



Set Free: Dead In The Water Romans 9:1-10:4

We need to abandon our attitude of “Save Yourself” Romans 9:1-5

“...I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh...” (v.2-3)

- A “save yourself” attitude disconnects us from dying people all around us. Paul describes the anguish he feels for the Jewish people by using words like “great sorrow” and “unceasing grief.”
- The Jewish people thought they had “saved themselves.” After all, they had:
 - Adoption, Glory, Covenants, The Law, Worship Services, Promises, Patriarchs, Jesus, the Messiah

Good genes don’t mean a thing when we’re treading water Romans 9:6-13

“That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.” (v.8)

- It didn’t mean a thing for Ishmael to come from Abraham
“...nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “through Isaac your descendants will be named.” (v.7)
- It didn’t mean a thing for Esau to come from Isaac
“THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.’ Just as it is written, ‘JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.’” (v.13)
- It doesn’t mean a thing for us what family we were born into

We need to reexamine the depths of God’s mercy Romans 9:14-29

“So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.” (v.16)

- Is God unjust?
“What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!” (v.14)
- A Sovereign God chooses to have mercy and compassion on who He wants.
“So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.” (v.18)

Moses & Pharoah
(v.14-18)

Potter & Clay
(v.20-23)

Insiders & Outsiders
(v.24-29)

Jesus is THE Lifeboat that sets us free Romans 9:30-10:4

“They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, ‘BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.’” (v.32-33, NASB)

“Careful! I’ve put a huge stone on the road to Mount Zion, a stone you can’t get around. But the stone is me! If you’re looking for me, you’ll find me on the way, not in the way.” (v.32-33, The Message)

Digging Deeper

The Election of God

As you read through Romans 9 there can be a growing sense that “it isn’t fair”, that God chooses those He wants to save and there really isn’t anything we can “do” about it. We live our lives wanting to “do” things to “get” saved, but that really isn’t how God works. Read through a portion of this article by S. Michael Houdmann on the elect of God.

Throughout Romans 9, Paul systematically shows that God’s sovereign election has been in force from the very beginning. He begins with a crucial statement: “For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel” (Romans 9:6). This means that not all people of ethnic Israel (that is, those descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) belong to true Israel (the elect of God). Reviewing the history of Israel, Paul shows that God chose Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau. Just in case anyone thinks that God was choosing these individuals based on the faith or good works they would do in the future, he adds, “Though they [Jacob and Esau] were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad – in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him Who calls” (Romans 9:11).

At this point, one might be tempted to accuse God of acting unjustly. Paul anticipates this accusation in v. 14, stating plainly that God is not unjust in any way. “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion” (Romans 9:15). God is sovereign over His creation. He is free to choose those whom He will choose, and He is free to pass by those whom He will pass by. The creature has no right to accuse the Creator of being unjust. The very thought that the creature can stand in judgment of the Creator is absurd to Paul, and it should be so to every Christian, as well. The balance of Romans 9 substantiates this point.

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. Paul obviously had a heart for the people around him, specifically the Jewish people, that they might be saved. He says, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” (Romans 10:1) Who are the people surrounding your life who need the salvation of God? Is your heart toward them burdened or ambivalent?
2. There is a mindset that we can, and we have, saved ourselves. If you look at the Jews of Paul’s day, and even the Jewish people of our day, they are consumed with the practice of the law. Paul says, “but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works.” (Romans 9:31-32) Remember, the next verse says that they stumbled over Jesus. What are some of the temptations you see in the Christian life where we can take our salvation into our own hands through our works and leave God out of it?
3. When thinking about the salvation that comes from God, have you ever thought about how God might be “unjust” and that it isn’t fair that everyone doesn’t go to heaven? Someone once said, “If you were God, how populated would heaven be?” What is the balance of God’s Justice and His Mercy?

Next Steps:

1. **Join the ‘Growing in Christ’ Discipleship Ministry to better understand God and His sovereign work in our salvation.** This study for new and growing Christians meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm in rooms S-1 and S-2. For more info, contact Ross Strachan at 714.541.1053 or visit calvarylife.org/grow
2. **Join a LifeGroup to help have a community to work out understanding your faith and the mercy that comes from God.** For more info, contact Laura Copeland at lcopeland@calvarylife.org or at 714.550.2398 to find a LifeGroup that will fit your schedule and interest. Learn more at calvarylife.org/lifegroups