not going to try to be good enough. I'm not going to try to be right enough. God, I am trusting that you see me good, which will in turn lead me to live good.

[6 : 40] I'm trusting that you have already accepted me, and I'm trusting in you and in you alone. But the problem is, when the world looked at the Jewish people, it seemed that God had failed the nation.

So in Romans 9, 10, and 11, Paul begins to use the illustration of the nation of Israel and to show that God had not failed them, that God's purposes and plans were continuing to work on.

And in Romans 11, verses 1 through 16, I admit to you, we are in a very difficult portion of Scripture. But I want you to see this morning, God's interaction with the multitude.

God's interaction with the multitude. It was applicable to the nation of Israel when Paul is writing. It is still applicable to the nation of Israel as a whole, but really it applies to the world today.

And if we're not careful, it applies also to the church, to how we define the church. It is said statistically that a third of the world's population claims Christianity as their faith.

[7 : 43] A third. One third of the world's population claims Christianity as their faith. Now if one third, let me just stop and let's just pause right there for just a moment.

One third. One third.

One third. would be transformed in the blink of an eye. 120 individuals gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. The Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost, and that 120 individuals, 120, turned the whole Roman Empire upside down in a short 300 years.

You say, well, it took 300 years. Yes, but it only started with 120 people. We understand the reality that the majority of that third claimed Christianity because their nation mandates that they claim some type of faith, and it is the lesser of two evils.

They want to claim this one. It's a social position. It is a family position. It is something that they were born into. It is something that is common even in our churches today.

[9 : 08] People's names continue to find their role on church membership simply because their family has always been a member of that church, and they will always be a member of that church.

My family's been a member of that church since the day that church started. My family will be a member of that church until the day that church falls down. But they're there because of history.

They're not there because of relationship.

And what we see here in Paul's illustration of God's dealing with the multitude of the nation of Israel is the same as God's dealings with the multitude of the nation of the world, the multitude of people.

First and foremost, I want you to see the despair of Israel and really the despair of the majority. Paul starts out and says, I say then, God has not rejected his people, has he?

It's a valid question. The people in Rome would have known full well of God's interactions with the Jewish people, the great Jewish population there. They would have known their claim to be God's chosen people.

[10 : 11] God, the great God of the universe, has chosen us and called us to himself. We read throughout the Old Testament of this reality, and it is the truth that we must nod our heads in agreement to, that God chose a people from around the world.

He chose one man, that is, Abram, from the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans, and rose up out of Abram, the nation of Israel. He called them to himself to be his special people. We see the commands of that.

If you come back tonight, we'll be looking in Exodus 21 and following and looking at this book of the covenant, of God's special covenant, with one people group in all of the world. No one else lives under that covenant.

No one else was ever intended to live under that covenant. But in the days of Paul writing the book of Romans, the people, the non-Jewish people would have looked around and said, yes, but look, Jesus came to his own and his own received him not, right?

They denied him. They crucified their Savior. They crucified the Messiah. And Paul, you're telling us this is their Messiah? And it looks as if God is leaving them alone because you are now offering to us what God originally offered to them.

[11 : 11] He said, Paul, I've got a question. Has God rejected his people? Has he rejected the multitude of the nation of Israel? Now, he'll flesh this out through the rest of Romans 11 as we get to it next week, if the Lord allows us to tarry and we go further and we see how God's eternal plan.

But just for today, I want you to look at the despair of the nation. They find themselves in a very difficult situation because look at what it says. May it never be.

And we'll come to this in just a minute. He just answers this. No, that's not the case. God has not rejected his people. We'll look at the illustration of this in just a minute. But now go down with me to verse 7. What then?

What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained. But those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened just as it is written. God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day.

And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block and a retribution to them, and let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever. What is he saying?

[12 : 15] The nation of Israel finds themselves in a very despairing condition. It finds themselves as being people who have rejected their Savior, and now seem to be outside of the favor of God. They find themselves as being the right people in the wrong place.

They find themselves as being someone who thought they were God's chosen people, and now it looks like God is extending that invitation to someone else. It tells us here that the nation of Israel were those who sought after righteousness, yet never could find righteousness.

Put yourself in that position. Labored and worked for years, obeyed command after command after command, fulfilled every law to the best of their ability, and now God says it's not good enough.

Well, that's not the truth, because God had always said it's not good enough. You will never earn it.

The laws were there to show you you couldn't earn it, not so that you may earn it, but to prove to you that you could not earn it. And these people were seeking to the best of their ability, but that lies the problem.

Their ability is not good enough. And what they are seeking after, they cannot find. We're not pushing them down and saying they're not religious. As a matter of fact, we lift them up and say they are the most religious people in all of the world.

