

God Hasn't Moved

11.2.25

Message 41

Romans 11:1–12 (CSB)

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? Absolutely not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ **Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I am the only one left, and they are trying to take my life!** ⁴ But what was God's answer to him? **I have left seven thousand for myself who have not bowed down to Baal.** ⁵ In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶ Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

⁷ What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, but the elect did find it. The rest were hardened, ⁸ as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear, to this day. ⁹ And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution to them. ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and their backs be bent continually. ¹¹ I ask, then, have they stumbled so as to fall? Absolutely not! On the contrary, by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. ¹² Now if their transgression brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness bring!

God Has a Plan

A. The flow of Romans has carried us here.

1. The first chapters show the sinfulness of humanity and our lostness.
 - a. Then we learn of God's grace toward sinners through Jesus.
 - b. We read of the struggle and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us in Chapter 8.
 - c. Then Chapters 9-11 display God's plans and purposes for Israel.

d. Chapter 12 will be super practical and is one of the most powerful passages in the whole book.

2. But why did it matter to the believers in Rome about God's plan for the Jews?

a. Shouldn't they get what they deserve?

b. They had their chance, and now it's time for everyone else to have a chance.

B. But Paul won't let that happen.

1. If God made a promise to Israel and then nullified the promise, then what would keep God from doing the same to us?

2. This is a critical understanding when we read this passage.

a. If God would throw away the Jews, then what would keep Him from doing the same to us?

b. And that's exactly Paul's point.

c. God hasn't moved.

d. God hasn't changed.

e. He has kept His promises of blessing and curses, of reward and punishment, and preserved a remnant even out of exile.

3. Has God abandoned Israel? Verse 1 says ABSOLUTELY NOT!

This message is going to take a dark turn, but don't worry, I won't stay there.

C. A proper reading of Romans 11 will not permit us to hate the Jewish people.

1. In fact, you can't be a believer and hate anybody.

2. The Church has a terrible history of Anti-Semitism.

3. From the Spanish Inquisitions and pogroms, to the furnaces of Auschwitz and the lynching trees of the KKK, the enmity between the Seed of Abraham and the rest of the world has always shown its ugly head.

a. Anti-semitism isn't limited to Palestinians or Ivy League schools, and it isn't a new development.

b. Hatred of the Jews has been found in countless countries, cultures, communities, and families.

c. All throughout human history, the Jews have been hated, martyred, and persecuted.

d. This persecution will last up to the last days, at battles called Megiddo and Armageddon.

4. The Apostle Paul is adamant: God has not rejected his people, so we cannot either.

a. God isn't done with them yet.

b. God still has a plan for the people of Israel.

c. I confess I don't understand it.

1. It isn't easy to define exactly who Israel is today.

2. I also will say that we cannot justify all that happens by the nation of Israel.

D. Yet, the purpose of this passage is not about Israel's goodness, but God's!

1. It's not about how faithful and good I am or Israel was.

2. It's about how Good God is.

3. God isn't abandoning His plan; he's not rejecting those he foreknew.

4. He is still working out the same divine plan: that man might be restored to God through Jesus Christ.

E. The Jews were told ahead of time, through the Promises, the Covenant, the Torah, and the Prophets.

1. They were given advanced knowledge, but most rejected it.

2. They have a spirit of stupor, that keeps them from seeing the truth in front of their eyes.

3. Now the same message that was told to Israel is being shared to the outsiders, the Gentiles, people who didn't even know any of this stuff.

4. And they are loving it.

F. **Illustration**

1. It's like when a family member dies and leaves behind items of incredible value but the kids don't want it.

2. They don't value that antique hutch, that guitar in the case, the painting on the wall.
3. But those items were designed to be enjoyed, if not by family, then at least by somebody.
4. Instead of throwing it in the trash, you hunt down someone who you believe will enjoy it and appreciate it.
5. That's what is happening even today!

G. The Jews had it all (Romans 9) but they didn't value it.

1. God commissioned men like Paul to give it away to the Gentiles.
2. Jesus told the parable of a banquet.

He invites a lot of guests and tells them to get ready. When the meal comes, they all have excuses for not coming.

So the host of the banquet gets angry and tells his servants to "Go out into the highways and byways" and invite anyone you meet to come and eat. For the food will not go to waste.

If the invited guests won't eat it, someone will.

The invited guests were the Jewish people, and the others are you and I.

H. There is a lot in this passage that can relate to us, even though we aren't Jewish.

1. Because God is a God who doesn't change and keeps His people,
2. We can rest assured that God hasn't moved even today.
3. He is still on the throne, working His divine plan, even when we are busily trying to mess it up.
4. Let's look at God's plan in Romans 11 through the lens of: Where is God when...
5. All of us have had the question: Where is God?
6. Let's look at 3 instances.

