

Having laid out God's wonderful plan of salvation in the first half of Romans, and our wonderful future... we have our everyday life her...in which Paul beautifully states in these verses ...

**Romans 8:** <sup>23</sup> *And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.*

- **How are we to handle our current troubles? what do we do when we are starting to get weak and the journey of life is getting too laborious and we don't know if we are going to make it?**

**Romans 9:26** *And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.* <sup>27</sup> *And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.* <sup>28</sup> *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.* <sup>29</sup> *For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.* <sup>30</sup> *And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.*

- **And the triumphant declaration that we can all say as children of the Most-High God:**

**Romans 8:31** *What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?* <sup>32</sup> *Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?* <sup>33</sup> *Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.*

- **There is an accuser of the brethren: who is relentless...yet has absolutely no power to condemn..**

**Rev 12:10**...*For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.*

- **He accuse us but Christ died and was resurrected. And pleads for us...**

<sup>34</sup> *Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.*

<sup>35</sup> *Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?* <sup>36</sup> *(As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.")* <sup>37</sup> *No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.*



<sup>38</sup> *And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.* <sup>39</sup> *No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**\*\*\*\*\*How awesome ...then Paul shifts his thoughts to his people...if all that he says in the first half of his letter is true...then what about his people, the Jews?... Does God keep his word about the Jews...heck the vast majority have rejected their Messiah? I thought they were God's chosen people?**

**Will the promises of Romans 8 stand? Will the blood-bought promises that we Gentiles and Jews are staking our lives on stand? Will God stand by his commitments, sealed with the blood of his Son? Will he work all things together for our good? Will the predestined be called and the called be justified and the justified be glorified? Will he give us all things with him? Will nothing separate us from the love of God in Christ? Is there really now no condemnation, and will there be none tomorrow?**

**Paul wrestles with the pain of his people not coming to Jesus...it makes his soul bitter...and he has been trying to figure why this is? And he shares with the romans his insights, through much prayer contemplation and insight...and study ...because his promises to Israel have not seemed t pan out. and he is grieved...he must have had a flash back to all the years of his ministry ...and how few of his own people received Jesus as the Messiah...and the violent persecutions he suffered at their instigations and sometimes by their own hands.. and writes....**

*Romans 9:*<sup>1</sup> *With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it.* <sup>2</sup> *My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief*<sup>3</sup> *for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them.* <sup>4</sup> *They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshipping him and receiving his wonderful promises.* <sup>5</sup> *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And he (CHRIST) is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

- **Paul so desires the salvation of His fellow countrymen because he knows the free gift of righteousness is available to them if they would only believe.**

***For many people no question seems as puzzling as the problem of unanswered prayer.***

- **Why is it that some things we pray about are never answered? We could all spend hours remembering times when we prayed and prayed, often with tears, only to conclude in the end that our prayers had not been answered.**



—Every cemetery reminds us that not all our prayers are answered. —Every cancer diagnosis testifies to the suffering of this life. —Every divorce proves that good intentions are not always enough. —Every lawsuit demonstrates that we live in a fallen world. —Every violent crime teaches us that perfection will not be found in this life.

*The question of unanswered prayer is difficult precisely because we don't know why it is not answered.*

-Did we not pray hard enough? Or long enough? Or fervently enough or with more faith? -Did we use the wrong words? Or ask for the wrong things? -What if we had asked more people to pray? -If we had lived a better life, would that have made a difference? -If we had given more money or tried harder or been better people, surely that would have helped, wouldn't it?

-Maybe we didn't confess our sins. Or maybe our hearts were filled with pride.

-Did we wait too late? Should we have gotten on our knees? What if we had made a vow to God? Would that have made any difference?

- **You can torture yourself for a long time with questions like that. And you still won't know the answer. That's the ultimate frustration. The worst part is not the "No." It's the "No" that comes without any explanation from above. If only we knew why. But we don't.**

If you've ever wondered about God, this text is for you because you're not the first person to grapple with the disappointment of unanswered prayer or seemingly unfulfilled promises....

- *More than anything else, Paul prayed for his Jewish brothers and sisters to come to Christ. In fact, he even said that he would be willing to go to hell himself if it would help them be saved.*
- **No one ever prayed harder. No man was ever more sincere. Yet his prayers for the most part were unanswered. Most of the Jews rejected Christ. For everyone who said "Yes" to Jesus, 100 said "No."**
- *Therein lay the greatest mystery of all—the mystery of Jewish unbelief. How could the Jews be God's chosen people and still reject Christ—who was himself a Jew? If Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, how could his own people reject him?*
- **Paul lived and died knowing that his greatest and most fervent prayer had not been answered. But he also died in faith, still believing in God.**

*How do you reconcile faith in God with the mystery of unanswered prayer?* Here is Paul's answer in

*Romans 9:<sup>6</sup> Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people!*



- Whatever else you can say, you can't say that God has not kept his Word.
- No matter how disappointed we may be, God's Word has not failed. we have just not seen the reason why it has been answered differently than we had hoped....