[13 : 21] During the days of Paul, and even in today's time, the most religious people in all of the world striving to the best of their ability, but falling desperately short. And they can't find it.

And then it goes on to say, and they will not find it. Now this is a very difficult passage. It makes us kind of choke a little bit. But it says, because they have been hardened. God gave them eyes to see not and ears to hear not.

Just as the Bible tells us in the book of Exodus that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Here it tells us that God allowed the nation of Israel to be hardened so that they would not respond to Jesus.

So their despair is that they cannot. And even further, they will not. You say, well, that doesn't seem right. That doesn't seem fair. Why would God harden their hearts?

Well, why did God harden Pharaoh's heart? It's because God, knowing all things, knew Pharaoh's disposition. Okay, that is understanding he knew the tendency of Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his own heart.

[14 : 25] And then finally, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. If you read it in the book of Exodus, a number of times, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed to himself. And then it begins to be attributed to God working.

And the reason is, is because God doesn't take sin lightly, my friend. Listen, God will not, the Bible tells us, dwell with man forever. And he does not mess around with this thing called sin.

Which means, we can't continue to live how we want to live and to do what we want to do and to claim, oh, well, I'm God's special person like the nation of Israel might have been. I'm just going to trust in my own works.

I'm going to trust in my own doings. And there comes a point where God gives us over. Some of the scariest passages I find in all of Scripture is where it says, and God gave them over. 1

Thessalonians says it.

It says it in Romans 1. It says it there. God gave them over. You ever notice what God gives them over to? It never says that God gave them over to Satan. As a matter of fact, the only one that's ever attributed to giving someone over to Satan is Paul.

[15 : 27] Paul turned a man over to Satan in the church of Corinth. And when he wrote 1 Corinthians, I'm handing him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that he may be eternally secure. And just to blow your minds a little bit, the man that Paul handed over to Satan was a believer that he thought he would spend eternity with and said, I'm just going to let Satan have his way with him.

That way he can go ahead and get to heaven and not be a hindrance to the church anymore. Wait a minute. That gets you in trouble from the pulpit. Pastor, move away from that. So we see here that when God gives someone over, what does God do? He gives them over to their own desires, to the desires of their heart, to a debased mind, to their own thoughts.

What does it say? Man tests God, tests God, tests God, tries God, pushes God aside, denies God, denies God, denies God, and God finally says, if that's the way you want it, then here you go, you can have it.

This should be a warning to those who say, well, I believe, and I honestly believe in all of my heart, I believe that as long as you have breath in your own lung, you can call out upon Jesus Christ and he will save you and redeem you.

I believe that you can be on your dying bed and in your very last breath, call out to him and he will save you completely. And the reason I believe that, I see the thief on the cross. I believe in his very last moment, he said, Jesus, when you come into your kingdom, remember me.

[16 : 41] And Jesus looked at him and said, truly, truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. I believe that that man had lived a life of sin. I believe he had lived a life of rampant wickedness and in his very last breath, he called upon Jesus for salvation and was in an instant gloriously redeemed.

I believe that happens today, but I do not believe it happens with the individual who says, I will someday call upon him, but today, I'm going to live for myself. I do not believe in the individual who says, I'll put that off because you do not know if God will continue to work on your heart.

There is danger in tempting the Lord and it leads you to a great place of despair. We see this in his interactions with the nation of Israel and it says here that there is the multitude of them who are seeking but they cannot find because they had let, here he is, why would God harden their heart? It says that their table had become their stumbling block. What does that mean? They had begun to embrace the sign of the things and not necessarily the true fulfillment of the things.

The ritual had become more important than the person. The altar had become more important than the sacrifice. The temple had become more prominent than the presence of God in the temple.

[18:05] As a matter of fact, when the Shekinah glory of God never came back to the temple, no one ever noticed because the temple that Herod built was beautiful but it had no glory but they didn't miss the glory as long as they had the temple.

The table had become more important than the bread, that is Jesus Christ. The sign of things, the symbol of things had taken its place and friend, before we point our finger at the Jewish people too much, let us look at the church today.

Sometimes the rituals and the practices and the traditions of men become so much more important than the person that we're begging would be in our presence. The buildings and the order of service and the pews and the carpet and making sure the music is just right, everything has the tendency to become more important than the one we're desperately hoping will be there and we can encounter. It is not that we would sing the right songs and we would do the right order and we would pray the right prayers and we would have the right service and we would have a comfortable building. If Jesus isn't in it, if Jesus isn't there, friend, listen to me, it is a place of utter despair because we run the risk today of being given over to our own desires and never knowing when the Savior fails to show up.

The despair of the nation was they did not accept Him and they had come to a place where they could not accept Him because they were more concerned about how they did things as opposed to why they were doing things.

