

Romans 9 (Conrad Bowman) (August 6, 2008)

Chapter 9, and we're continuing to make some progress here; and we'll see where we go from here. Sonya is here, slipping in. Alright. Let's have a word of prayer please before we begin.

Father, its so great just to work our way through the Word as you delivered it to the apostles for us. We thank You for it Father. Thank You for the preservation of it, and just the clarity of it. Lead us through it, and guard us from our own misconceptions and mistakes. Just keep us centered in Your intentions for the Church as you deliver them to the Apostle Paul and spread them now to the Romans; and we thank You Father for that; for his ministry; for our ability to – and privilege just to walk in the things that he laid down in the tenants of the Christian life. And we thank You for that, in Christ's name and for His sake. Amen.

Class. Amen.

Conrad Bowman. Alright, in Romans chapter 9, it starts out with a declaration.

1. I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,
2. that I have great sorrow and inceasing grief in my heart.

My inner man.

3. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,
4. who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,
5. whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

That's one continual thought. Ok. And its loaded down. First thing. Paul says,

1. I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

He prefaced it next to the statement with that. He wanted them to be sure they understood that he was as honest in what he's going to say next as anything he's ever said.

2. that I have great sorrow and inceasing grief in my heart.

3. Because I wish that I myself were accursed ...

And he's talking about accursed of God.

3. ... separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

Now you look at what Paul is saying. He said, if I could affect the salvation of my kinsmen, and benefit them, I would declare myself accursed on their behalf in order to reach them with the Gospel. You got anybody you're willing to do that for?

John Young. NO. ABSOLUTELY NO.

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely not. [Laughter]. You want to think about that a while, John. [Laughter]. Pretty to the point, but my golly, that's honest. That's as honest as Paul was being honest. Now, this is a – that's a tough thing to say. That's a very difficult thing to say. Ok? But he made that statement and he's standing by it. Now,

3. ... accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

He's recognizing the fact that he himself is an Israelite; is a Jew; and these are his kinsmen who are the Israelites, in verse 4, to whom belongs the – here's the list; the adoption as sons. They were the first to be offered the adoption as sons. The glory and the covenants – and the covenants are the Abrahamic covenants. The Noahic covenant; the Isaac covenant; the Mosaic covenant. Those three alone. That's the big three, right there. The covenants, and the giving of the Law. There's the Mosaic Law wrapped up into one. It was to the Israelites to whom it was given. And the temple service and all the promises that go with it. It's out of Israel that the fathers were born, who is over all – who is over the fathers. And

from whom is the Christ according to the flesh who's over everything. God bless forever. Boy that's a powerful statement. Now, go to verse 8 – 6 rather.

6. But it is not as though the word of God has failed.

And He's where He is; and they're where they are.

6. ... For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

And then he draws this parallel. He says, here's Israel after the flesh. And you can track them through the history. Through the fathers; through the covenants; through the whole lineage; all the way down to Christ. But, that's not all of Israel. Then he says,

6. ... they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

Now notice how he put that. "They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." In other words, just because you're a natural son of Israel, a natural child of Israel, does not mean that you are one who will receive the benefit of the promises and covenants made with Israel. There are a lot of descendants of Israel who are outside the covenants and outside the promises. Why? Because they don't have faith. They're not living by faith in what God has promised God will deliver. Ok? Because the Gospel has always been a gospel of faith according to the promises. That's always been that way. Ok. Now,

7. neither are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants ...

So they weren't all children because they're Israel's descendants. They're not all children because they're Abraham's descendants.

7. ... but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED."

So, Abraham had two lines of children, didn't he? One through Isaac, the other through Ishmael. We're fighting in Israel today over that same thing. The children of Ishmael and the children of Isaac. Fighting over that same exact claim to the promises. That is, it's not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. So it's the ones who have accepted the promise of God by faith who became the true descendants of Abraham and the true descendants of Israel. No question on that.

Lady. Conrad, you're saying that in this distinction is between Israel's spiritual condition and Ishmael nationalities?