Where is God when...

When it feels like God is done with you.

A. Have you ever asked the question: Is God done with me?

1. Maybe life has changed so drastically that your identity and vocation have changed.
 - a. The kids moved out.
 - b. The job changed, you retired, or were let go.
 - c. You enter into a season where your health doesn't allow you to do what you've always done.
 - d. Or, maybe, you've messed up so big you are sure that God has to throw you away, because surely He can't start over again.
2. Here's the Good News:
 - a. Because God hasn't rejected Israel, He hasn't rejected you.
 - b. There is forgiveness and restoration for those who call upon the Name of Jesus.
 - c. God hasn't moved!
 - d. God hasn't changed!

B. If you had stopped reading at the end of Romans 10, you could end up believing that the Jews have rejected God one last time.

1. Surely, God is done.
2. Surely, this is the time the Prodigal Son comes home and finds that the Father has moved.
3. But that isn't what happened.
4. And that complicates the story.
5. We would understand a God who changes His mind, but that isn't what God does here.

C. Some people have adopted what we call "replacement theology."

1. This states that God has replaced Israel with the Church.
2. And I get it. It makes sense.
 - a. I would have started over.

b. I would have thrown them away.

c. I would have unleashed the Death Star by now.

3. But not God.

D. God hasn't thrown Israel away, even though they deserve it.

1. We would have cut our losses.

2. We would have started over by now.

3. We would have looked somewhere else, because Israel wasn't dependable, faithful, or righteous.

4. But God didn't. He hasn't rejected His people.

E. God hadn't moved.

1. He was the One who started the plan.

2. He hunted down a man named Abram and gave him a promise and a covenant,

3. He gave Abraham a son of Promise, and the guarantee of progeny that would be immeasurable.

4. It was God who led them to Egypt and then delivered them with signs and wonders, while they carried the blessings on their backs.

5. It was God who led them to the Promised Land and led them victoriously through.

6. It was God who gave them the Covenants, the Law, and Jesus.

F. For those days, months, or even years when you feel like God has done with you, I want to tell you: God hasn't moved.

1. He isn't throwing you away unless that's what you want.

2. His arms are still open wide to receive all who believe, who call upon the Name of Jesus.

3. Mercy has not run out, and grace is still free.

G. Today, if the enemy of your soul has been telling you to walk away because God is done with you, it's time to turn around and come back to Jesus.

1. Yes, judgment is real.

2. Yes, all who reject Jesus go to eternal death.
3. And all who call upon the Name of the Lord are saved.
4. GOD HAS NOT MOVED!

Where is God when...

2. You feel like the enemy has won?

A. The illustration Paul uses is of Elijah.

1. Elijah was a powerful man of God.
2. At his peak, he mocks a foreign God, embarrasses their priests, calls down fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice, kills the priests, makes it rain, and outruns a chariot.
3. All in one day.

B. And on the same day, the Queen Jezebel threatens to kill him and he spirals.

1. He runs with his tail tucked between his legs.
2. He begs to die.
3. He wants to quit.
4. And he throws an epic fit to God about being the only one left.
 - a. He tells God that he was the only one left.
 - b. He was the last man standing, and God you've failed and messed up.

C. God hadn't abandoned Elijah.

1. He felt alone.
 - a. He looked like he was alone.
 - b. But He wasn't.
2. **Despair feels like abandonment.**
 - a. Elijah was at his limits.
 - b. He felt like he was the only faithful person left.

c. And when we despair, we place our limitations upon God.

3. When Elijah felt like he was the only faithful person left and thought he was going to die, God spoke up.

a. Elijah wasn't the only one left, he was 1 of 7000.

b. God had resources Elijah didn't know about.

c. God had reserves Elijah hadn't tapped into.

d. God's plan was bigger than Elijah, but Elijah couldn't see it.

When we feel like we are completely abandoned, look up.

D. My friends, God hasn't moved.

1. He is still on the throne.

2. He is still in control.

3. The plan of God can't be thwarted by Jezebels, angry people, assassins, bullets, or persecutions.

4. And whatever you are facing won't stop God either.

a. God hasn't moved.

b. There is still a remnant chosen by grace.

c. Not of merit, not by earnings, not by ladder climbing, but by grace.

E. Why?

1. Because God has not moved.

2. He has not changed.

3. He didn't abandon the Jews, and He isn't abandoning you.

Where is God...

