

Sunday August 14, 2016
Romans 9:6-18
A Gift of Mercy

⁶ It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."

⁸ In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

⁹ For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰ Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac.

¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand:

¹² not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

¹³ Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

¹⁴ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!

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 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

¹⁷ For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you this morning with the affirmation that it is all in God's hands. I felt the need to say this because the past week has been one in which someone loss a loved one, quite unexpectedly; someone had an event at their job which hurt them to the point of tears; someone was forced to spend time with coworkers who were not pulling their share of the load. These events and many like them happen every week. In a world in which we wish to believe that bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people we are forced to acknowledge the truth. Both good things and bad things happen to all people, all the time. Someone is thinking... but why? And the response is both complicated and simple. It is all in God's Hands.

Last week I labored with Romans 8: 28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

I wanted you to leave with a clear understanding that God has promised to work in all things, in our lives for the good, if we loved Him and are living according to the purpose He has for our lives. I worked to enforce this concept with the theme: **For The Love of God!** Today we continue to examine Paul's letter to the church at Rome and I want to focus on Romans 9:

¹⁶ It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. ¹⁸ Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Let's look at a bit of background so that you are clear why Paul was teaching this particular lesson. The Jews, Paul's own people, were not necessarily happy about the fact that their God had decided to include non-Jews in the blessing He had promised to them through their ancestor Abraham. They thought that they had a special claim on God because they were the chosen people. But Paul stopped to tell them that yes they were the chosen

people, but God could do what God wanted to do because the it was God's mercy and God could show mercy to whomever God wanted to show mercy.

Pray with me and let me attempt to make this point clear in a very simple way.

If I want to spend my money on large bottles of water, knowing that many of them will be left around the church opened and not drunk, you may feel that is a waste of money. You may be correct, but it is my money and how I choose to spend my money at the end of the day is my business, because as I just said it is my money. The reverse is also true, if someone wishes to spend **their money** buying small bottles of water to reduce the waste, even though small bottles cost more per ounce than large bottles that is their business, for again it is their money. **Our response should be gratitude that someone provided water for us to drink when we are in need of water.** The act of someone buying water for us is the result of God working in their lives to provide good things in our lives. Is anybody still with me?

This is how God works. God provides for us, often using someone else and it is not dependent on our human effort or our work it is dependent on God. Yet there is a dilemma! God does what God does because He loves us, but God expects something in return. The OT says it this way:

Micah 6:7-9 (NIV)

*⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
⁸He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

Jesus said it this way:

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.*

³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

⁴⁰ *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

I hear someone and they are wondering where is the "good news" this morning. Well, here is the good news! We serve a God who is as good as His Word. Our God is the original Promise Keeper. Our God is the best Father any child could ask for. **Our God is God all by Himself.**

That is the good news and will always be the good news. Yet sometimes we are in the midst of the trials and tribulations and trouble of this world and we forget exactly what the good news is and what it says. Allow me to remind you with the lyrics from a modern day psalmist and that will also be my theme:

God's Grace and Mercy

SHALL WE PRAY!

Father God we come this morning to hear a Word from heaven, but before that Word can be heard we need to be in the right frame of mind. So we come first of all to praise and adore you for being God all by yourself. Next we wish to confess our own sins, spoken and unspoken; acted upon and just thought about. Then we want to thank you for keeping us until this very moment and the moments you have already allotted from the beginning of time. And finally Father God we call on you to help us to be transformed into the people you have called us to be. Abba, look, hear and bless us this morning. Use me even though I have sinned and fallen short of your glory. Bless this people as you use me and do not deny them because of my shortcomings. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen and Amen.

God's Grace and Mercy

Verse #1

Thank You for saving a sinner like me

To tell the world salvation is free

There were times when I just didn't do right

But You watched over me all day and night

Remember earlier I said that God's mercy often posed as with a dilemma or a challenge. We have been saved by the blood of Jesus for a purpose and one of them is to tell the world – that salvation is free.

DID YOU SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH ANY ONE THIS WEEK?

If we are honest we just didn't do right last week

WHAT ARE THE SIN(S) FOR WHICH YOU NEED FORGIVENESS?

sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies¹

The chorus says:

Your grace and mercy brought me through
I'm living this moment because of You
I want to thank You and praise You too
Your grace and mercy brought me through

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU JUST THANKED GOD?

Well Pastor it is hard to thank Him when you are going thru...

Thank Him because you have enough sense to know you are going thru

Thank Him because you believe you are going thru and trouble don't last always

Thank Him for the bad times and the good times because if you never had a problem you would not know God could solve them

Paul told Timothy to preach in season and out of season

Well this preacher stopped to tell you to praise Him in season and out of season

Praise him for the job interview that did not lead to a job offer

It was practice

Praise him for the flat tire because it happened where you could get some help

Praise him for the end of a relationship – because he spared you ongoing despair

Praise him when you don't have the words. For Jesus hears our moans and groans and intercedes on our behalf.

Praise him when you have done all you can – STAND

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5&version=NIV>

The end of summer is just around the corner and many of you will be back in school and returning to work before we meet again. It is the time of new beginnings and I know of no better way to begin anew than to acknowledge the grace and mercy of God.

Allow me to read the words before we sing them.

Your grace and mercy brought me through
I'm living this moment because of You
I want to thank You and praise You too
Your grace and mercy brought me through

Thank You for saving a sinner like me
To tell the world salvation is free
There were times when I just didn't do right
But You watched over me all day and night

Your grace and mercy brought me through
I'm living this moment because of You
I want to thank You and praise You too
Your grace and mercy brought me through

Justice demanded that I should die
But grace and mercy said

Oh no, oh no, oh no
We've already paid the price

I once was blind
But thank God I can see
It was because grace and mercy
Came along and rescued me

Your grace and mercy brought me through
I'm living this moment because of You
I want to thank You and praise You too
Your grace and mercy, your grace and mercy
Your grace and mercy brought me through²

² Read more at <http://www.songlyrics.com/mississippi-mass-choir/your-grace-and-mercy-lyrics/#FT3g1FufzU6gzQ8J.99>