Conrad Bowman. Run it by me one more time.

Lady. Ok. It is this distinction, in using the term "Israel," between a spiritual condition Israel – your spiritual condition verses your heritage or nationality.

Conrad Bowman. Alright. You take all the descendants of Israel. The first separation that's made. The first cut that's made is to look just at the children of Israel. And you notice that they're divided. There are those that are children of Israel – natural children of Israel, Ok, who have faith. There are those who are natural children of Israel who did not accept the promises of God by faith. Ok?

Lady. It was their spiritual condition that did that?

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. What you believe is everything. Content of what you believe is everything. See. The children of Isaac were the same thing. See. There are those that are children of Isaac – take the, take the descendants right down level by level. Every time there's a new generation, and that new generation is divided; they're some in that generation who have faith. They're some in the generation who do not. Those that have faith are true Israel. Those who do not have faith are not. Ok. Now when you get to Abraham, that affects us because – because Paul used Abraham as the example of children of faith. Because Abraham – Abraham was the father of those of faith. And so Paul was careful to point out that we are spiritual descendants of Abraham; not fleshly descendants of Abraham; because we have faith in God's Redeemer. We have faith in Christ, and have chosen faith in Christ, so that makes us Spiritual Israel. That does not mean we inherit the promises of Israel, because they weren't made to us. But, we inherit the promise according to faith. Everything that goes with faith we inherited. Now,

Evelyn Wamble. Was those other promises the land?

Conrad Bowman. Right. Real estate. God promised Abraham real estate. That was the first promise. He promised him real estate. He said, I want you to leave your family and your land and go to a land that I will show you; and leave your family behind and this is your real estate. Then Jacob came along and he divided the land. He divided the land into twelve tribes and twelve parcels, and each one of them had a parcel. Ok. So he divided it that way and they came in and

inherited their part of the land. Now that was the, that was the – that was the inheritance that went with the children of Israel and the children of Abraham. Now, verse 8,

8. That is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

And that's the direct answer to your question. Now,

9. For this is the word of promise:

Lady. Could I ask a question?

Conrad Bowman. Sure.

Lady. About the promise. You said the first part was for Israel.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Lady. Ok. I have always claimed Isaiah 41:10. "So do not fear,

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Lady. "... for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God."

And I claim that other exception for the Israelites.

Conrad Bowman. Well, you can claim it if you want to, but – I mean, that's fine, if it gives you comfort, latch on to it. But the truth of the matter is, there's not a time when God is not in you in union. You see, that was given to a people who didn't know what union was. When Isaiah 41:10 was given, there was no such thing as union with God. The Israelite would never be in union with God. He would be a friend of God, and he would be a descendant – he would be God's child; and would be ruled over and provided for by God. But listen, God has promised you union. He said, when you accept Christ, the Holy Spirit takes you and joins you to the Only Begotten Son; which means you're joined to God Himself, by being joined to His Son who is one with Him. Israel was never promised that. That was never a level to which they could aspire. And it's true of the least believer in the world.

John Young. And it can't be undone.

Conrad Bowman. And it cannot be undone. It can never be untrue. It's there, remarkably so. See, that's why it says in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, I believe it is, "Even if we say we believe not, yet He abided faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." And because He's declared you to be His, even if you got to the point that you said, I just don't believe that anymore – He's faithful. You're not. He is, and you're held to Him by His faithfulness; not by your faithfulness to Him. So there you go.

9. This is a word of promise.

And it takes us back and says, that

9. ... "THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

How old was Sarah when that was said? She was looking at a hundred, wasn't she? That's right. How would you like – how would you like that news that you have?

[Class banter back and forth].

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

[Class banter back and forth].

Lady. I wouldn't like that.

Conrad Bowman. I've got news. That would not be good. That would not be good. [Laughter].

9. ... "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON."

There they were. He laughed about it. So, nobody said a word for a while.

10. And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

11. for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12. it was said to her, "THE OLDER IS GOING TO SERVE THE YOUNGER."

