

Title: God's Faithfulness to His People
Series: Living Free
Text: Romans 11

ICE BREAKER QUESTION: Share a personal example of how God was faithful to you, even in a time when you felt you may not have been faithful to Him.

Alternate question: Share an example of how God fulfilled a promise to you.

Introduction: Does God keep His promises? Is He trustworthy? Always?

TEXT: Read the whole of Romans 11

In the book of Romans, chapters 9 through 11, the Apostle Paul deals with the question of God's ancient promises to the Jews - now that Jesus has come as the Messiah and been rejected. The Jews had been blinded by national pride and/or religious legalism. They loved the privileged status of the Law but missed of whom the Law and the prophets spoke.

→**The question now arises: What about the promises God gave the patriarchs and the prophets?**

God always remains faithful to His promises (even when we are faithless)

Psalms 36:5 *Your love O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies*

The Hebrew root from which the words translated "faithfulness" in the Old Testament are derived means to stay or support - as applied to a person, means someone a person can safely lean upon.

God's promises are fulfilled in His way and in His time

Paul teaches in Romans that the promises made to Israel will also come to pass in God's time and in His way. Could this be happening today?

God is sovereign in election and calling. What is our role then?

Our role is to respond to God's grace with faith and obedience

I. God will *not* cast away His people

Romans 11:1, 2

1) *I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

2) *God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah...*

A. All believers are now considered His people

- **Rom 9:25** *I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.*

B. The gifts and calling of God are of grace not works

- **Romans 11:29** *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*
- **Romans 11:1** (The Message): *Does this mean, then, that God is so fed up with Israel that he'll have nothing more to do with them?*
- **Isaiah 11:11** *It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left.*

Always free. This Scripture reveals a general truth regarding all of God's gifts and callings – they are blessings of grace and as such undeserved now and always.

Anointing Lost. You can, however, lose your anointing of the Holy Spirit, your credibility in the world and the church, and even your opportunity to minister, but the calling on your life remains for as long as you live.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Let's discuss Romans 11:29.

- How do these words impact you?
- Is there an area of gifting or calling in your life that you have felt has been unfulfilled or "collecting dust on the shelf"?
- Can anyone share a testimony of how you've seen the truth of this verse fulfilled in your own life?

II. The promise of a Land, a People and a Deliverer

- **Genesis 17:7, 8** *I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendents after you in their generations for an **everlasting covenant**, to be God to you and your descendents after you. Also I give to you and your descendents after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an **everlasting possession** and I will be their God*
- The promise to Abraham about the land and relationship is an *everlasting* covenant.

A. The government of Israel (i.e. the *nation* of Israel) is not to be confused with God's total dealings with the Jewish people.

- We can support the Jewish people, their right to land in Canaan and yet not have to support all the decisions of every Israeli government.

B. Some things are getting clearer. Just as the theology of the gifts of the Spirit was more accurate after the outpouring of Azusa Street so the dozens of Scripture verses on God restoring Israel made more sense after 1948. God is restoring truth in every area – marriage, worship, prayer, priesthood of the believers... and now Israel.

C. The Deliverer has come: Jesus: *The Deliverer will come out of Zion* **Romans 11:26**

D. Every believer is promised a name, a place and people – too. **Genesis 12:1-3**

III. The Stupor of Unbelief

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Share about a time when you struggled with unbelief toward God and how God brought you out of that?

Romans 11:8 *Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day."*

The judgment under which the Jew suffers is the same judgment that Paul speaks of for the Gentiles in **Romans 1**. God says, "If you want it (sin) and you will not heed any word of restraint or reason you can have it (your fill of it)". Three times Paul says "God gave them over"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

As believers, what affect does unbelief have upon our lives?
What were the affects upon Israel that we see in this passage?

