

RESPOND HUMBLY TO GOD'S GRACE

OCTOBER 16, 2022

WORSHIP

Great are You Lord, All Hail
the Power, Prepare the Way
of the Lord, Your Grace Still
Amazes, Revelation Song

WELCOME

In your times of need, do
you feel embarrassed
receiving help from people
who don't expect anything
in return from you? Why or
why not?

WORD

ROMANS 11:17-24
 (READ UNTIL THE END OF
 THE CHAPTER)

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. ²² See then the kindness and severity of God: to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; for otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

If the Lord Jesus Christ were to appear in front of you right now, what is the first thing you would say or do? How we answer that question somehow gives us an idea what we believe about Jesus! Are we going to respond humbly to His grace? **Romans 11:17-36** shows three very clear reasons why we should do so.

1. GRAFTED BY GOD

Romans 11:17-18 shows us that Gentiles (non-Jewish people) were grafted into the Christ while Jewish people were broken off from the root, because of their unbelief (**vv. 19-20**). However, Paul reminds his readers that they are not to be arrogant about it (**v.18**). It is only by God's grace that we (the Gentiles) are grafted among God's people, not because of who we are or what we have done. In fact, before coming to Christ, many of us had a wild past life!

We need to be careful not to have an attitude of spiritual superiority to those who don't know Jesus yet. Let us not forget that once upon a time, we were as spiritually blind as they are. So let us be humble recipients of God's grace today.

When people do not believe the gospel, it is not an intellectual issue, but a spiritual one. Even if you've shared Jesus' claim that He is the only Way to the Father (**John 14:6**) to those who are spiritually blind, they may still hold on to their belief that there are other ways to be saved. But the last thing that believers should be feeling is any hint of spiritual superiority over someone else because we were once as blind; it is only by the grace of God that we have come to believe in Jesus alone as our Savior!

Now, the generally accepted summary of Paul's illustration (**vv. 16-24**) is as follows:

- Root: Abraham/patriarchs, God's promises
- Olive tree: Collective people of God
- Natural branches: Jews
- Natural branches cut off: Jews that rejected Messiah
- Grafted wild branches: Gentile believers

Paul reminds Gentile believers they cannot boast of being grafted because those who believe in Christ stand in their faith (**v.20**); and it will be the same for the Jews who will eventually put their faith in Jesus, the Messiah (**vv. 25-26**). **Verse 22** can be scary and brings many people to debate if believers can lose their salvation or is eternal security the norm of God. Clearly, this warns us not to be arrogant, conceited, and presumptuous about the faith we claim to have. Many people claim to be followers of Jesus but are not; their lives don't show it, and they believe that their Christianity is based on the righteousness they believe they've achieved but God rejects. The Parable of the Wedding Feast (**Matthew 22:1-14**) illustrates this. Jesus reminds us of two things: we become part of God's family only by grace, we never earn our salvation; secondly,

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is that true followers of Jesus will live transformed lives. Being part of a Dgroup will help us grow in Christlikeness as we make ourselves accountable to one another (**2 Corinthians 13:5**).

2. GUARANTEES OF GOD

God is not just a Promise-making God, but a Promise-keeping God! The "partial hardening of the Jews" is only temporary (**v. 25**); it's only until the fullness (sum total) of the Gentiles have come to Jesus. How about you, do you sense a hardening of your heart (**Ephesians 4:17-18**)? May you respond to the grace of God and believe in Jesus as Savior!

God promised that all Israel will eventually accept Jesus as the Messiah. Even today, there are Jews who are turning to Christ! Even if Jews do not read the New Testament, the message about Jesus is found throughout the whole Bible (**ex. Isaiah 53:3-5**) such that many have come to believe in Him as Messiah! God is busy at work fulfilling His promise to Israel. **Romans 11:26-27** is based on Old Testament promises (**Isaiah 59:20, 27:9a, Jeremiah 31:33**). These are all guarantees of God for all of Israel's salvation (**vv. 26-27**). Nothing is impossible with God, and **Zechariah 12:9-10** gives a possible explanation of how God will bring about the salvation of all Israel.

The promises made by God to the patriarchs (**Genesis 12:2-3, 26:3-4, 28:14**) are His irrevocable guarantees to the Jewish people (**vv. 28-29**). **Romans 11:30-32** shows us that we are all in the same boat as Israel—God will show mercy even to those who were once disobedient to Him (both Jews and Gentiles) who put their trust in Christ. The gospel was first preached to Israel, and they rejected it. It was then preached to the Gentiles, and their conversion to Christ makes Israel jealous, but eventually they will come to faith in Christ the Messiah! Only God could have come up with such an elaborate strategy to save His people (both Jews and Gentiles).

If God is sovereign over Israel's history, He is also sovereign over your story. If God has been gracious to Israel, He will be gracious to you (and He already has). If God will keep His promises to Israel, He will keep His promises to you.

3. GLORY TO GOD!

At the end of **Romans 11 (vv. 33-34)**, all that Paul could do was to acknowledge "the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" and "how unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!". Whatever is the "long and winding road" of your life, God is sovereign. We owe God everything, He owes us nothing (**v.35**); "for from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things (**v.36a**). One day, Jesus will appear again, and everyone will bow before Him and confess that Jesus is Lord (**Philippians 2:10-11**). But even right now, we know that Jesus is with us, and we choose to say with the apostle Paul, "to Him be the glory forever. Amen".

DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

How does the reality of having been "grafted in" impact you?

2. Setting It Right.

God will keep His guarantees to the Jews. Which of God's many promises in the Bible mean the most to you and why?

3. Living It Out.

Take turns glorifying God by sharing how He has been gracious to you.

4. In which areas of humility can you most improve?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE
IN ACTION

Pray for those who are still spiritually blind and unable to respond humbly to God's grace. In humility, share the gospel of Jesus to them, and share with them why you are grateful for God's grace that you have experienced in your life. Tell others the story of God's sovereignty in your life, and how God is a sovereign and gracious promise-keeping God worthy of their trust!

WEEKLY
PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- Recovery and restoration for places devastated by recent typhoons and hurricanes.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!