

Romans 11:16-36

“Mercy Aailed To All”

To catch us back up to the context Paul has been presenting to us both practically and principally how that God has not cast Israel off indefinitely. He hasn't set them aside permanently and at that it's only partially, He hasn't cast them off in totality, He's rejected them *nationally*, but not as it were every Jew *individually*, God still has His remnant. There are still Jews today who are in love *with* and walking in submission *to* Jesus Christ Christianity at its roots is entirely Jewish, the 1st church was comprised completely of Jews, you don't really find the 1st Gentile coming into the church until Acts Ch 10 when Peter shared the gospel with the household of Cornelius (the Roman Centurion of the Italian Regiment). So you'd have to deny both God's promise (to Israel), and Paul's person (him being a Jew) to say that God had completely and in totality written Israel off.

Now having said that we realize (as I mentioned already) that *nationally* God *has* set them aside, but even at that Paul wants us to understand that *ultimately* He will restore, renew and revive Israel (even on that national level). and We left off last time seeking to get a grip on the fact that if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their *fullness*! Which is to say if God can accomplish such a radical reconciling of the world through their *failing*, the blessings through their *fullness*, (meaning their national restoration) are going to be off the charts! Now Paul continues to support the premise of Israel's restoration, and he gives us a couple of more illustrations here to help us get a grip on the fact that God has a plan, and though it includes the Gentiles, it's not to the giving up *on*, or to the utterly forsaking *of* the Jews. God has set them aside temporarily, but He'll restore them to Himself *ultimately*, notice.

Vs16

2 Illustrations to demonstrate to us virtually the same thing, and remember the context here is with regard to Israel, and he says that if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy. Now what this is referencing here is found in Num 15:17-21, and I don't want you to be confused with the fact that he mentions 1st *fruits* and then a lump of dough as if to say, “Which is it, is it fruit or is it dough?” The idea of the “First fruits” applies to anything we might reference, for instance the very beginning of your day would be considered the “first fruits” of your day. If you have a garden, even though it's packed with veggies when it 1st begins to bear forth and bring to you food off those vines that would be considered the “first fruits” of your garden. and The bible teaches a principle that the 1st fruits belong to God, the idea there being that He's worthy of our very best, right off the top of whatever we've been blessed by we're to offer that to God.

It doesn't matter what it may be God desires, and is deserving of our 1st fruits, be it of our time, our money, our efforts or our energy, God is entitled to the 1st fruits. Now we could get into the tithe here and speak of the fact that the principle of the tithe goes back before the law, it's reinstated in the law, and finds biblical support from Jesus and the whole bit. The tithe quite frankly isn't yours, it's God's. and When you don't surrender it *to* Him, He considers it as us stealing *from* Him (Mal 3), now is there grace, absolutely. But you need to know the heart of God on the matter that you might make your decision wisely as to whether or not you're going to submit to God *in* the matter. The bible speaks of how God's people so often sow much, but bring in little, they earn money only to place it bags that seem to have holes in them, how you look for much, but it came to little, you brought it home to have it blown away, why?

God says in Haggai Ch 1 because the house of God is neglected while everyone is prioritizing their own, He says, "Everyone is looking to be in the bigger/better home, looking to have nice things, but My house lies in ruins, no one is considering, or placing priority upon the sanctuary." and He said because of that He dries up the labor of our hands, now it's not wrong to want a nice house, and it's wise to plan for the future, but if in so doing you neglect your primary priority to seek 1st the kingdom of God and lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, if you don't give to God what belongs to Him, then you've erred. and It's not that God is against you, He's very much *for* you, wants to bless you, but God doesn't bless self centered priorities. But He's looking to open the windows of Heaven and pour out an uncontainable blessing upon the one who'll look *to* Him, trust *in* Him, lay *before* Him in humble submission the whole of their lives. You see if you can't *give* to God what's His, how are you going to *offer* Him what's yours, be it your time, your efforts, your abilities, your resources or whatever?

