

Parson to Person

ROMANS 11 PART 7

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life'? But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.' And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.'

I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

You will say then, 'Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.' Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

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! 'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?' 'Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:1–36 NKJV).

For the genuine believer there should be no trepidation concerning death nor fear over the loss of salvation. We as believers have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus and sealed with the Holy Spirit, are kept by the power of God, and will be presented faultless before Him. These facts give hope to every genuine believer! However, there are many professing believers who carelessly name the Lord as Savior but lack saving faith or any real concern for obedience or honor. They willingly and intentionally practice sin with no apparent grief of soul or conviction leading to repentance. Sadly, many of these individuals have never been born again and (tragically) far too often have been given a false sense of eternal security. For these, the doctrines of the genuine believer's security in Christ are misapplied.

The true believer will grow to understand that the Lord is their life and that there is no need for concern about pleasing Him through human effort. The man or woman who has trusted Christ for salvation is indeed pleasing to the Lord—even amidst shortcoming. This “pleasing” is the result of genuine faith in Jesus and His finished work—not a works-based effort to appease or offer meritorious performance to Him. However, the “professing believer” who can willfully sin without the realities of inner conflict and grief should take that as a note of concern. It may well suggest that although they profess to know the Lord, in works they deny Him, and may be without genuine regeneration. I have seen this many times!

This kind of “profession” of faith is often found among “church goers” who think that being a part of a religious organization is enough, or that by virtue of knowing who Jesus is—and feeling “good” about Him—means they are believers. However, those who have truly trusted Jesus for salvation not only know it personally but know that their salvation has come as the result of a genuine exercise of faith and trust in Jesus to forgive their sin and provide the gift of eternal life.

The true believer would not and cannot go on willfully practicing sin without experiencing a deep and nagging lack of peace. This grief of soul is what I call “blessed misery.” Those who are willfully sinning and do indeed experience grief over it should be thankful for the work of the Holy Spirit who is grieving within them over their condition. However, the ones who in rebellion against the leadership of the Lord continue practicing sin may indeed be eternally secure and make heaven their home, but by their rebellious acts mock the sacrifice Jesus made for them, harm their testimony, injure others around them, and misrepresent the Lord who saved them. This practice is unacceptable for any believer. Moreover, it calls for rebuke and repentance. Those who are unwilling to repent should experience proper Church discipline and/or may find themselves under the chastening rod of the Lord.

I have said it before and will say again, “As a genuine believer, I am motivated to live righteously by considering that my sins have added to the afflictions of Christ much more than through the fear of a punitive consequence doled out at a future Judgment.”

We should be compelled to live for Jesus as an offering of worship—inspired by grace and love—rather than by the fear of personal sufferings. “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.”

May the Lord be pleased to see the genuine believer take full advantage of His mercy and live Godly in the present age—even if careful obedience is not essential for salvation! Jesus deserves our worship. He is to be praised.

Therefore, my beloved, present yourselves to God as obedient children... Never abuse the grace of God.

I love you all,

Pastor Paul