When you've fallen and can't get up? VS 11-12

¹¹ I ask, then, have they stumbled so as to fall? Absolutely not! On the contrary, by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel jealous. ¹² Now if their transgression brings riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness bring!

A. Earlier, Paul says that the Jewish people had stumbled on the stone.

1. Jesus is the stone in the path of every person, and we must navigate that reality.
2. Some people hit the stone, the reality that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and they fall.
 - a. They absolutely cannot accept the truth of Jesus and the Gospel.
 - b. The stumbling stone leads to their fall and destruction.
3. Others come upon the same truth, the same person, the same Gospel, and not only accept Jesus but build their house upon the Rock.
4. Others stumble upon the Rock and are unsteady for a while.
 - a. They've stumbled but haven't fallen yet.
 - b. They are unsteady and what happens next determines if they hit the ground or stay standing.
 - c. But they are still up, still standing.

B. The Jewish people were stumbling.

1. Yes, some believed, but as a nation and a people, they faltered.
2. They weren't out of the picture yet, but they were sidelined for a season.
3. It's kind of like when:
 - a. The best player on the team comes up lame on the play.
 - b. His status is undetermined.
 - c. While the personnel are checking out the injury, the bench player is called up.
 - d. That bench player gets reps he wouldn't have otherwise while the extent of the injury is determined.

4. Think about this a bit further:

- a. There is concern for the injured player. (Is he out, did he tear his ACL or is it just a sprain)
- b. There is joy for the substitute.
- c. But the focus is must be on the TEAM.
- d. There is still a game that must be played, and the primary goal is for the TEAM to win.

C. A danger for this text is to place the emphasis on the individual instead of the team.

- 1. The Jews were the starters, the first team, but they stumbled and got benched.
- 2. God called up the Gentiles, and they are doing so well that it's making the Jews jealous.
- 3. The TEAM is still winning, Jesus is still be glorified and the goal of the Master is to let both the Jews and the Gentiles when together as a team (that's next week and the grafting in).
 - a. Will EVERY single Jewish person come to Jesus and be saved? NO.
 - b. Will EVERY single Gentile who hears the Gospel call upon the NAME of the LORD? No.
 - c. But, does the team, the Jews and Gentiles together, win and glorify God? YES!
- 4. The purpose of the remnant is to continue the promises of God.
 - a. While the majority may reject Christ, some won't.
 - b. While some of God's people, like in the days of Elijah, will be killed by the Jezebels, God still protects and preserves a remnant so that His plans and purposes will continue.
 - c. God did this in the wilderness through Joshua and Caleb.
 - d. Even though many died in the Babylonian exile, a remnant did return to Jerusalem.
- 5. Though the Jewish People, Israel, has stumbled hard, in the end, Israel will be saved.

D. Where is God when I've stumbled?

1. I want to tell you that God hasn't moved.
2. He is still there, holding out his hand, hoping you will let Him rescue you.
3. He is there calling you back into the fold.
4. As long as we have breath in our lungs, as long as we have that conviction and pull in our lives, there is still a chance for salvation.
5. God still knows how to work all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.
6. If God can still have a purpose and plan for Israel after all of this time, why would you believe that God has thrown you away so soon?

E. What about judgment?

1. Judgment, discipline, and consequences are still real.
2. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration are not the same.
3. Our actions still carry consequences.
4. But what is in view in this passage is the grace and mercy of God.

G. God can't save me and use me because I'm too messed up!

1. It is said that Jeffrey Dahmer was saved in prison before he was killed.
2. David Berkowitz (Son of Sam) testifies to having met Jesus in prison and being changed.
3. Countless thousands have met Jesus while serving prison time, and THAT IS exactly the kind of thing Jesus does.
4. Would it surprise us to find that people who cursed Jesus at his crucifixion were later saved and became believers?
5. Or men like Paul, guilty of murder, met Jesus and became the Apostle to the Gentiles.
6. You may have stumbled, but make sure you don't fall.

Where is God?

- A. If you feel like you are all alone, I'm here to tell you that isn't true.
- B. If you feel like God is throwing you upon the trash heap, that isn't true either.

C. If you feel like you've fallen too far for God to reach you, that's a lie of the devil.

D. You are here today because God still has a plan and purpose.

E. You are here today because God has not moved.

1. He is walking through this grief with you.

2. He is walking through the pain with you.

3. He is calling to you in the darkness to come to the light.

4. Even though you have stumbled, it's not final till its final.

Today, I invite us to make ourselves aware of what God has promised: He will never leave you nor forsake you.

He knows how to work all things for good.

God has not moved

Prayer