Now, it that – that was never to be so. It was always the younger who served the older.

13. Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

Now most preachers have to say, "Esau I love less," because they don't like the word "hated"; but it says, in the text, "Jacob I loved, Esau I hated."

14. What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?

And here's that phrase that Paul loves so well. *Mae Genoito*. May it never be.

14. ... May it never be!

It's a very strong phrase.

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 does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has the mercy.

Jackie Parks. Can't find a seat, if she's the last one in. Come on. Come on. You've got to get it right up front. Isn't that terrible? You need a spy that comes in here and saves you a good seat. It's a good seat, Gil.

17. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

So Pharaoh has a purpose; and he realized what that purpose was when it was declared to him. Ok?. Now, as God raised him up in order to demonstrate His authority and power. Absolutely. That's what He did with Pharaoh.

18. So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens those to whom He desires to harden.

19. You will say to me then, "Then why does He still find fault? For who can resist His will?"

And that's an argument that you'll run into today. If you can't resist the will of God, then how can – how can God hold you accountable for the bad choices that you make? Ok? It's always there, isn't it? What do you say when they ask you that? Hmm? You look in the corners of the wall. You look around and you say, call Phil, he's one of the Elders. [Laughter].

Phil Richman. Well, I'll have to give you an answer to that. I think when you do that you have a high view of man, and a low view of God. I think that's basically it.

Conrad Bowman. Got to be. Got to be.

Phil Richman. Because it says what it says. Its talking about the sovereignty of God here.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Phil Richman. And that's operative.

Yes. Boy, you got out from under that. That was as swift as Barak Obama. Yes ma'am?

[Class banter back and forth].

Conrad Bowman. Who said that?

Lady. Didn't God say that?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am.

Lady. Ok. But it doesn't say anywhere.

Conrad Bowman. No. I understand that. No ma'am. We'd have to go back – we'd have to go back to the ...

Lady. I went back to Genesis to and didn't find it.

Conrad Bowman. You didn't find it in Genesis. No. It won't be found there. No ma'am. But it's God who declared that. He says, "I'll have mercy on whom I'll have mercy;" And when I declared that the elder would serve the younger ...

Lady. It says that in, and God said that.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. He did. He did.

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Right. Ok. "Jacob I loved, but Esau I have hated, just as it's written."

14. What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

Maganoyto. May it never be. There is no injustice with God. Did God look at their lives and the way they would think and the way they would move; and what-have-you; and make a decision based on His omnipresence, that He knew what their lives would turn out to be? Perhaps. But that begs the question, doesn't it? You know. Perhaps He did that. But perhaps He didn't. Perhaps He declared out of His sovereignty that this one's going to be the recipient of my love and this one is going to be the recipient of something different. Because He had just given the example of Pharaoh just ahead of that; that He made, specifically for the purpose of showing certain aspects of His character. So if you put – if you put that example of Pharaoh that He had just laid down up there ahead of that,

17. Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

18. So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Now that introduces the subject of hardness of heart. Did He harden Pharaoh's heart that was already bent against God? Now, that's a statement that can be made about everyone of us. We weren't born in love with God. And we went through a large segment of our life fighting against everything that we know that He teaches and stands for. In most cases, we were dragged kicking and

screaming into the Kingdom. We didn't come with our arms around His neck thanking Him so much for showing up on our doorstep. We slammed the door when we opened it and found He was there. Ok. That's true of most of us. Now occasionally, we find one that's so disappointed with the world, and so beat up, that they're glad to see any kind of help show up. But that's not true of most of us. Yes sir?

Gentleman. It seems like a logical conclusion.

Conrad Bowman. Pardon?

Gentleman. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. All He had to do was let us alone.

Evelyn Wamble. Conrad, did something good come out of Pharaoh's hardening of the heart – three times he hardened it?

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Evelyn Wamble. Did something good come out of that?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. You had five million Israelites that were turned loose from bondage and escaped.

Evelyn Wamble. There's a purpose of all of that?

