

ROMANS

Let God Be God – Part 2

Romans 9

David Sunday

November 19, 2017

Romans 9 is a chapter that brings out our theme, “Let God Be God.” The words we’ll read today are not so much hard to understand. There may be some things that are difficult to understand, but most of it is actually quite clear. I think what’s challenging about Romans 9 is it reveals truths that we find hard to accept. As we hear God’s Word today, my prayer is that we who were miserable sinners and have been so loved by Christ our holy Savior would be struck in the depths of our souls to thank Him for such wondrous love. May we be awestruck at the miracle of God’s mercy that reaches us as we hear His Word read.

I’m going to read the verses I preached on last week, Romans 9:1-5, because I don’t want us to forget the tone of the heart of the Apostle Paul—his love, anguish and sorrow for his fellow Jews who were still outside of Christ. I want you to remember this as we focus on verses 6-29 this week. Let’s begin at Romans 9:1 and may God give every believer in this church more of the kind of heart that Paul had as he wrote these words:

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—² that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. ⁴ They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹ For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁰ And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived

children by one man, our forefather Isaac,¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.”¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵ As indeed he says in Hosea,

*“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’
and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”*

*²⁶ “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’
there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”*

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, ²⁸ for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” ²⁹ And as Isaiah predicted,

*“If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring,
we would have been like Sodom
and become like Gomorrah.”*

Let us pray.

God, You are sovereign and we are not. You are the Potter and we are the clay. We pray that You would create in us a humility that is willing and eager to submit to Your Word and to surrender to all You have revealed. May we find the joy that comes from a deepened awareness

of and appreciation for Your mercy toward us in Christ today. We pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

I love Romans 9 today, but I did not always love this chapter. I can remember specifically a time in my life when I really wished I could take this chapter out of the Bible. I vividly remember a specific night in the early summer of 1989 when I was in my parents' home. I was reading through Romans, trying get a handle on the gospel. I was really enjoying what I was reading—until I got to chapter nine. This chapter literally arrested me. I was so troubled by what I was reading in this chapter that I had a hard time sleeping that night. I'd never heard teaching on this chapter, at least not that I could remember.

I had never grappled with a God Who could say things like, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” I wonder if that's in our Awana verses to memorize on Wednesday nights. I was not ready to accept a God Who has mercy on whomever He wills and Who hardens whomever He wills. In my childhood, I had sung, “Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way. Thou art the Potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will...” But that night, I wondered, “Can I worship a God Who, desiring to show His wrath and make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?”

This really shook me up. It made me wonder if I really believed in the God of the Bible. I think it was the very next day that I arranged to see a pastor in Kenosha who at that time was in the denomination in which I had grown up, a denomination that did not preach the doctrine of election the way I am going to preach it today. I was really hopeful, as I went to see this young pastor in town, that somehow he was going to be able to reconcile what seemed so clear in the Bible but was so hard for me to accept as what I thought the Bible was saying. I thought he'd be able to give me an explanation that would reassure me that divine election was not what the Bible seemed to be teaching it was.

Instead, to my dismay, he handed me a paper he had written in Bible college called “One Hundred Bible Verses That Teach the Doctrine of God's Sovereign Election.” All it was was Scripture. He told me, “Go home and read this, pray for understanding and then come back and talk with me.” So I did.

I'll never forget reading that paper. As I read those verses from God's Word, it was as if, “My chains fell off; my heart was free.” A weight was lifted off my shoulders. I surrendered to the truth God was revealing in His Word. It was as if a light started to shine through the whole Bible, helping me grasp the gospel and my security in Christ in a way I had never grasped before. That day, when I read that paper, I started for the first time to really rejoice in the truth that Jonah proclaimed from the belly of the whale: “*Salvation belongs to the Lord.*” Wouldn't that be

a great summary of the entire Bible—that one verse from the belly of a whale? *“Salvation belongs to the Lord.”*

Now, I’m well aware of the fact that some of you are where I was back in 1989. And if it’s any consolation to you, I labored over this message for you. I had a hard time sleeping last night, thinking about delivering this message to you. I know these things are hard to accept. To you who believe that it cannot possibly be true that God chooses to save some people but does not choose to save others, I want to say this: In spite of what you might say at this moment, if I gave you the opportunity to speak—which I’m not planning to do—I want to contend that every Christian here actually does believe in the doctrine of election.

