

Series: Romans

Title: Goodness and Severity of God

Text: Rom 11: 22-24

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Romans 11: 22: Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23: And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24: For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive tree?

“Behold Therefore”—we behold *the goodness of God* upon the elect Jew and Gentile through their *faith in Christ*. We behold *the severity of God* in blinding the majority in Israel and Gentiles due to their *unbelief of Christ*.

Subject: The Goodness and Severity of God

Proposition: *God’s* goodness upon his elect is always through faith in Christ and *God’s* severity upon the reprobate is always due to their unbelief of Christ.

God cut off the physical seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel, because of their willful unbelief. And God sent the gospel to the Gentile world that he might save all his elect, Jew and Gentile, through faith in Christ.

GOODNESS THROUGH FAITH

Romans 11: 22: Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

The goodness of God falls on *God’s* elect through faith in Christ. *God’s* goodness includes *God’s* gift of faith to his elect—“*if thou continue in his goodness*”—means if thou continue in that faith that *God* in his goodness gave you, believing on Christ. Our Lord Jesus gave this same admonition.

John 8:31: Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

John 15:9: As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

The apostle Paul gives the same admonition in several places in scripture:

Romans 2: 7: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, [God shall give] eternal life:

Colossians 1: 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

All who have truly been regenerated and called by the Spirit of God are preserved by the Spirit—“*sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*”—so that we cannot fall away.

Hebrews 10: 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

If a professing believer continues in the faith, we prove *God* truly called us. If a professing believer does not continue in the faith, he only proves that he believed in vain—his profession was false from the beginning—*God* had not truly called him.

1 John 2:19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Hebrews 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, [we are proven to have been made partakers by *God’s* grace] if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

So the goodness of *God* falls on *God’s* elect through faith in Christ. Every true believer begins in faith by *God’s* in his goodness giving us the gift of faith. And by *God’s* goodness, every true believer continues in the faith—*God* preserves us so that we persevere in faith in Christ.

SEVERITY DUE TO UNBELIEF

Romans 11: 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.

God's severity upon the reprobate is always due to their willful unbelief. Throughout scripture an individual sinner own determined, willful unbelief is always the cause for which God's severity falls upon him. God himself declares in Ezekiel 18 that he does not reprobate sinners due to our father Adam's sin nor to our immediate father's sins. But God reprobates and damns sinners due to their own willful unbelief.

Men hear the doctrine of headship—how we all became guilty and corrupt in Adam—and they say why am I judged because of my father's sins that's not fair? God says, "Oh, you won't be. If you perish it will be due to your own willful unbelief.

Ezekiel 18: 20: The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him...26: When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. 27: Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28: Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29: Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? 30: Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Christ declared the same in John 3.

John 3: 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 16:9 [When the comforter is come he will reprove the world] Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Paul declared the same in 2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 2: 10...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Adam's transgression made it so that we need God's grace to give us spiritual life and faith so that we can believe on Christ. So God gets the glory. But the willful rejection of Christ is our own fault and the cause of condemnation. Men are not cast into hell for Adam's sin. They are not damned for adultery and drunkenness and so on. They are damned because they believe not on Christ. Therefore, all of these scriptures have to be done away with if God ever condemned someone who did not *willfully* reject Christ, such as people with mental handicaps or unborn infants. The issue is that such cannot willfully reject Christ which why God says he damns sinners.

So God's judgment has fallen upon the Jews as a people because of their *determined unbelief*, but not upon all Jews. There is "a remnant according to the election of grace" who must and shall be saved. But the great majority of Abraham's physical seed is shut up in darkness because of unbelief. Divine judgment is always just. It is always a matter of just retribution. That is what we read in verse 23.

Romans 11:23: And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.

CHRIST BORE THE SEVERITY

Romans 11: 23: And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. 24: For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, [Adam] and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: [Christ] how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive tree?

God is able to graff his people into Christ because Christ bore the severity of God for his people. Christ is the Vine into which all his people must be graffed. Christ is the good olive tree.

John 15: 1: I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2: Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3: Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5: I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6: If a man abide

not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

By nature, all men—Jew and Gentile—come from the wild olive tree, Adam—we all died in sin by Adam. But Paul speaks of God’s elect in Israel being grafted into Christ as their own olive tree. It is because Christ was a Jew according to the flesh, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the son of David. Christ bore the severity of God in the place of all God’s elect—Jew and Gentile.

1 Peter 2: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Our substitute bore the shame of the sins of his elect. Then God justly poured out his severity on Christ. He made him a curse for us in strict justice. Now "*God is able to graff them in again*"—because Christ justified us on the cross.

Therefore, God’s goodness must fall on God’s elect—he shall draw each of his elect to Christ. He shall give us faith. He shall robe us in Christ’s righteousness through faith. He shall preserve us and not one shall be lost

Isaiah 54: 7: For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. 9: For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

I beseech you to believe on Christ today. God told Ezekiel to tell the dry bones to live. I say to the dry bones “Live!” At the same time I pray to God for the Holy Spirit to quicken. Don’t delay. Life is a vapor. Don’t delay.

Isaiah 55: 6: Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Amen!