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Evelyn Wamble. God's hardening his heart.

Conrad Bowman. Yes. Yes. You had the demonstration of God's mercy in the Passover that came out of Pharaoh's hardness of heart. Because when that death angel passed over the land, the blood over the lentils, the blood over the door posts, it was clear, it was clear – yes ma'am. And ...

Mary Chambliss. If all of us, myself included, were in the first category that you said.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Evelyn Wamble. The bad ones.

Conrad Bowman. Yes. Yes ma'am.

Lady. Then, what do you say to the person who says to you, well, without God showing me mercy, I don't have a chance. I'm just like you. Evidently, God showed you mercy, but He hasn't shown me mercy and brought me kicking and screaming into the Kingdom. Who's responsibility has that been? For that person. Is it their responsibility for saying, no God? Or, did they have a choice?

Conrad Bowman. They have a choice.

Mary Chambliss. If God doesn't show His mercy, they still have a choice.

[Class banter back and forth].

Conrad Bowman. If God shows His mercy, you still have to accept it. That's what Dee was saying.

Mary Chambliss. That's not what I'm looking for.

Conrad Bowman. No. What you're looking for is if God didn't make me come, how can I be held accountable?

Mary Chambliss. If he doesn't show – if He shows mercy on whomever He chooses.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Mary Chambliss. And without that mercy and grace, you can't of your own will, according to verse 16, choose to come.

Conrad Bowman. You won't. That's right. Yeah.

Lady. Without His mercy, though, we'd all be unsaved.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Lady. We need His mercy all the time.

Conrad Bowman. We would all be – thoroughly – We'd all be lost – thoroughly lost.

Evelyn Wamble. Just like all the Jews.

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Lady. If God knows who's going to reject Him and who doesn't ...

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Lady. Do we still pray for everybody and for Him to show His mercy? That He lay in on our heart to pray for people that He knows ...

Conrad Bowman. He has it on our hearts to pray for people, some of whom never accepted Him. The laying in on your heart and praying for people is your response to a God you love. That's your response. That is not so much for their benefit as it is for your benefit. See. God – God wills what He wills; and does what He chooses to do. The choices that man has – the choices that man has – now this is going to sound real tough and abrasive, and – but it's the clear declaration of Scripture in so many places that we need to address it. And right here it's addressed head on: That God wills where He wills, and He shows mercy where He shows mercy. And He leaves hardened where He leaves hardened; and He hardens in some cases as He did with Pharaoh, where He hardens. Yes ma'am?

Lady. He also says – the Lord is not slow in keeping His promise. He's patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish.

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Lady. But everyone should come to Him.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. He desires that all would be saved. That's His desire.

Gentleman. The hardening came – just opposite of that Scripture.

Conrad Bowman. Sure. It is. He didn't argue on His part. Sure. As in Pharaoh's case. Yes sir?

Lady. What was Esau supposed to do?

Conrad Bowman. Well Esau – Esau is supposed to be obedient.

Lady. But he already – God hates him.

Conrad Bowman. Well, that doesn't mean that he wasn't provided for, because he was given choices all along the way, didn't he? But his choices – his choices were responded to differently than the choices of – than the choices of Jacob. Jacob responded in a much different way.

Lady. That's through deception.

Conrad Bowman. Pardon? Yep. Which – what does that mean to you? Does it mean where God has mercy and puts mercy even on a rascal?

Lady. No.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. You know.

Lady. ... is greater than all our sins.

Conrad Bowman. Well this would be easier if the good guy was rewarded and the bad guy was treated meanly. But it didn't work that way, did it? No. You look at Christ's background and there's a – there's a – rustlers, and thieves, and harlots, and – you look at the lineage of the Savior. It wasn't made up will all nice clean-shaven people, was it? They weren't all model mothers. They just weren't there.

John Young. No don't ask for a show of hands on that. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Naw. Naw. Not with two horses parked out back. You see, here's the point. We look around at people and we – our sieve for sorting people out is so different than the one that God uses, isn't it?