We believe it in two ways. Number one, all of us who are saved confess, “God saved me. He did it, 100%.” We thank Him for that. We praise Him for that. None of us would ever think to say to God, “Thank You for the part You did in my salvation.” None of us would think to take some of the credit for being saved. We give all the glory to God. In the heart of every Christian, we know—although we might not have this all figured out—salvation began, continues and will to the very end continue to be totally of God and His grace.

The second indication that we really do believe more in what Paul is teaching here than we realize is the way we pray for our lost friends and loved ones. How many of us have ever said to God, “God, please bring my friend to the point where they can choose their own salvation?” No. We pray, “God, do whatever it takes in her heart to bring her to faith in You. God, save my loved one. Save them, because salvation belongs to You, O Lord.”

At this point, you might be saying to me, “David, of course I believe that my salvation belongs to the Lord. Of course I pray for God to save my loved one who don’t yet know Him. I believe I am saved because God chose me. But I also believe that God has chosen everyone for salvation.” And this gets to the heart of the problem Paul is addressing here in Romans 9. If God has chosen everyone for salvation, then why isn’t everyone saved?

Paul is thinking specifically of the Jewish people—he was an Israelite. The Jews were God’s chosen people. To them belonged glorious privileges which Paul outlines in verses four and five. But from Paul’s vantage point, there are a lot of Jewish people who are not trusting the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. They’re rejecting the salvation God was bringing them in Christ. The people are troubled. How can that be? Can God’s calling and purpose be rejected?

As Tim Keller puts the question, “If God promised that Israel would be His people, yet the majority did not believe in Christ, does that mean God’s promise, power or mercy is failing?” Paul is very concerned about that question. He is writing this chapter primarily for the justification of God. He wants us to know that there is no way God’s promise, God’s power or

God's mercy are going to fail. So he engages in a dialog with us. Think of Romans 9 like one of those FAQ pages—"Frequently Asked Questions." Paul is reading our minds. He knows what we're thinking. He knows how we're struggling, so he puts three FAQs out for us to consider.

Has the Word of God failed?

The first question is in Romans 9:6-13: Has God's promise failed? Does the fact that so many Jewish people don't receive Christ as their Messiah at the present time indicate that God somehow didn't fulfill His promise to Abraham and to his offspring? Paul's answer is an emphatic, "No! God's Word has not failed." God will save all those He has promised to save.

But here's the clincher: God never promised to save everyone. It's been that way from the beginning, all the way back to the time of Abraham. Being from Israel—from Jacob, from the chosen people ethnically speaking—does not guarantee you are Israel, one of God's own people. Being in a church does not guarantee you are a Christian. Why? Because, *"For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. And not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring"* (9:6-7). It takes a miracle to become a child of God, Paul is saying.

Think of the story of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden. God had promised Abraham he would have many descendants—as numerous as the stars in the sky. But Abraham and Sarah were very old and they had never had any children. So finally Sarah said, "Let's help God along in the fulfillment of His promise. Here's Hagar, my servant. You go in to her and have a child, and that's how God will keep His promise." So that's what happened and Ishmael became Abraham's offspring according to the flesh. But he was not a child of the promise.

It took a miracle for the child of promise to be born. His father's body was 100 years old, as good as dead. His mother had been barren all her life. Sarah was 90 years old, well beyond the time of childbearing. But God caused an old man and a barren woman to have a baby boy. It was a miracle. And God said, *"Through Isaac shall your offspring be named"* (9:7). Isaac was the son of promise. Paul concludes, *"This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring"* (9:8).

What does that mean for you and me? One thing it means is that you don't get saved because of who your parents are. You don't get saved because you've grown up in a believing home. You don't get saved because you've been to Sunday School and Awana and youth group your whole life. You don't get saved because you were christened or baptized as a baby. None of this guarantees that you are included in God's family. It takes a miracle to become a child of God, a miracle Jesus calls being born again (John 3:7). This is true for everyone, no matter who your parents are or what they did in the church.

Furthermore, Paul goes on to the story of Abraham's son Isaac and his marriage to a woman named Rebecca. He tells us not only does it take a miracle to become a child of God, it has nothing to do with our merit or our privileges. Just look at Jacob and Esau in verse ten. They both came from the same act of conception. Jacob and Esau both came from the same mother. But before either one of them had been born, and before either of them had done anything good or bad that might influence God's choice, God said, "*The older will serve the younger*" (9:11). That's not the way it's usually done in the ancient Hebrew world.

