

Discussion Guide

Romans 11-1-10

Opening Prayer

Guided Prayer: Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding and applying the truths discussed.

Recap

Recap of the Sermon and Summary of the Text

In Romans 11:1-10, Paul addresses a critical question: Has God rejected His people, Israel? He answers emphatically that God has not rejected His people, citing himself as an example of an Israelite who has found faith in Christ. Paul introduces the concept of a "remnant" chosen by grace, indicating that, even in times of widespread unbelief among the Israelites, God has always preserved a faithful remnant. This remnant is not based on human merit but on God's gracious choice. Paul contrasts this with the rest of Israel, whom he describes as being hardened, referencing Old Testament passages to illustrate that this hardening is both a fulfillment of prophecy and a mechanism through which God's purposes are achieved. The section concludes with a somber reflection on the consequences of hardening, including spiritual insensitivity and stumbling.

Understanding the Text

1. **God's Faithfulness to Israel:** How does Paul argue that God has not rejected His people, Israel?
2. **The Concept of the Remnant:** What is the "remnant" according to Paul, and how is it chosen?
3. **Grace versus Works:** How does Paul differentiate between being chosen by grace and works?
4. **Hardening of Israel:** What purpose does Paul suggest the hardening of part of Israel serves?
5. **Use of Old Testament Prophecies:** How do the Old Testament references in verses 8-10 support Paul's argument about Israel?

Practical Application

1. **Reflecting on God's Grace:** How does understanding that God's choice is based on grace, not works, impact your view of your own conversion?
2. **Responding to Spiritual Hardening:** In what ways can we guard against spiritual hardening in our own lives and is this something Christians are immune to?
3. **Praying for the Remnant:** How can we pray for the "remnant" in our own contexts, including those within the church who are faithful amidst widespread unbelief?
4. **Appreciating God's Sovereignty:** How does this passage challenge us to trust in God's sovereignty, even when His actions or plans are difficult to understand?
5. **Engagement with Scripture:** What steps can you take to deepen your understanding of the Old Testament as it relates to the New Testament teachings?

6. **Witnessing to Jewish Friends:** How can this understanding of God's faithfulness to Israel inform our approach to sharing the Gospel with Jewish friends or neighbors?
7. **Learning from Israel's Example:** What lessons can we learn from Israel's example about the dangers of self-reliance in spiritual matters?

God Has More to Say

Romans 11:1-10 continues Paul's discussion about Israel's place in God's salvation plan, emphasizing that God has not rejected His people but has preserved a remnant according to grace. This section includes references to Elijah and the concept of the remnant, illustrating God's faithfulness and sovereignty. Here are related biblical passages that illuminate these themes:

1. **1 Kings 19:10-18:** Paul references Elijah's complaint about Israel's apostasy and God's response that He has preserved 7,000 men who have not bowed to Baal. This story is used by Paul to illustrate the concept of a remnant chosen by grace.
2. **Isaiah 1:9:** This verse is alluded to when Paul speaks about the remnant. Isaiah states that unless the LORD of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah, emphasizing God's mercy in preserving a remnant.
3. **Isaiah 10:20-23:** Isaiah prophesies that a remnant of Israel will return to the mighty God and that though the people of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will return. This prophecy underpins Paul's argument about the remnant.
4. **Jeremiah 11:16-17:** Jeremiah speaks about God's judgment on Israel for their unfaithfulness, which is relevant to Paul's discussion about God's judgment and mercy in Romans 11.
5. **Ezekiel 9:4-6:** Ezekiel describes a mark being set upon the foreheads of those who sigh and cry over the abominations in Jerusalem, sparing them from judgment. This notion of a remnant being spared foreshadows Paul's discussion in Romans 11.
6. **Romans 9:27-29:** Paul previously discussed the concept of the remnant in Romans, quoting Isaiah to show that although Israel's number is like the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved.
7. **Romans 11:25-27:** Later in Romans 11, Paul further discusses the mystery that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and then all Israel will be saved, providing more context to the discussion in Romans 11:1-10.
8. **Micah 2:12:** Micah speaks of assembling Jacob as the sheep of Bozrah, a small remnant among the multitude, which resonates with Paul's theme of a remnant.
9. **Malachi 3:16-18:** Malachi distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not, illustrating the concept of a faithful remnant.
10. **Galatians 6:16:** Paul refers to the "Israel of God" in his blessing, which some interpret as a reference to believers in Christ as the true remnant, connecting to the theme in Romans 11 of a remnant chosen by grace.

Prayer - End with prayer, focusing on specific requests related to the sermon's themes, personal struggles, and applications.