Lady. Right. Exactly.

Conrad Bowman. Now who needs to make a change?

Lady. It's not God.

Conrad Bowman. There you go. There you go. Do we expect God to adjust to what we think is the right and wrong of choosing people? Man it's a by-word in this class – if I were God, I would not pick me. Right? That whole other group of fine looking people doing well in life and don't have aches and pains and drive nice cars that would look good on the parking lot. God didn't pick them.

Lady. I wouldn't have picked Jacob.

Conrad Bowman. You wouldn't pick Jacob, would you?

Lady. No.

Conrad Bowman. He's a snake. Wouldn't have picked him.

Evelyn Wamble. He's a momma's boy. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Right. Now ...

Lady. Worse than death.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. Isn't it – isn't it good that God didn't pick those kind of people? Because we wouldn't have – how many seats would we have go through life. You know. We've got to get ourselves in the mind of Christ. He died for them all. All would have rejected Him but for those whose hearts He softened and to whom the call went and drew us in, and we accepted that call. You can dig around in that minefield all we want to about why we accepted that call; and how we accepted that call; and how come somebody didn't? But the fact remains, that's the way it is. And if there's a brain in our head, it will touch that heart of ours and strike a thankful chord. And we'll sing His praises because of it.

Now, something else I want you to watch, and I've been paying careful attention to it because of the Revelation class. You watch Israel. Israel is still the Jacob He saw questioned. Still He's taken that nation, and He's taken them through some of the worse two millennium – millennia – you could possibly imagine through the persecution and terrible atrocities. And we're coming to the end of this age, and as we hit the end of this age, they're going to be right on the point again; still trying to sort out who is Israel and who is not. That question is – if you think it's big with us, it is huge with them; and they don't even know it yet. But just a few do. "Jacob I loved, but Esau I have hated."

14. What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there?

*Mae Genoito.*

14. ... May it never be!

15. For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY. I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON HIM WHOM I WILL HAVE COMPASSION."

16. So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

So, it says, even if He gives you the right thing to do, you're running is not going to determine the outcome. God will, for the –

17. Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

And after all, it's not about us, it's about Him. It's hard to remember that. It's not about our salvation even. It's about His glorification. That's a tough one to swallow, because we've been taught our whole lives that this whole thing is about our salvation. But it's not. It's about His name, and His glory, being proclaimed throughout all of creation. Ok. Now,

Phil Richman. Conrad?

Conrad Bowman. Yes sir?

Phil Richman. You know, William R. Newell has some good statements here, and I could just read a couple of them from his commentary.

Conrad Bowman. Fire away.

Phil Richman. He recommended us – chapter 9 ...

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Phil Richman. Ah, when He says, I will harden, he says literally, make strong his heart. Literally, make strong. Another phrase. Now it's not necessary for us to make God the author of Pharaoh's stubbornness. No more is it right to insist that if God is love, He must save everybody as all sorts of universalists proclaim. Here's another phrase. On the whole, therefore, we are compelled to see that Pharaoh's heart was left by God simply in its natural state, heavy with iniquity, unlike the [inaudible]. His heart had never been lifted up to the ways of Jehovah.

Unlike David, he had not even felt the weight of his sins. For David complains – and he goes on in Psalm 38. The word “heavy” here is the same use of the word that God uses to describe Pharaoh’s heart in its natural state. He makes a very – he makes a remarkable phrase here at the end, as he’s going into verse 19. A believer’s heart is not fully yielded to God until he can accept without question, without demanding softening – this is the 18<sup>th</sup> verse. It says what it says. You know, you’ll find other verses that talk about man’s volition, you know, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, which implies volition, and you shall be saved. But right here, we’re talking about God’s sovereignty.

Conrad Bowman. Right.

Phil Richman. Accept it.

Conrad Bowman. It’s there.

Phil Richman. It’s there.

Conrad Bowman. It is what it is. Ok. So we’re in – we’re in 19.