Be that as it may, the principle of 1st fruits, here's the deal. Back in the book of Num Ch 15 the Lord spoke of how they were to offer the Lord the 1st fruits of their grain in the form of a cake of bread. and The idea is that in giving the Lord the part (the 1st fruits) He sanctifies the whole, (the whole grain harvest) in receiving the 1st portion, the rest is accepted and considered set apart as well. So as you give to God the 1st fruits of your day, He blesses the whole, as you give Him the 1st fruits of your resources He sets them apart in full. (Doesn't mean there'll never be struggles or tough times, welcome to a fallen world) but here's the deal, God received (on the principle of faith) the 1st fruits of Israel, Ab, Isaac, and Jacob, and in so doing God has received and set apart to Himself the whole. He hasn't rejected that which He's already accepted, there's still the remnant, God's not finished with Israel, they may be being set aside nationally *temporarily* But God will restore them very *definitely*. He's accepted the 1st fruits; He's therefore sanctified the whole (in the big picture).

You see if the root be holy, than so are the branches. As goes the root, so goes the fruit, a holy root can't produce an unholy fruit, remember Jesus said, "...*every good tree bears good*

fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” Matt 7:17-19 and The idea there is that you’ll know the root *in* a person’s life by simply observing the fruit *of* a person’s life. What kinda fruit springs forth from your life? Now that’s not to say that you’ll never make a mistake, or stumble along life’s way, even trees that bear good fruit have branches now and then that need pruning, they have problems things that need to be removed from them that they might continue to flourish and be found fruitful. and Such is the case with the nation of Israel, the root is holy, therefore the fruit is as well, again we have the scriptures thanks primarily to faithful Jews, Jesus Himself (our Lord and Savior) was a Jew according to the flesh, the patriarchs living their lives receiving righteousness by faith in God and His Word, they believed God and it was accounted to them for righteousness. So then that holy/righteous root, will spring forth as well in holy/righteous fruit, doesn’t mean that there’ll never be pruning along the way, unfruitful branches that need broke off that others might be grafted in, and that’s what Paul points out, notice.

Vs17-21

I think we’d all agree that this is a pretty hefty exhortation, and the exhortation here is unto humility. #1 We’re not the natural branches, we’re a “wild” bunch, #2 we don’t support the root, the root supports us. It wasn’t our ancestors who were called; it was Israel’s we’ve been grafted into the root system that God has provided through them.

Vs19-20

Paul says, “There’s no getting around the fact that God has broken some branches off in order that you might be grafted in, but that shouldn’t make you haughty, it should make you humble.” and Even Jesus alluded to this, stated plainly the fact that the kingdom would be torn from Israel and given to others who would bear fruit accordingly. In Luke 14 Jesus shared that parable of the man who was having a great supper, and he invited all these people who began to make excuses as to why they couldn’t come. Finally getting upset he told his servants, “Go out into the streets, and the back allies and invite the poor, the blind, the lame and maimed,” so the servant did that, said there’s more room still. The master said, “Go out into the highways and hedges, find whomever will, fill my house, for those men who were invited shall not taste my supper.” Israel was invited over and over again, but rejecting God’s invitation God turned to you and me, the poor, the lame, the blind and the maimed and is filling His house accordingly. Leave Romans turn quickly to Matthew 21 (Vs 33-43.)

That’s what Paul is speaking of here, there’s no getting around the reality of what God is doing, but he says here in Vs 20 don’t think that God has done this because of anything special in you, as though we had something offer God that He didn’t already have in Israel. It wasn’t a

matter of God favoring one over the other, or being tired of Jews, and thinking that Gentiles were better, it's not an ethnic issue, remember there's no room in the kingdom for the anti-Semite, God loves the Jews, has given us His Word and His Son *through* the Jews, Paul says it boils down to what God has always required of those whom He received unto Himself, faith. They didn't believe in Jesus, and you did, that's it, they were broken off in unbelief, you were grafted in by faith. That shouldn't be a matter of pride for us, but rather humble fear, we need to revere God, walk in humility *before* God. The bible says, "*Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.*" Hab 2:4 Paul told the Corinthians, "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" 1 Cor 10:12