To top it all off, Paul quotes from the prophet Malachi in verse 13: "*As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'*" We've got to be careful not to carry into that word "hate" the kind of emotional freight the word usually has in our day and age. Remember that Jesus said if anyone wants to follow Him, they have to hate their mother and father (Luke 14:26). Jesus was not teaching that you should disobey the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12), nor that you should have an emotional hatred in your heart for your parents. What He was saying was that we must love Him more dearly than we love our dearest ones on earth.

What God is telling us in these verses is that He made a choice while those two boys were still in the womb. God set His saving purposes on Jacob, but He didn't do the same for Esau. God preferred Jacob over Esau. It's hard to swallow, isn't it? But it's very clear in the Bible. And here's Paul's key point: God's choice of Jacob over Esau had nothing to do with what either of these boys was going to grow up to be.

Do you remember earlier this year going through the story of Jacob in Women's Bible Study or here in church on Sunday morning? Remember those sermons from way back six or seven months ago? Remember what a noble, spiritual giant Jacob was? I mean, just the kind of guy you want to have on your team, right? No. He was a liar, a cheater, a deceiver. And he kept acting that way throughout his life! God did not say while these two boys were in the womb, "Well, Jacob's going to be a far better player on My team. I'll choose him."

No, His choice was for this reason: "*In order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls*" (9:11). That's the key: not because of works, but because of Him Who calls. Friends, when it comes to your salvation, it's irrelevant how many Bible verses you've memorized, how many stories you've learned, how much theology you know, how much money you've given away, how much you've served. You can teach in Sunday School. You can work in a homeless shelter. You can read your Bible every morning. You can say the Lord's Prayer every night. None of those things can get you into God's family or make you one of God's children.

Conversely, you could fail to do all of those things. The fact that you haven't done any of those things cannot keep you out of God's family or prevent you from becoming one of God's children. The way you become one of God's children is not through what you do or don't do. It's totally by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. God's purpose of election began before you were born or had done anything good or bad.

That doesn't mean that God doesn't have any reasons for His choice. It doesn't mean that God is up in heaven saying, "Eenie, meenie, miney, mo" and robotically picking people. He's not arbitrary. The Bible tells us God's election is a decision bathed in love. It's a choice of love. God has His reasons for choosing as He does, but they are reasons that have nothing to do with our parents or merit or privileges. He has reasons that have nothing to do with anything we have done or will do in the future. God's reasons are found in the heart of God's grace and goodness, and He doesn't have to reveal His reasons to us.

You might be asking, "Why do we have to talk about this doctrine, then? It's so difficult—and really, the week before Thanksgiving you had to pick this to speak on?" You were just feeling comfortable, and now you want to get out of here, right? No. We can't avoid what Paul spends a whole chapter in Romans on, expounding the freedom so that our hearts will be lifted up in praise to God. I love how Tim Keller answers the question, "Why should we speak about such a difficult doctrine?"

Yes, election causes many difficulties. But the best reason for accepting the doctrine is that every alternative creates even more problems and difficulties. The first is that without 'election' you compromise the central teaching of the Bible that we are saved by grace alone, not by our works. If the difference between the unbeliever and the believer is ultimately in us (I have greater humility or I made a better choice or I was more open to God), then we are the real authors of our salvation.

That, I believe, is true. Election takes us right down to the foundation and reminds us, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you. You did not save yourself, but I saved you." Just because there are Jewish people who haven't accepted Jesus as their Messiah, and just because there are plenty of people in Christian churches under the sound of the gospel who haven't really trusted in Jesus as their Savior, and just because there are many who ultimately will not be saved, does not mean that God's Word or God's promise has failed. God has never promised to save every single person. God has promised to save everyone who trusts in Him by faith. And those who freely come to Him in faith are those who were freely chosen by Him in grace.

Is God unjust?

I know what you're thinking—and so does Paul. He's already put your next question on his FAQ list. He's reading your mind right now. Doesn't it make you a little nervous that Paul knows what you're thinking? In verse 14, he's thinking that you're thinking, "Is God unjust?" You see, what we struggle with is that human reason argues, if God was really just, He would save everyone. He'd at least give everyone an equal opportunity to be saved. Is it fair for God to choose some and not choose everyone?

Paul counters that argument without apology. Paul says in verses 14-18, "Wait a minute. You're confusing justice with mercy." Mercy has nothing to do with what's fair. By definition, God always has to be just, but God never has to show mercy. Mercy is always freely given. No one can ever say, "God, You owe me mercy." God doesn't have to save anyone, nor can we demand that from God.