19. You will say to me then, "Then why does He still find fault?  
For who can resist His will?"

The answer is not to choose who’s right, but to consider who has the right to ask the question. Now you think about that. We are formed by God just as the bowl is formed by the potter. All power is in the hands of the potter, not in the bowl. So the potter decides the use to which the bowl will be put. He may decide to design it for just one specific purpose. You know the song already.

Have Thy own way, Lord! Have Thy own way!

Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me after Thy will.

While I am waiting, yielded and still.

Conrad Bowman. Is that true? You betcha it is. It sticks to your heart, doesn’t it. Ok.

20. ... who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "Why did you make me thus?"

21. Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Carefully note, if you would, that the objects of wrath were not created as objects of wrath, but were prepared for destruction. His attitude to those so destined is one of compassion, not hatred; attested to by, as the lady reminded us a while ago, great patience. In contrast, the objects of His mercy are said to be prepared in advance for glory, or glorification. This was true of both Gentile and Jew called upon called ones – Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, even the Lord Himself, they were all created out of the genius of the mind of God for glorification, and in some cases – in every case, they fell by their own choice.

20. So on the contrary, who are you O man who answers back to God, the molded thing will not say to the molder, why did you make me like this?

21. Does not the potter have the right to make of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble use and another for common use?

22. What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and make His powers known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23. And He did so [purpose] in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

24. even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

So here the vessels of mercy meet. Ok. And we congregate. And too often we illuminate over those that are vessels fit for destruction, rather than considering the blessings of mercy, and grace, and sovereignty of love that He's bestowed upon us. Why? Is the human heart so different?

Tom Douthit. What do you mean illuminate over vessels fit for destruction?

Conrad Bowman. I think we feel guilty too often about our position as Christians, as believers. And rather than grasping what God had makin available to us, we hold off from it because the guy next to us can't get there; or won't get there; or can't seem to raise himself up to get there. And so we hold ourselves back from grasping all that God has given us. Listen! When Ephesians 2:10 says, "we are the masterpieces of His creation." We're the handiwork out of everything that He's made. He's made us the crown of His creation. And that's what Ephesians 2:10 said. That we should walk in the footprints of the work that He's prepared and completed before the world ever began. He doesn't expect you to do great works. He expects you to walk in great works that He's done. We don't want to do that. We don't want to walk bathed in the love and brightness of Christ. It calls too much attention to us. Somebody might call us pious. Somebody might call us over-achievers. We don't need to be afraid of that. We can embrace what Christ has given us. Just take it to ourselves. Accept His blessings. Accept His blessings. The Church has been trained to live in poverty. And yet, its destiny is one of riches. Incredible, lavish riches; and we've been trained to walk in poverty, denying God's grace poured out on us, because it might set us apart. So He has to set us apart in other ways. He sets us apart by taking us into hard places, forcing us to consider ourselves special. But now we're special in another way. We're special because we can withstand the pain. Hang the pain. We don't need that. Ok. We don't need that. God will give it to us if it takes that to bring our minds under control. But as a body, we don't want to lose sight of the fact that we are God's master work designed to walk in light of His work. Ok. And accept His grace; and His riches; and His mercy. And that's what this chapter is all about. And we shouldn't question that. We shouldn't have to question that. He did so in order that He might – He made us that way. In verse 23.

23. ... in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

24. even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

25. As He says also in Hosea,

"I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,'

AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, I'LL CALL 'BELOVED.'"

26. "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,'

    THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING GOD."

27. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL SHALL BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED;

God's going to be real picky. Ok?

28. FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD UPON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY."

And you join us at 8:00 o'clock on Sunday morning and you'll hear the details of that.

29. Just as Isaiah foretold,

    "EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY,

        WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

Wiped out completely.

30. What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31. but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

It's absolutely true. It's absolutely true. Israel strapped on the burden of the Law and carried it. And they never arrived at righteousness because the Law only condemned. It was the sacrifice that brought righteousness. And that, only after the sacrifices consumed and condemned, had righteousness was conferred on it again by the Father. That's what happened to the Son. Ok?