Vs21

Or to understand that another way, if God tore off the natural branches, don't think that He'll have an issue tearing off wild branches that've been grafted in. Now there are those who will remind us of the context saying that this isn't a reference to any certain individual, and that Paul is speaking on a national level. That having torn off Israeli branches, He can just as easily tear off Gentile branches. and That may well be, however the word, "you" in this Vs as well as in Vs 22 is singular, it's not a plural form of the word. What am I saying? I'm saying don't take anything for granted, but walk in the fear of God, drawing near to God, cultivating a relationship of intimacy *with* God, then you don't have to worry about it. But I'd hate to grow comfortable resting on a particular doctrinal position only to have the rude awakening discovering my doctrine was wrong. "Once saved always saved?" I hold to the John 15 position personally, if you're abiding in Christ, you've got nothing to worry about; He's your safety zone. But even Jesus said, "*If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*" John 15:6 Now you can explain that away however you wish, but to me it seems pretty clear, notice Vs 22.

Vs22

You see that word, "if" makes it a conditional clause, salvation is free, that's Divine initiative, there's nothing you can do to earn or deserve it, but there's no getting around human responsibility. We have to remain in that place of receiving it by faith, walking in humility, not thinking that God somehow owes us, or has found a personal preference *in* us, it's not in us the reasons He's saved us, it's in Him.

We're to continue in His goodness, trusting in Christ, abiding in Christ, but this is a stern warning, God's severe judgment against those who reject Christ, and His benevolent goodness towards those who accept Christ. Now again if you choose to see this as a collective

exhortation, not dealing with the individual but with the Gentile church, or nation as a whole, you're free to do that and that's probably right, all I'm seeking to get across here is that we are to walk reverently before God, and taking nothing for granted *from* God, not only as a collective body, but you and me individually.

As far as that goes on a collective level the bible teaches that the day is coming when God will turn from the Gentiles (collectively, not individually) and turn back to the Jews, that's what Paul is leading up to here, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, God will rapture the church, open the eyes of Israel nationally, and begin to use *them* once again specifically, it'll be much like a role reversal. There was a time when Gentiles weren't seeking God, God was dealing with Israel, then God turned from Israel upon their rejection of Christ to the Gentiles. When the Gentile fullness has come it, God will then receive the bride of Christ via the rapture, and will once again turn from the Gentiles (not that Gentiles won't be saved, but on that national scale) to the Jews. (I'm getting ahead of myself)

Vs23-25

You see the blindness of Israel is in "part" not every Jew is blind, the majority yes, but in totality "No." But Paul says, "I want you to know why that is lest you should be wise in your own eyes." Always a dangerous thing by the way; the bible says, "*Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*" Prov 26:12 Isaiah said, "*Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!*" Isa 5:21 "*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*" Rom 12:3 and Again, "*Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.*" Rom 12:16 Paul says, "I don't want you to think more highly of yourself than you ought, God has a plan and a purpose in all of this.

Don't be misled by the word, "Mystery" all that means is that there's something that was concealed in the OT that's now being revealed in the NT. The gospel going out to the Gentiles was alluded to in the OT, but the specifics of how that was to happen, and to the degree God was going to act were silent. and Paul is simply stating that the time is coming when this phase of God's plan will be fulfilled (the fullness of the Gentiles) and then He'll turn His attention again to the nation of Israel.

What's meant by the fullness of the Gentiles? Paul talks of the fullness of the Jews in Vs 12, here we have the fullness of the Gentiles, it represents the complete # of Gentiles who will be saved, God knows how many and who all that will be. and When all 100 of the flock are in the fold (parabolically speaking) (Matt 18) we'll catch air, we'll be caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Then God will again turn His attention to Israel.

Vs26-27

So Paul quotes scripture for us out of Isaiah to affirm what he's saying to us, and when he speaks of "all Israel" being saved, there are those who take that literally, that God will turn each of them individually to Him (which is completely possible). and Others who say that again it's on a national scale, not an individual scale so that nationally they'll be a Christian nation, but that doesn't necessarily indicate each individual Jew being saved, however you want to see that you'll be in good company. The point here is that God isn't finished with them but will once again restore them. and This will have to take place before the 2nd coming of Christ.