[19:39] But then there's also the despair of the individual there and he points to Elijah. There are some who say, but what about these people? What about the multitude? Elijah says, Lord, I'm alone, I'm alone, I'm all here, which leads us to the second thing, the dependency of God.

We notice the dependency of God. It says, in verse 1, I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be. For I too, here we go, we're looking at the dependency of God, for I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin.

Paul could answer very quickly that God had not rejected the nation of Israel and the way Paul could answer that is say, look at me. If he had rejected the nation of Israel then I would not be here because I am of the nation of Israel.

I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I am from the tribe of Benjamin. I am fully Jewish and I know that God has not rejected His people because He would not have accepted me if He had rejected His people.

But He says, it's not about me and it's not about who I am. I'm not trusting in the fact that I belong to the Jewish nation. He said, I had a day. He doesn't talk about that in the book of Romans but we could get to it somewhere else. There was a day when I trusted in that.

[20:44] There was a day when I trusted in my heritage more than in my Savior but that's not the case today. I'm looking at the dependability of God. I'm looking at the faithfulness of God to mankind not to the multitude and to the group.

He says, because He's accepted me. Verse 2 says, God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Now all of a sudden we bring this conditional clause in here. God has not rejected the people who He knows.

but He has rejected those who don't know Him. Now we're not going to get into trying to define the foreknowledge of God and I'm not going to try to get into defining who God foreknows because to be honest with you, we can't.

Because if we could define it then we'd be able to describe and define God and everything I have found is that anytime man tries to describe God man ends up getting himself in trouble. But I do know this that God knows everyone is going to come to Him because God is God and God knows everything and if He does not know everything then He is not God.

And He has not rejected those He knows is coming to Him. It says that God has not rejected those whom He foreknew or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah? How he pleads with God against Israel.

[21 : 50] Here you go. Lord they have killed your prophets they have torn down your altars and I alone am left and they are seeking my life. You know Elijah's problem. Elijah has just went up on Mount Carmel he has called the prophets of Baal to task he has asked them to pray and see if fire would fall down for heaven for them and they did it for half a day and nothing came and they had their sacrifice there and no fire fell and then Elijah comes up and he has his bull laid out upon the altar which he rebuilt with twelve stones all this matters if we had time to get into it.

He poured water upon water upon water upon that and Elijah prayed for like 25 seconds. The prophets of Baal prayed for half a day for over four hours. Elijah said about a 25 second prayer and the fire of heaven fell down consumed the sacrifice the water the altar the trench and the altar and Elijah says told you he was God and he says okay now everybody kill the prophets of Baal so they killed 400 prophets of Baal that day and then Elijah who saw God respond to a 25 second prayer gets scared of a woman named Jezebel and he runs away from Jezebel and hides himself and Elijah has a pity party because the things on the mountain didn't make its way to the valley because Elijah outran the horse and remember it's pretty cool Elijah was fast and you go see that he outran the chariots and he got so scared of Jezebel he ran away just because there's a God of a mountain doesn't mean we've taken him to the valley and Elijah gets down and says God I'm alone I'm the only one that's left nobody else is here God you don't know you don't know this pity party and God says be quiet Elijah you don't know what you're talking about I've got 7,000 men who haven't bowed the knee to Baal he says Elijah you keep looking at yourself you keep looking at your own ministry and you keep looking at the response to your ministry here you go this blows Elijah's mind Elijah you know what it's not all about you and I'm not depending upon you I have my own people you know what this shows us as pastors God doesn't have to use me he doesn't need to use me God doesn't need me to call people to himself but man I am so thankful he may use me to do it he doesn't need you to lead someone to Christ because he can call them to Christ but you ought to be thankful he allows you to be a part of that work God can call people to himself through a burning bush a crowing rooster or a talking donkey God can do it however he wants to do it but aren't you thankful that he wants to use you see now all of a sudden this whole idea of missions and great commissions and sharing the gospel now it doesn't become a burden that you have to go win someone to Christ or lead someone to Christ and you don't have to take the you out of it God is calling people to Jesus Christ he is dependable and the thing of it is he wants to use you and he wants to use me and he says Elijah you may look like a failure but the gospel does not fail my work does not stop with you Elijah while you're up here hiding I've got 7,000 others down there who are faithful well he's pointing to the faithfulness of God that even in the darkest moment when it looked like Jezebel had led the whole nation of God's people into idolatrous worship of Baal God says I'm not giving up I'm not giving up I'm not falling because it says here in the text just as it speaks of the despair it says in the same way then there has also come at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice God is calling people to himself God is calling individuals to himself look what it says in verse 6 but if it is by grace it is no longer on the basis of works otherwise grace is no longer grace friend listen to me the dependability of God is this he is still redeeming mankind through grace and grace alone the Bible tells us Jesus says no man comes to the father lest he be drawn by the father no man comes to God except through me and he has to be drawn by the spirit of God to me it is not the work of man lest any man should boast it is the grace of God extending the invitation through the spirit of God maybe through individuals of the people of God so that he could draw people to respond to that grace and God is faithful to do it the fact that God is redeeming and saving individuals the fact that God is dependable to extend his grace is the greatest motivational factor for missions that I have ever seen in my life the fact that God is still redeeming people that God's grace is still available I don't know who they are you don't know who they are but I know one thing God is still doing it and he is dependable which ought to move us to take that message outside the doors of the church we don't know but the grace of God is extended the grace of God is still there and it is not because we look at a group of people who are going to work to be good enough this is what is so great about God's dependability is that as he extends this offer of salvation he is not extending and saying hey guys go outside the doors of the church see if you can convince people to work a good enough life see if you can teach them to be right see if you can get them to clean their life up see if you can get them to get their act together and once they get their act together I'll save them that's not what he's doing you know what the gospel is the gospel says take this good news that God's grace is

