

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #14: God's sovereignty and my responsibility.

January 5, 2020

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: A most difficult truth.

Read Romans 9 & 10.

1. Read also, Romans 8:28-30.

- How does this verse confirm and prepare us for the issue of His sovereignty and our free will?
- How has God sovereignly worked through your choices, not around them or in spite of them to draw you to Himself and mature in His sovereign love?

2. Predestination taken too far produces *fatalism*, while free-will taken too far denies the sovereignty of God. How does Paul carefully refuse to take either view in verses 22-24?

3. Romans 9-11 is not dealing with God's purpose in the original creation (before the fall), but what He does with fallen humanity.

- In light of that, does God have full right to take what is already ruined and redeem some of it?
- Is there anywhere in Scripture where God deliberately made some people that they might go to hell ... or has He made everyone with the ability to know Him?

4. Read John 6:35-43. What is your own experience of God drawing you to Himself? How is your own story an example of why you are praying in faith for others around you?

- What are the signs you see of God drawing people to Himself?

5. Some people think the doctrine of election messes up the gospel, but it actually clears things up ... because if we believe in total free will we are saying that some of us are smarter, more righteous or more able to seek God than others - putting justification by works back at the centre of knowing God and receiving His love.

- Read Romans 9:10-12. How does Paul completely refute this argument?

6. Election, fully understood & embraced, removes my pride, humbles me and leads me to prayer for others.

- How does knowing that God is drawing people to Him change the way I pray for them?
-