There's a distinction between the rapture (of which no prophecy needs to be fulfilled before Jesus calls His bride up to Himself) and the 2nd coming of Christ, when Jesus will return physically to the earth. As far as the rapture goes we're to watch and be ready because that could take place any time, 7 years later Jesus will return literally to the earth, and in that interim period God will restore Israel, renew them to that place of having a relationship with Him that's predicated upon faith, not law, and they'll receive the righteousness of Christ as their covering, seeing Jesus as their Messiah.

Vs28-29

Underline Vs 29, "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable." God doesn't take back His call upon your life, or the gifts He's given you *in* your life. You might cease walking in them, or turn your back on Him, but He'll never revoke *from* you that which He's given *to* you, now with in the confines of the context Paul is saying that God has called Israel, therefore He'll restore Israel. They may be enemies of the gospel presently in that they've rejected the gospel on a national scale, but has covenanted with them and still has a love for them and it's only a matter of time before He restores them.

Maybe you've been places and done things lately that you feel may be beyond the realm of God's forgiveness, not so, God leaves the lines of restoration open to you, if you turn to Him in humble repentance, He'll restore and renew your life.

Vs30-32

Why have all been committed to disobedience? That God might make His mercy available to all, that word disobedience, could be translated "unbelief" it speaks of a "stiff necked ness" of course disobedience is represented by sin, so that all have been confined under sin, and in that God is able to have mercy on all, and He will have mercy on all who call upon His name. God has availed His mercy to all who are willing to receive it in the person of Jesus Christ If you don't want Christ, you don't want His mercy, because His mercy, His grace is found in Christ, but it's available to you, and to all of mankind who've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

I liked the way Wuest translated these few Vs. He translates it, "*For, even as you formerly disbelieved God, yet now have been made recipients of mercy through (the occasion of) their unbelief, thus also these now have disbelieved in order that through (the occasion of)*

the mercy which is yours, they themselves also might become the recipients of mercy, for God has corralled all within (the state) of unbelief in order that He might have mercy upon all."¹

Wuest and At this point Paul is just reeling as to the wisdom with which God works out the details of His purposes and His plans and so He just bursts out here in this spontaneous phrase of praise.

Vs33-35

God will never be a debtor to man, we owe Him everything, He'll never owe us *anything* He's greater than our ability to *glean* and He's greater than our ability to *give*. He's more than we can understand, and we're rightfully able to give Him nothing. Because what on this earth wasn't His before we ever got here? It's all His, we're just stewards of it, be it good or bad, none of it belongs to us, everything we have we've received 1st from Him. So than who can say they gave 1st to God?

As it's been said, "If God were small enough to understand, He wouldn't be big enough to worship." I'm glad God is greater than what I can glean, or gather, understand and comprehend, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past our finding out.

We can't track the Lord, His ways are beyond our ability to search out, the Psalmist said it right when he said, "*Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known.*" Ps 77:19 Can't track Him, understand all the ways of Him, His ways are greater than our own. Who's become His counselor? Oh, all of us have probably tried, but God doesn't need our advice, ever notice that Jesus never asked advice? He didn't need it, He's God.

Vs36

Translation, it's all about Jesus. He's the first Cause, the effective Cause, and the final Cause of everything; all things are of Him, created *through* Him, sustained *by* Him, and will ultimately serve to bring glory *to* Him, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Prayer Points: Lord we're humbled that You would avail Your mercy to each and everyone of us when it's the last thing we deserve. So may we honor You with our lives, draw near *to* You, walk intimately *with* You, and lay the 1st fruits of all that we are, and all that we

¹Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Ro 11:30). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

have before You. May we continue to abide in You, bring forth fruit as unto You that Your grace might be magnified in our lives.

If you've never given your heart to Christ understand that God wants to graft you in today to the riches of His goodness, of His grace and His mercy that's poured out unrelentingly in the person of Jesus Christ Rivers of living water waiting to wash you, to cleanse you and to quench the thirst in the deepest recesses *of* you. Maybe you think that you've done something, or several things and you're not sure you're in a position to receive God's forgiveness, God delights in demonstrating His mercy, all have sinned, that all might receive God's mercy. The only thing that'll keep you from receiving the mercy of God is you, open your heart, open your life, receive God's forgiveness through the person of His Son.