

Did God's Plan A Fail?

Week 5 - Romans 11:25-36

Objectives:

- Wrestle with the idea that God has allowed all to sin that mercy may be given to all
- Recognize that no person has an advantage or inroads with God; all are saved through Christ alone
- Dedicate your "heart, mind, soul, and strength" to God because of the mystery of God's plan

? When was the last time you had restaurant envy? Where someone ordered something that looks way better than what you got...

What stands out?

Leader note: as usual, don't feel like you need to answer every question that you and your group members come up with when reading this section. This is a confusing passage!

Romans 11:25-36 NIV

²⁵ I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number 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 turn godlessness away from Jacob.

²⁷ And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins."

²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹ for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³² For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"

³⁵ "Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?"

³⁶ For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

? There seems to be a lot going on in this passage. What questions do you have about what Paul is saying?

Possible answers: Will all Israel be saved? What the heck does verse 28 mean? Why would others receive mercy because of the mercy to me?

Leader note: the goal is not to have an answer for everything that might come up. A large point here is that much of how God works is a mystery.

? Paul writes in verse 25 by referring to “this mystery.” Take time to recap: what is the mystery that he has been unpacking in these chapters of Romans?

Possible answers: somehow Gentiles were always a part of God’s people, that God might use them to win ‘back’ Jews, that God always intended to send a savior to pay for sins rather than bulls and lambs.

? How does Paul describe God’s mercy and grace towards both the Jews and Gentiles?

Possible answers: unbought by them, irrevocable, because of and in spite of our disobedience

Digging a little deeper

? How does verse 28 relate to 11:17-20? Explore what kind of interaction between Jews and Gentiles Paul is advocating for...

Possible answers: Gentiles should not act superior as though God has a “new” people, Jews should rejoice at the greatness of God’s mercy, and all should recognize that they need this mercy.

? What is the significance of Paul’s doxology in verses 33-36? How should this influence how we view God and His plan of Salvation?

Possible answers: Paul is acknowledging the mercy and grace of God and praising Him for it. He is not trying to “solve” the mystery. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”

Read Romans 12:1-2 together:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

? How does our worship of God relate to our obedience to Him as believers? (See 12:1)

Possible answers: "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice...this is true and proper worship" - obeying God and living in a way that is pleasing to Him is a form of worship and thankfulness. We don't do it FOR our salvation, we do it BECAUSE we are saved.

Bringing it home

? How can God use the mercy He has shown us to attract others (to His own mercy, and Himself)?

Possible answers: God can use challenges we have faced to equip for ministry, God can use us to show others how to walk in paths they are walking, God can give us gifts for the building up of others.

? Do you ever feel like you owe God, doing good to make sure you *are* good? Do you ever feel like He owes you, giving you good things because you've done good?

Possible answers: answers will vary. Dig in!

? What is the precondition, or thing we must do, for mercy?

Possible answers: Diddly-squat. Sin.

For Discussion and Accountability

? Do you struggle to view others with the same mercy as God does? How about yourself?

? What in your personal story with God makes you most worshipful toward Him?