



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

To Know God is To Love God

May 17, 2020

Romans 11:25-36

Clint Pressley

²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

*“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;*

*²⁷ “and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”*

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

*³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?”*

*³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him
that he might be repaid?”*

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

(Pastor prays)

Just a few moments ago, I asked you to stand as I read from the Bible. And before we read, I quoted Isaiah 40:8, *the grass withers and the flowers fade but the word of our God stands forever*. And although that can feel like a ritual, behind the ritual there is meaning. It is an admission that we stand as a people under the authority of the Bible because that Bible is God speaking to us.

There is a reason this pulpit is in the center of the room, because it holds up the book that is God speaking to us. There is a reason I'll spend hours and hours studying this Bible to get the words right and the context clear and the meaning straight. It's because this is God showing Himself to us. There is a reason why my illustrations are few and my stories are short and the Bible is dominant. It's because the most important thing I can do is help you know the God of the Bible more fully and profoundly, to know His love and His grace and His mercy and His holiness, to see His holiness and realize your need for Jesus. I want you to see Jesus dying on the cross, taking the wrath of God and then being raised from the dead so you can receive the grace and mercy and love of God. It's because knowing more of God is what you need right now, and this passage in Romans takes us there.

In chapter 9 we started climbing the mountain of God's sovereignty and at the end of Chapter 11 we reached the summit of God's glory. And there, we can rest in God. To know God is the greatest comfort and accomplishment any man or woman could hope for, and I hope from this passage to show you that ...

The More You Know About God, the More You Want to Worship God.

I hope to point out a few things this passage should do in our hearts.

We should be humbled by the truth of God

Go with me to verse 25 and just read the first sentence Paul says to the Gentiles. ²⁵*Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers:* Now before we attack it as a whole, let's break it down into parts.

See that first phrase – “lest you be wise in your own sight.” That's the third time in this passage Paul has warned the Gentile Christians about pride. This time he quotes Proverbs 3:7, *be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil*. Paul knows the condition of our hearts, how a little knowledge can puff us up. He knows that people who have been married a year and a half shouldn't write marriage manuals! Why is he warning them? It's in the rest of

the verse. Let's read the whole thing. ²⁵ *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* **Mystery.** It is something that was previously unknown and now is being revealed. And we will get to that revelation in a moment, but first let's pause and receive the warning, the warning that the more we know about God, the more humble we should be and not more arrogant. And the more humble you are, the less offended you are. If people say terrible things about you, you shouldn't be offended because the truth of who you are before God is much worse than what people actually know about you. You have been much more offensive to God than you *ever* have been to another person and yet, even while we were still sinners, Christ *died* for you. And God in Christ saw you and loved you and saved you and now sustains you.

We call that *grace*. Even when you were a sinner you received grace. And of all the things that grace does, one of the most prominent marks of a person saved by grace is the lack of pride and judgment in the presence of gratitude that He would save a sinner like me. The less you think about grace, the more you think about yourself and the more prideful you become. The cross of Jesus is the greatest truth that's ever been given to mankind, and we should be humbled by that truth. We should be humbled by the truth of God. But there is another "should."

We should be amazed by the Providence of God

I hope that you are getting more and more familiar with the doctrine of the providence of God. Because from verses 28-31, you have a circular providential working of God in Salvation.

Let's take a look at Israel first in verse 25. ²⁵ *Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.* There is a partial and temporary hardening, but that hardening has a purpose. Now let's look at the Gentiles again. Do you see the phrase, "fullness of Gentiles"? That's *us*. A certain number of Gentiles known only to God are to be saved and their salvation, according to verse 14, will serve to awaken the Jews. And in verse 26 it says "and in this way all of Israel will be saved"!

Now that verse has caused a lot of discussion over the years. What does Paul mean when he says, "In this way **all** of Israel will be saved"? That word "all." I don't think he means that one day every single Jewish person will be saved. I think that he means in the providence of God, one day there will be such an ingathering of Jews coming to faith in Christ that it will be

characterized as *all* Israel being saved. I think what is more important is how the nation of Israel will be saved. He tells us that by quoting the Bible in Isaiah 59. Let's read verse 26-27. ²⁶ *And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";* ²⁷ *"and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

Now let's break that down and see how the Jews will be saved. The deliverer will come from Zion. You can draw a straight line from there to Jesus, who is all God and all man. He came as a substitute to live a righteous life that we cannot live.

Notice what else it says in verse 26: He will banish ungodliness from Israel. Now keep reading verse 27. "This will be my covenant when I take away their sins." You can draw a straight line from this text to the cross where Jesus died as a substitute paying for all the sins of every sinner who will ever be saved, Jews and Gentiles alike! This is done powerfully and providentially. Paul even says so in verse 28-29. ²⁸ *As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.* ²⁹ *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

In verse 28 the Jews were hardened so Gentiles could be saved, but in verse 29 we are reminded not to forget God's plan, and it doesn't change. It is the Gospel and the doctrine of election. God's people are in Christ, and when we read this we should be amazed at the providence of God and how He works in history. In *your* history.

Think of all the things God has done to get you to this point in your life. And for those of you who are not believers, God has providentially— and sometimes even painfully— brought you along so that you might see your need for Christ and turn from your sin and be saved. We should be humbled by the truth of God. We should be amazed by the Providence of God.

We must be changed by the mercy of God

Now listen, mercy changes a person. We need to understand mercy. Mercy is *not* getting what you deserve, committing a crime that calls for punishment and you actually *not* getting that punishment. That's mercy. Now in verses 31-32, Paul is explaining how Jews and the Gentiles alike receive mercy. I want you just to walk through verses 30-31 and see the word "disobedience" and how every time there is disobedience it's overcome with mercy. ³⁰ *For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,* ³¹ *so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you*

they also may now receive mercy. The ultimate purpose of God in all your sin and terrible decisions and ongoing rebellion is that he can show mercy. In fact in verse 32 is one of the great summary statements of God's mercy. ³² *For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.* God has consigned all disobedience. Four times you find the word “disobedience” and four times you find the word “mercy.”

At the cross every foul sin is overrun with God's forgiving mercy. That word “consigned” when looked up is to be in a dungeon of disobedience with no chance for escape, no hope for change and no possible way out so that each sin becomes another iron bar in our prison cell, and this applies to Jews and Gentiles alike. The text says God has consigned all to disobedience. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But that allowed sinfulness is the backdrop of intentional mercy. You can climb and scrape and try but all of your efforts only remind you that you are in a hole that's too deep for you to get out of. And what you need is *mercy*. If there is any hope for your future and for your survival, it will be when you realize that the dungeon you're in is too deep and the walls of your sin are too tall and you can't get out. God has you there that you might open your eyes and see mercy, the mercy and grace of Jesus, meek and lowly Jesus.

You shouldn't stay there in that sin. God created you in His image, and that image has been terribly disfigured by sin. So God has consigned you to disobedience. But that's not the end of the story. He has allowed you to live in disobedience for the miracle of Jesus, His life of righteousness and substitute death for you on the cross, and His resurrection that brings about your Salvation.

Do you want out of the dungeon? If so all you have to believe is Jesus is Lord and accept Him as your savior.

(Pastor prays)