A. Bondage ... bow down their backs Romans 11:10 *Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always."*

- Backs bent under slavery, a heavy burden, cowering with fear, bowed with grief, too weak to stand, groping through blindness... the idea is a bowed-down-ness instead of the liberty of the believer

B. Rejection ...because of unbelief they were broken off Romans 11:20 *Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.*

C. Blindness ... blindness in part has happened to Israel Romans 11:25 *... that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

IV. Promise of End-time Revival in Israel

God remains faithful to His people Israel. Even though they have tarried, the promises of God are sure.

A. It will begin with a remnant

- **Romans 11:5** *Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*
 1. Remember the earliest church was all Jewish, Jesus was Jewish and so were all the apostles, including *Paul himself*.
 2. There has always been a remnant of believing Jews. Today, there are roughly 10,000 Messianic Jews in Israel. It is still a remnant but it is very active and growing.

3. *Will you be part of a remnant in your generation? While you wait for God to bring revival will you go against the grain of our culture and be a part of a Gideon remnant?*

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Where has God called you to be a remnant (in your family, workplace, school, neighborhood, community)? Encourage everyone to respond to this question.

B It will bring unprecedented blessing to humanity

- **Romans 11:12** *Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!*
- If the Jews failing to accept the Messiah resulted in riches for the Gentiles – i.e. salvation, the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit, etc. – how much more will the acceptance of the Messiah be a blessing for all nations.

C. It will be a massive turning to the Lord

- **Romans 11:26, 27** *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*
- At some point the Spirit will be poured out upon the Jew in a special way and they will awaken spiritually and mourn over the Savior. **Zechariah 11:10** *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a first born.*

D. It will follow an end-time harvest of the Gentiles

- **Romans 11:25** *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*
- The fullness of the Gentiles relates to the fulfillment of Jesus prophesy in **Matthew 24:14:** *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come.*
- A **Gentile Revival** around the world will come that will provoke Israel to jealousy and a hunger for Him. **We have never seen a greater revival and harvest among “gentile” nations and people groups (ethnic groups) than is happening today!**

Romans 11:11 *to provoke them to jealousy salvation has come to the Gentiles*

V. What shall we do? Romans 11

DISCUSSION QUESTION: So we don't make the same mistake Israel did, what should we do in response to this passage we've discussed today?

A. Respond wholeheartedly to God's grace

Romans 11:6 *And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*

1. Jews lost salvation when they trusted in the works of the Law and the Gentile was given salvation by hearing and believing. It was the difference between grace and works.
2. Keep it clear: our walk with God is a *response* to His grace and not an effort of the flesh. The more we respond to grace the more grace that is given. **Grace – Response - Grace**

There is a truckload of grace for you!

B. Keep in balance both the goodness and the severity of God

Romans 11:22 *Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

1. A **balanced understanding** of God's character: God is all good and all just. He is merciful and totally equitable. He blesses beyond measure and yet judges all things.
2. Israel was given an opportunity to believe and she did not – the result was that they were cut off. God is God. We are not. Let us keep a **healthy awe, respect and fear of the Lord**. He is a God of wrath and anger as well as mercy and grace – these are all fully consistent with love

C. Trust that God's ways are perfect

Romans 11:33 *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*

• God is executing the **perfect plan** – for Israel, the Gentiles but also *for you personally!*

Read this version of Romans 11:33-36 from The Message: *Have you ever come on anything quite like this extravagant generosity of God, this deep, deep wisdom? It's way over our heads. We'll never figure it out. Is there anyone around who can explain God..... Everything happens through him; Everything ends up in him. Always glory! Always praise! Yes. Yes. Yes.*

Does God keep His promises? Yes. Above all you ask or think – with extravagant generosity!

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- What is God speaking to you today from these verses today and how can you apply it to your life in the coming days/weeks?
- What is holding you back from giving 100% to God? Where do you need to give the last 5% of your heart that perhaps you've held back from Him?
- Where might you be struggling with unbelief towards God today? How can we pray for you?

Take time break up into small groups of 2-3 and pray for each other in these areas.