

- I. Introduction (1:1-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live (1:18-11:36)
  - A. No justification by our own righteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - B. Justification by Faith Alone in Christ Alone (3:21-4:25)
  - C. All those that God justifies, He shall also glorify (5-8)
  - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
    - 9:1-5 Paul's Grief for his Unbelieving Kinsmen
    - 9:6-13 The Purpose of God According to Election
    - 9:14-29 Questions of Sovereignty & Responsibility
    - 9:30-10:21 The Righteousness by Faith in Christ
    - 11:1-10 Israel's Rejection not Total
    - 11:11-32 Israel's Rejection not Final
    - 11:33-36 Closing Doxology
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith" (12-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion (15:14-16:27)

## God Has Mercy on whom He Wills

*Romans, Part XLV*

Romans 9:14-18

Stuart W. Bryan

### I. Appointed to Eternal Life (Acts 13:48)

Luke, the author of Acts, makes an important observation which helps reinforce what we learn in Romans 9. After Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch, Luke writes that "*as many as had been \_\_\_\_\_ to eternal life believed*" (13:48). Sinners only respond positively to the Gospel when God shows them mercy and calls them faith; otherwise, they will remain in their unbelief and ultimately perish.

#### *Romans 9:14-18*

<sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup>For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." <sup>16</sup>So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup>For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." <sup>18</sup>Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

### II. Is there unrighteousness with God?

#### A. Questioning God's Purpose According to Election (14)

Paul categorically denies that there is unrighteousness with God. God is a God of justice, "*righteous and upright is He*" (Dt 32:4). All His ways are right and good including His *election* of Jacob and His *rejection* of Esau.

#### B. It is of God who shows mercy (15-16)

To bolster his denial, Paul resorts to Scripture. He appeals to the very nature of God revealed in Exodus 33:19. Following Israel's golden calf incident, Moses prays that God would be gracious to Israel and still go with them into the land:

<sup>15</sup>Then [Moses] said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup>For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." <sup>17</sup>So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." <sup>18</sup>And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." <sup>19</sup>Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Ex 33:15-19)

In other words, no one can \_\_\_\_\_ God's mercy. His distribution of mercy is free. "*So then,*" Paul concludes, "*it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy*" (16). Douglas Moo explains the significance of v. 16:

*"The principle Paul formulates moves beyond the positive assertion of v. 15 – God's bestowal of mercy has its origin in his own will to be merciful – to its negative corollary – God's mercy does not, then, depend on human 'willing' or 'running.' The former denotes one's inner desire, purpose, or readiness to do something; the latter the actual execution of that desire. Together, then, they 'sum up the totality of man's capacity.'" (Moo, 593)*

God's *election* is of grace from first to last; it is founded in God's love not man's merit.

C. Whom He wills He hardens (17-18 cf. Ex 7:3-5; 9:16)

Just as God has mercy on whom He wills, so too God hardens whom He wills. As freely as He *elected* Isaac and Jacob, just as freely He *rejected* Ishmael and Esau. God is the Lord. He chooses one in His mercy and rejects another in His justice, both of which reveal His *power and Name*. As God says to Pharaoh, “*For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.*” Many claim that God’s hardening followed Pharaoh’s. However, God told Moses that He was *going to harden* Pharaoh’s heart before Moses even met Pharaoh (Ex 4:21):

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.”

So why isn’t this unjust? Because by doing so God *declared His Name in all the earth* and God’s righteousness is His “*unswerving commitment to preserve the honor of his name*” (Piper). God’s Name is His character. When God proclaims His Name to Moses, He says:

<sup>5</sup>Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with [Moses] there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD... <sup>6</sup>“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup>keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” (Ex 34:5-7)

Who is the Lord? He is the God who *shows mercy freely* and who *executes justice faithfully*. In Him, mercy and justice meet. So what is God’s purpose in history? His purpose is to display the fullness of His glory in all the earth. So God \_\_\_\_\_ some in His mercy and \_\_\_\_\_ others in His justice.

### III. Application

A. Your God is Too Small

<sup>33</sup>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! <sup>34</sup>“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?” <sup>35</sup>“Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?” <sup>36</sup>For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Rom 11:33-36)

B. Your Ego is Too Big (cf. Eph 2:8-10)

C. Your Gratitude is Too Lean (cf. Heb 2:16)

D. Your Prayers are Too Tepid

“...if it is said, ‘It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,’ because it is of both, that is... as if it meant the will of man alone is not sufficient, if the mercy of God go not with it – then it will follow that the mercy of God alone is not sufficient, if the will of man go not with it; and therefore... why may we not rightly say, ‘It is not of God that shows mercy, but of man that wills,’ because the mercy of God by itself does not suffice? Surely, if no Christian will dare to say this... lest he should openly contradict the apostle, it follows that the true interpretation of the saying, ‘It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,’ is that the whole work belongs to God, who... goes before the unwilling to make him willing [and] follows the willing to make his will effectual.” (Enchiridion, 40)

### IV. Conclusion