

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 4

Sermon Title: Week 1: Just what does it mean that God is God?

Date: 01-06-19

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- **TODAY! Launching into Romans part 4. Chap 9-11.**
- **CHALLENGING! R8 is one of most taught in NT, 9-11 one of most ignored. FRAME IT OUT TODAY**
  - **Track with all messages. Don't get lost...**
  - **Read First tracks- pre-read scripture**
  - **Do study questions. If possible, be in a group.**

#### ✠ Christianity's great offense

- **Why are chap 9-11 so little studied? Because they contain a truth that is at the heart of what makes Christianity so offensive to so many.**
- **What makes Christianity offensive?**
  - **Behavior of Christians? Sure**
  - **Distortion of scripture? Sure**
- **THE BIGGEST OFFENSE of the Gospel is... RESURRECTION.**

1 Cor 1:22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,<sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,<sup>24</sup> but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Acts 23:6 I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!"

- **What is offensive about the Resurrection of Jesus?**
  - **Fine with forgiveness, love, grace, new life...**
- **IF RESURRECTION is true, then it means that GOD IS GOD. Here it is...**
- **If GOD is God, then WE ARE NOT.**

#### ✠ Just what does it mean that God is GOD?

- **If God is GOD- all powerful, all knowing, holding time and eternity in his hand... if HE is the creator of all- and WE are the creation... that means HE is the one in charge! Consider following passages...**

**Colossians 1:15-18** *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.<sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.<sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

**Romans 11:36** *For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

- **This is a FAR cry from man-centered religion, where we use God for our purposes, keep him in our doctrinal and traditional boxes, and decide what role we will let him have in our lives.**
- **If THESE ARE TRUE, and GOD IS GOD, then...**

#### If God is God, then God is SOVEREIGN.

- **Means He is in control, yes... but more important, it means that God does not have to conform to our human thinking about how he should act.**
- **We struggle with this! We may have no problem with God existing, but we want him to exist on our terms. We want him to conform to our version of what we think is right and fair.**

- *God, you are good if I see justice and fairness the way I think should be in my circumstances, or others I know of our care about.*
  - *God, you love me if you meet my needs the way I think they should be met.*
  - *This is why we have the ever present question of why good things happen to bad people, and bad things happen to good people.*
- *As we take this step into the second half of Romans, Paul proclaims to us in strong terms that THIS GOD- the God revealed to us in the first half of Romans- The God who has redeemed us, justified us, made us his own, given his life, set us free from condemnation, and brought us into HIS LOVE that IN CHRIST we can NEVER be separated from... THIS GOD HAS DONE EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE according to HIS nature, HIS purpose, HIS plan, and in HIS timing.*
  - *AND, looking forward, GOD.. being GOD... will continue to work and act according to HIS nature, HIS purpose, HIS plan, and in HIS timing.*
  - *GOD IS NOT BOUND TO OUR TERMS, OUR WISDOM, or OUR DEMANDS of how he should act. HE IS GOD!*
  - *This is the great point Paul is going to make across these three chapters, and he begins by addressing an objection sure to have arisen from the church in Rome, many of whom were Jewish. Objection is inferred here, but it is inescapable: Matter of Israel.*

#### † The matter of Israel (rejection of Gospel)

- *PAUL! If everything you have told us so far is true, if God is so good, and if His goodness fully seen in Jesus, then WHY was Jesus rejected by his own people? PAUL! Remember God's covenant to Abraham? If Israel has rejected the messiah, then doesn't it seem like God's covenant to Abraham has failed? What is Israel's role in all of this?*
- *Paul answers with the most emotion we see from him in all of the NT.*

**Romans 9:1-5** *I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, <sup>4</sup> the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. <sup>5</sup> Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

- *You can hear pain in Paul's heart for his people, as largely they had rejected the Gospel.*
- *He makes a startling wish cut off from Christ for the sake Israel- impossible, but it shows us 2 things- the significance of Israel to Paul, but also the reality that while we LOVE people, minister to people, pray for people- ULTIMATELY we have no control over other people. Israel had heard the gospel, and rejected it.*
- *IMPORTANTLY- focus here is on Israel as a nation, not the salvation of individuals- many had believed.*
- *IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL to God's plan. Paul makes it clear that was through Israel that God had brought Salvation to the world, and in 9-11, Israel is still significant to God's salvation for the world- Israel may have rejected God's messiah, Jesus, but God had not rejected Israel.*
- *Paul goes back to the beginning of the cov...*

#### † The promise to Abraham

**Romans 9:6-9** *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. <sup>7</sup> 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."<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

- **Gods covenant promise to Israel had not failed.**
- **First, just being a physical descendant of Abraham didn't mean you were one of Israel, as chosen people**
- **Point made through story of Isaac, and Ishmael, even though Ismael isn't named.**
- **THE COV: God said, I will give you a son- grow into a nation, all world will be blessed through him. THEN, A&S got impatient, Hagar, Ishmael. We go on to see that God cared for Hagar and Ishmael, he didn't abandon them, but they were not his plan to bring the grace of his salvation to the world.**
- **NO... God had made a promise... "at appointed time... I will fulfill my promise, Sarah will have a son, and I will fulfill my covenant through Isaac.**
- **HOW MATTER NOW? If we think of the total plan and purpose of God in the human story as the story of HIS GRACE- THEN FIRST POINT Paul makes...**

Receiving God's Grace is the result of God's **PROMISE**, not man's **PLAN**.

Proverbs 19:21 *Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

- **Paul takes this a step deeper... story of...**

† **Jacob and Esau**

- **OT story continues (all in Genesis), Isaac marries Rebekah, and they have twin boys, but Esau is born first. According to their tradition, Esau then inherited his fathers birthrights.**

**Romans 9:10-13** *Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac.*

<sup>11</sup> *Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: <sup>12</sup> not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."* <sup>13</sup> *Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."*

- **Okay... we must look closely here.**
- **Remember the story? By mans tradition, Esau was elder. Family story would run through him. But Rebekah and Jacob hatched a plan to deceive Isaac, who was blind, and trick him into giving the family blessing to Jacob. What they did was deceitful, they lied, and yet, because of what happened, the family story, the line that would lead to birth of nation of Israel, would come through Jacob, not Esau.**
- **We think- THAT'S NOT FAIR! God says... it may not be fair, but this is my sovereign plan. I have chosen to call Jacob for this purpose, not Esau. OFFENSIVE TO US!**
- **According to mans plan, Jacob never should have been in the spotlight. Because of his actions, we think, he should have been further disqualified... and Yet, God says... I HAVE CALLED HIM. I HAVE CHOSEN HIM for my purpose.**

Participation in God's Grace comes from God's **CALL**, not our **QUALIFICATIONS**

- **A WORD "hated"... prime example of not immediately reading our 21<sup>st</sup> century meaning into an ancient text. Sense is that of rejecting, not as a person, but in regards to a purpose. STRONG words, but Paul is quoting from Malachi, to make the point that for HIS purposes, God chose Isaac, and he thus rejected Esau.**
- **WE, in humanity, cry out, GOD! You're not supposed to work that way. That's not fair!**
- **God's response, as we shall see... I AM GOD!**

† **What then shall we say?**

**Romans 9:14-16** *What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.*

– ***This is the theme we will see going forward. We want to evaluate God, and want him to act, within our sense of fairness, what is deserved. THE TRUTH, is that everything God has done, and will do, is a result of his MERCY. THIS IS GOOD! THIS IS WHAT WE WANT. For the God who is sovereign says....***

**Colossians 1:19-20** *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*