**That leads me to ask to crucial questions: \*Is God free to do whatever He wants?  
\*Is God fair in the way He treats people?**

**1)Is God free to do whatever he wants? God's Freedom is seen in His choice of Isaac over Ishmael**

*Romans 9:*<sup>7</sup> *Being descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted," though Abraham had other children, too.*<sup>8</sup> *This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the children of the promise are considered to be Abraham's children.*<sup>9</sup> *For God had promised, "I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."*

- ***Don't miss the point. Abraham had two sons, but one was chosen and the other was passed over by God. Isaac and Ishmael were both sons of Abraham by birth, but only Isaac was considered the son of the promise the son who was born of Sarah when she was very old.***
- **There is only one problem with that illustration. Isaac was the son of Abraham and his wife Sarah, while Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Sarah's handmaiden Hagar. Someone might object that Ishmael was ruled out since was he the product of what you might call an Old Testament heterosexual domestic partnership. So we need another example and Paul gives us one...**

**God's freedom is also seen in His choice of Jacob over Esau**

*Romans 9:*<sup>10</sup> *This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins.*<sup>11</sup> ***But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; <sup>12</sup> he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.)*** *She was told, "Your older son will serve your younger son."*<sup>13</sup> *In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau."*

- **That last phrase has given many people problems. Many translations use the word "hate" instead of "rejected" and people ask How could God "hate" Esau even before he was born?**

***But the word "hate" doesn't imply animosity or bitterness. It simply means "not chosen." So here are two sons from the same parents. One is chosen, the other is not.***



And in case we miss the point, Paul stresses that God's choice happened before either brother had done anything good or bad.

There is no inherent reason to choose Jacob or Esau. In many ways, Esau appears to be the better choice and indeed, he often appears to be a much nicer person. He certainly is more forgiving than his brother. *It is at least as remarkable that God "loved" a cheater like Jacob as it is that he "rejected" Esau before he was born.*

\*\*\*\*\**Why some are chosen and others are not is a mystery we will probably never be able to understand....*

- *The amazing miracle is that God saves anyone. No one deserves it.*
- But if you are saved, remember this: **You didn't deserve it.**
- *God didn't choose you because of your good looks or your good life. Your religious background had nothing to do with it. Your intellect mattered not at all to him. If you are a Christian, it is because of God's free grace—and nothing else at all.*
- Is God free to do whatever he wants? Absolutely. His freedom is seen in his choice of Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau. *That's why they call him God. He can do whatever he likes.*

But is that unfair? No fair would be getting what one deserves...that is fair...however Mercy triumphs over judgement...

James 2:13 because judgment without *mercy* will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. *Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

*Romans 9:*<sup>14</sup> *Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not!* <sup>15</sup> *For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose."* <sup>16</sup> So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.

- **Moses wasn't a very likely candidate—but God chose him. Verse 16 plainly says it wasn't because of desire or effort on Moses' part, but simply because of God's mercy.**
- One day Moses killed an Egyptian who was beating a fellow Jew. After killing him, he hid his body in the sand. When Pharaoh found out, he tried to kill Moses who fled to the desert where he lived for forty years. *Not a very auspicious beginning for a hero.*
- *He was a murderer and a fugitive. But it didn't matter to God. God had determined to raise up Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, and he was going to keep at it even if it took 40 years—which is in fact how long it took to prepare Moses for greatness.*



- Moses didn't plan to be a great deliverer. It wasn't his desire at all. It was God's plan and God's desire that made Moses what he was.

**\*\*\*Key: God chose to show mercy to a man who didn't particularly deserve it. Is that fair? Sure it is. After all, if he deserved, it wouldn't really be mercy. It would be a reward for good behavior.**

**\*\*\*That brings us to the second example of God's fairness: God's Fairness Is Seen In His Justice To Pharaoh...**

*Romans 9:<sup>17</sup> For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, "I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth." <sup>18</sup> So you see, God chooses to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of others so they refuse to listen.*

- **Before you start feeling sorry for Pharaoh, just remember two facts about Pharaoh when you read this passage:** 1. Pharaoh was a pagan through and through. At no point does he become a believer in the true God. 2. The Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his heart against the Lord.
- **The sequence is this. God raised up Pharaoh as the ruler of Egypt. When Moses said, "Let my people go," Pharaoh said, "No."** Not just once but over and over again. He didn't want to lose all those hard-working Hebrew slaves. So God used his stubbornness as the backdrop against which he displayed his power to all the world.
- He fought against God and against God's people. The more miracles God worked, the harder he fought against him. He had his chance to believe, but he didn't. So God—who raised him up in the first place—hardened his heart that was already hardened in the first place.

**Is that fair? Sure it is. Pharaoh got what he deserved—total destruction in the Red Sea.**

**Think of it this way. Did Moses deserve mercy? No, but he received it anyway. Did Pharaoh deserve mercy? No, he deserved God's justice. And that's what he received. God chose each man to accomplish what he wanted...and they did that is fair**

**God is completely free to do whatever He wants. And He is completely fair in the way He treats each person. We all deserve God's judgment.**

**The fact that anyone receives God's mercy is nothing short of a miracle.**

- That understanding about the Gospel is what creates true humility before a holy God...and it is that Humility that is one part of seeing a great move of the power and presence of God in our midst.

**Well you might say I don't have any choice...God choses whom he wants...but you do have responsibility to choose based on your knowledge...**

**Romans 9:**<sup>19</sup> Well then, you might say, "Why does God blame people for not responding? Haven't they simply done what he makes them do?" <sup>20</sup> No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?

- **These verses sound harsh to modern ears tuned to the common accepted idea that our personal belief of how God ought to do things...is somehow valid**
- **Paul's unapologetic answer to such me-centered thinking, is "But who are you, O man, to argue with God?" God will make no mistakes in his dealings with humanity.**
- **There is no answer because the question answers itself: No one can win an argument with God ...we are incapable...we are clay he is the potter**
- **Don't overlook the main point: The coffee cup can't say to the potter, "I wanted to be an expensive vase." It doesn't work like that. *From one lump of clay the potter has the right to shape the clay any way he likes. The same is true for us. We're not all the same.***

*John 5:17 .... Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."*

**The key is finding surrendering to what God is making you... you are clay he is the potter...submit to the potters work...and join with him in that... want to have a life that is of great value...find out what God is doing and participate with him....be present...ask what are you doing here Lord?...then what do you want me to do?**

**end**