available to all to people who don't deserve it which by the way is everybody the people who can never earn it which by the way is everybody to people who are in the worst of conditions and just let them know that Jesus loves them and see what God does with that it is the dependability of [27:12] God and we see God's interactions with the multitude even when the multitude is rejecting him my friend listen to me there are still individuals accepting him and we live in a world today where the multitude wants nothing to do and the multitude has been given over to the desires of their own flesh and to the longings of their own hearts and yet God is still gloriously saving individuals in spite of themselves through grace we see not only the despair of the nation of Israel we see the dependability of God and third and finally and I will be through we look at the display of salvation and this is where the rubber kind of hits the road for our own lives and we see this display verse 11 says I say then they did not stumble so as to fall did they what he is saying is well has God allowed them to fall so much that he's given up on them no he'll come to that later we'll come back to that next week may it never be look at this but by their transgression that is the nation of Israel salvation has come to the Gentiles to make them jealous what is he saying the nation of

Israel rejected the Savior they rejected the good news Paul himself is a great example of this Paul started his missional work going into the synagogues of the Jews and he would proclaim Jesus and once the Jewish people would not accept Jesus he said okay I'm taking this message to the Gentiles by their rejection it has been extended to others so by their rejection salvation has come to the Gentiles why to make the Jewish people jealous this is a great beautiful picture I'll show it to you in just a minute now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles how much more will their fulfillment be but I am speaking to you who are Gentiles look at this in as much then as I am an apostle of Gentiles I magnify my ministry if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them Paul says I want to make them jealous of the gospel I want to magnify this ministry I want the nation of Israel to see the salvation of the Gentiles in a mighty way to the point that they say enough of that that's supposed to be my promise that's supposed to be my blessing he says I want you to live my life in such a way that it would move them to jealousy it would show them what they are missing what we see here is the display of salvation God has called us to himself he has redeemed us he has freely forgiven us it is not of anything that we have done rather it is the work he has done he has saved us and left us he's left us here to live for his glory and this is what he's done he's redeemed us to live lives to such an extent that people need to come into contact with us and be jealous of what we have that they can't get this is what Paul says our life is a fragrant aroma to some unto life to others unto death which means that your life ought to be so transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ if you have been redeemed and you have been saved if it is by grace and not by works if you have nothing of yourself to boast in but you can boast in Jesus Christ if you really know yourself that you don't deserve it you didn't earn it and friend I am the chief of sinners but Jesus has saved me he has redeemed me man he has called me to himself and now that life ought to be so lived in front of other individuals that it should make them jealous

I want people to become jealous of the joy I possess I want them to be jealous of the peace that I know I want them to be jealous of the comfort I am given even in the midst of uncomfortable situations I want them to be jealous of the presence that I walk around with I want them to see in my life something that they cannot attain to in their life why because the only thing I can point them to is Jesus why do you have joy why do you have peace why do you have comfort why do you have presence why do you have all these things because I have Jesus my friend I don't have the struggles I don't have the trials I didn't earn it I didn't get there friend listen to me the life of salvation the life of the redeemed should be a life that moves other people to jealousy which means people you're called the salt of the earth the light of the world it doesn't say you can be the salt of the earth Jesus says you are the salt of the earth and so creates thirst which means as we live our lives in the community around us people need to be thirsting for the water from the well of Jesus Christ and if people come into contact with us and they don't get thirsty for what we have then the salt has become useless and we're treading on dangerous ground because this is how God interacts with the multitude as he calls the redeemed to live in their midst and to create a jealous desire for what they have I want to ask you just I ask you real quick I don't have it all together I fall falter and all those things I don't know miss

Tricia just had to leave I'm sure something with Nolan I get that but she was talking about fear and how she stands up and she's she's had fear and I know she's she's talked to Carrie and I about that