Starting in verse 15, Paul reminds us of when the Israelites were worshiping that golden calf in the wilderness (Exodus 32). Moses came down from the mountain and saw the Israelites carousing in indecent idolatry before a golden calf. He went back up Mt. Sinai and pleaded with God on their behalf. And friends, God had every right to destroy every single one of those Israelites. In His justice, He could have put an end to them all—and indeed, He did choose to put an end to 3,000 of them in that incident, but most of them He kept alive.

When Moses asked Him for some reassurance that God would still go with His people on their journey to the Promised Land, listen to how God revealed His character to Moses in verse 15: "*I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.*" God is saying, "I don't owe anyone mercy. I am free to be merciful to everyone—or to no one, or to some. That's My prerogative." Verse 16 adds that it doesn't depend on anything we might desire or any effort we might put into it. It depends totally on God how and when and to whom He decides to show mercy.

In verse 17, Paul then brings us to Pharaoh, an earlier story in Exodus 4:21 and chapters 7-15. God says to Pharaoh, "*For this very purpose I have raised you up.*" Why? "Because I want to show you that I'm sovereign over evil. I've raised you up, Pharaoh, and made you king over Egypt—and then hardened your heart—so that My power and My glorious name might be proclaimed throughout the earth." Think of what a short movie "The Prince of Egypt" might have been if Pharaoh had given in and repented after the first plague. We would have seen some of God's glory, but not the extent of the glory we see after ten plagues, the Passover, the parting of the Red Sea and all God did to deliver His people from Pharaoh and his evil. God says, "I've been sovereign over all that."

Just in case you're feeling a little sorry for Pharaoh right now, remember this guy was not a Boy Scout. He was not innocent. Pharaoh had a hard heart and he wanted it that way. He hardened his own heart, the Scriptures say in different places. And the Scriptures also say God hardened Pharaoh's heart. So how do we put all that together? Well, I go back to Romans 1, where it talks about how although we knew God, we did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but our foolish hearts were darkened. We *"worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."*

Therefore God gave us up to dishonorable passions, to do what ought not to be done. He gives us over to the desires of our own hardened hearts. It's what He did with Pharaoh. He gave Pharaoh exactly what Pharaoh wanted: a hard heart. I like how Tim Keller describes it: "When God hardens someone, He doesn't create the hardness; He simply allows the person to go his or her own way. God hardens those He wants to harden, and all those whom He hardens want to be hardened."

Is there a warning here for you? Have you ever thought, "You know, I think I'm going to do this sin right now. I'll just come back to God in a few days and repent. He'll forgive me. He'll have mercy on me. That's His job. He always does that." Be careful. You might find you don't want to go back to God. You might find you don't want to repent. You might find that the hardness of heart that led you to turn your back on God becomes even harder and harder. And all you can do is fall on your face and say, "God, I plead for Your mercy. Please don't deal with me in Your justice, for in Your justice You could destroy me. You could harden me forever. I plead for Your mercy, O God. Make my heart soft and tender toward You, because I cannot do it for myself. I need You to change my heart, God."

The question, "Is God unjust for not showing mercy to everyone?" presumes that God owes mercy to anyone. He doesn't. Nobody deserves to be shown mercy. Nobody deserves to be saved. And the truth is that no one who is lost even wants to be saved. Haven't we all met some people who say to their dying breath, "I don't need God to save me. I don't want God to save me." No one is ever going to be able to stand before God and say, "You know what? I really pleaded with You to save me. I really wanted You to save me, but You refused. You wouldn't." That will never happen.

Friend, if you want to be saved today, the very fact that you want God to save you is an indication that God in His love is having mercy on your soul. He's creating that desire in you to go to Jesus and be saved. He didn't create that desire in you to harden you or to reject you. If you want to be saved, come to Jesus and He will surely save you. God's Word promises that. *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"* (Romans 10:13).

I like how John Stott summarizes this: “The wonder is not that some are saved and others not, but that anybody is saved at all. We deserve nothing at God’s hand but judgment.” If we receive what we deserve—judgment—or if we receive what we do not deserve—mercy—in neither case is God unjust. “If therefore anybody is lost, the blame is theirs, but if anybody is saved, the credit is God’s.” Glory be to God.

Why does God still blame us?