He who knew no sin became sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

See that? The Law took Christ to condemnation. The Father took Him to the grave, and declared Him righteous when He brought Him forth from the grave; and restored His righteousness; and restored His glory; and that's the righteousness that He bathes you in and made your robes out of. It's the righteousness of post-crucifixion. The righteousness of victory. Ok. Now,

30. What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained it, even the righteousness which is by faith;

31. but Israel, pursuing law ...

There is no "a" there.

31. ... law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.

32. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works.

They sought to do the works of the Law and gain righteousness by doing. Never happened.

32. ... They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

33. just as it is written,

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE,  
AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NEVER BE DISAPPOINTED."

That's where we are. That's where we are. Now look at that. Gentlemen, you will never be disappointed by acknowledging and worshipping God on the basis of your faith in the risen Christ. That's why He made you. Because every time you do that, you point back to the Father, and say, "all glory to the Father"; just like the Son points to the Father and says, "glory to the Father." Just like the Spirit points to the Son and says, "glory to the Son who gives glory to the Father." Because He'll never speak of Himself; and out of His own admission, He speaks of the Son and His work. And the Son's work points to the Father, and His will. And that's the same thing we do. You see, we are not evangelizing the world. That's not our job. It's the Spirit's job to evangelize the world. We are here to point to the Spirit, and point to the Son, and point to the Father, who loved the

world enough to send His Only Begotten Son. We don't do that work. We point to that work. And God blesses us by letting us be on site when He takes someone and draws them to Himself by means of the Spirit. And then blesses us for it as if we did it. I wouldn't do it that way. I wouldn't have picked me, and I wouldn't reward me for doing that. But that's the way the Father works it. Questions? We've got through this one a little quick tonight. Alright. Chapter 9. Questions? Let's close.

Father ...

Lady. Excuse me. This goes way back to what you said starting at the beginning. We were talking about pursued by faith. That if – Christ died by faith. Ok. If they meet us during the Church Age.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah.

Lady. Ok. Are they part of the Bride of Christ, or they, or they ...

Conrad Bowman. All who accept Christ during this Age, from Pentecost to the Rapture, are part of the Bride of Christ.

Lady. So all of us that are going to be guests of the Marriage Supper ...

Conrad Bowman. These are Raptured out. This is the Bride.

Lady. Ok.

Conrad Bowman. Boom. And the Bride is taken out, right here at the Rapture.

Lady. Right.

Conrad. Bowman. There are those that are convinced by the Rapture, and the events associated with it, and hundred and forty-four thousand that are sealed. Ok? Now we often speak of them as the evangelists of the Tribulation Period. They are not. They are the pointers of the Tribulation Period. It's still God who evangelizes. There are six angels released from heaven recorded across the Book of Revelation. Everyone of them, when they fly across heaven, scream out the everlasting – the first one – the everlasting Gospel. The second one, the Gospel of Faith. The third one, and it goes on and on. All of them putting out across heaven for everyone to see the Gospel of Salvation by Faith in Christ. They are the evangelists. The hundred forty-four thousand are the rock of testimony against

which God demonstrates His mercy and His faithfulness to deliver. They are the examples. They are not the evangelists, any more than we were the evangelists in this Age. It's the Holy Spirit Himself who is the evangelist of this Age. And we are here like the hundred forty-four thousand to make sure that men understand that God is mercy. Because He's working out His mercy and His love on us; and in us. And we testify to that. The evangelist is the Spirit. Ok. Now I want you to think hard on that. We'll come back to that next week, because that's where we are in this Age of Grace.

Father we thank You for the Spirit who walks ahead of us; clears the way; and shows us His footprints; for the love You've demonstrated to us as objects of Your mercy. Grant us Father eyes to see as we walk the path that You've given us individually, and help us as a Body of Christ just to demonstrate to those around us the beauty of knowing You as a child of Yours joined to the Only Begotten Son. In His name we pray. Amen.

Thank you.