But Paul knows there’s still one more question lurking around in that mind of yours. In the darkness of your heart, there’s something you’re struggling with this. So in verse 19 he brings us to that last question: why does God still blame us? “*You will say to me then, ‘Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?’*” I like how Ray Ortlund paraphrases this objection:

But if our spiritual condition is determined ultimately by God’s will, I know what you will say next. You will demand of God, “Why do You still hold me responsible? How can You judge me for a situation You control? After all, who has ever hindered the fulfillment of Your sovereign purpose? So if You find me guilty, God, You are a hypocrite.”

That’s what this objection is saying. Friend, there is in every single one of our hearts a scoffer who is very quick to find fault with God. We let dark, dark thoughts cloud our minds and impair our judgment. We have a very exaggerated sense of our own moral wisdom. and we have a very minimalist sense of God’s wisdom. We want to put God on the side while we sit on the judgment seat. We want to judge God. We forget very quickly Who God is and who we are. And Paul calls us on it. There’s always the opportunity to ask honest questions of God. But God is not obligated to give us answers to every question we might ask Him. He has every right to keep some things to Himself. He is our Creator. He has absolute sway over us. And when we ask impertinent questions with a heart that is scoffing, here’s the answer, beginning in verse 20:

Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

You see, there are truths God has revealed in His Word that are very clear. He doesn’t have to tell us why these things are true, or how these truths fit together with other truths. We have to trust Him. One of those truths is that God is absolutely sovereign over everyone’s salvation. From electing grace before we were born or had done anything, either good or bad, all

the way through to glorification on the day of Jesus Christ, salvation belongs to the Lord—100%. That is so clear in Scripture.

Another truth that's equally clear in Scripture is that human beings are responsible before God. In the very next chapter in Romans—where we'll be next week—Paul describes this truth so clearly. We will never be able to blame God for not showing us enough mercy or for judging us unfairly. No one will ever stand before His judgment seat and be able to prosecute God. We are accountable for the choices we make. We are responsible to repent and believe in Christ for our salvation. And I can't tell you how those two truths fit together: God's absolute sovereignty and our responsibility. I just know they're both true. And God doesn't have to tell us how those truths fit together. He knows how.

Remember the story of Job? We know why Job suffered the way he did. We see it in Job 1 and 2. Job never got an answer this side of heaven concerning why he suffered the way he did. He just had God showing him Who He was. All Job needed to do was let God be God, worshipping and trusting Him.

Friends, God has shown us His goodness. He *“did not spare His Son, but gave Him up for us all...”* (Romans 8:32). That's His heart. That's His love for sinners. He shows His bright mercy against the black backdrop of His wrath. That's what verses 22 and 23 are all about. He's calling out a people for Himself from all over the world. Those who were not His people, the Gentiles, He is now calling His people—sons and daughters of the living God—from every tribe, language and nation. That's the truth of verses 24-26.

And He's not done with Israel either. That's the truth of verses 27-29. Right now only a remnant of Israel is being saved, but there's more to the story. I can hardly wait to get to chapter 11 to see what God's going to do amongst the Jewish people. He is a great and merciful God, calling us to trust Him with what He's revealed, being content to let God be God.

Kate and I received a wonderful Thanksgiving note this week from Horst and Vicki Fiebig. I love what he said in that note: “It is so encouraging to realize that we can know Him, even though we do not understand Him. But then, if God were small enough for our minds, He would not be big enough for our needs.”

How did Horst know that's exactly what I needed to end this sermon today? That was like a gift in Friday's mail: conclusion to your sermon. “If God were small enough for our minds, He would not be big enough for our needs.” Yes! That's God—a God Who is big enough for my needs. I can't figure all this out, but I do know I need to bow in submission to what God has revealed about Himself.

If you're wondering, "Am I one of God's elect?"—if you're saying in your heart, "If I were one of God's elect, I would come to Christ, but I fear I'm not, so I can't come"—listen to what Robert Murray M'Cheyne said: "Christ nowhere commands the elect to come to Him. He commands all people everywhere to repent and believe the gospel. The question for you is not, 'Am I one of the elect?' but 'Am I a sinner?' Christ came to save sinners." If you know you are a sinner and you know you need a Savior, come to Him, for "*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*"

Let's praise Him for His great salvation.

Heavenly Father, nothing in our hands we bring—simply to Christ's cross we cling. Lord, we did not choose You. That could never be. Our hearts would still refuse You, had You not chosen us. Thank You for giving Your Son to be the Savior of people, each of whom did not deserve it. Thank You for showing mercy so generously to people so undeserving. And we pray that in Your mercy You would be doing that even now as we sing, "All I have is Christ." Make that true for each and every one of us, I pray, for Your glory. Amen.

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