How is it that God remains faithful despite Israel's unbelief?

1) The remnant is saved by grace (Romans 11:1-6)

a) Personal testimony (Romans 11:1).

Paul is living proof that God saves Israelites.

i) *God has absolutely not rejected His people* (Romans 11:1a).

[I'] [1] I ask [PAI], then, has God rejected [AMI] his people [λαὸν αὐτοῦ]? Absolutely [AMO] not!

ii) *Paul is living proof of a saved Israelite* (Romans 11:1b).

[G] For [P] I too am [PAI] 1.) an Israelite [Ἰσραηλίτης],
2.) [a descendant of Abraham [ἐκ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ]],
3.) *from* the tribe of Benjamin [φυλῆς Βενιαμίν].

b) Biblical precedent (Romans 11:2-4).

The remnant in the passage about Elijah reveals the pattern that God preserves His elect.

i) *God, who foreknows His people, will not rejected them* (Romans 11:2a).

[2] God has not rejected [AMI] his people [λαὸν αὐτοῦ] whom he foreknew [AAI, προέγνω].

ii) *The passage about Elijah is written proof* (Romans 11:2b).

[A] Or don't you know [RAI] what the Scripture says [PAI] [in the passage about Elijah [Ἠλίας]]

iii) *Elijah pleaded against Israel* (Romans 11:2c-3).

— [/] how he pleads [PAI] with God [against Israel [κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ]]?
[3] Lord [κύριε],
1.) they have killed [AAI] your prophets [προφήτας σου]
2.) *and* torn down [AAI] your altars [θυσιαστήρια σου].
3.) [P] [And] I am the only one left [API],
4.) [P] and they are trying [PAI] to take my life [1 Kg 19:10,14, τὴν ψυχήν μου]!

iv) *But God preserved an elect remnant amongst them for Himself* (Romans 11:4).

[Adv] [4] But what was God's answer to him?
I have left [AAI] seven thousand for myself
who have not bowed [AAI] down to Baal. [1 Kg 19:18]

c) Theological principle (Romans 11:5-6).

The remnant today proves that God's grace applied continues to flow from His elective choice.

i) *The present remnant has been chosen by grace* (Romans 11:5).

[/] [5] In the same way, [I'] then,
there is [PAI] [also at the present time] a remnant [λεῖμμα] chosen [ἐκλογὴν] [by grace [χάριτος]].

ii) *Salvation is by grace, with no mix of works* (Romans 11:6).

[P] [6] Now[C?] if by grace,
[E] *then* it is not [by works];
[G] otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

How is it that Israel remains in unbelief despite God being faithful?

2) The rest are hardened by God (Romans 11:7-10)

a) The Lost are Hardened (Romans 11:7).

While the elect are saved, the lost are hardened.

[I'] 7 What then? 1.)a.) Israel [Ἰσραήλ] did not find [AAI] what it was looking for [PAI],

i) *The elect found salvation through grace* (Romans 11:7a).

b.) [Adv] but the elect [ἐκλογὴ] did *find it* [AAI].

ii) *The rest were hardened by God* (Romans 11:7a).

2.) [P] [And] The rest were hardened [API, a divine passive, ἐπωρώθησαν],

b) The Hardened are Incapable (Romans 11:8).

God hardens the lost rendering them incapable to this very day.

1.) 8 as it is written [RPI],

i) *God is the cause of the rest's hardening.*

A) God gave [AAI] them

ii) *The effect of the hardening of the rest is their total inability.*

B1) a spirit of stupor, [Is 29:10]

B2) eyes that cannot see [PAN]

B3) and ears that cannot hear [PAN],

iii) *The duration of the hardening of the rest is continual.*

C) to this day. [Dt 29:4]

c) The Incapable are doomed (Romans 11:9-10).

The lost are fairly, but ironically trapped as a comprehensive judgment.

2.) 9 And David says [PAI],

i) *Their doom is ironic because it comes about through what is normally considered a blessing.*

A1) Let their table become [APM] a snare and a trap,

ii) *Their doom is deadly, and yet a fair consequence of their own actions.*

A2) [and] a pitfall and a retribution to them.

iii) *Their doom is sealed by a comprehensive state of total inability.*

B1) 10 Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,

B2) and their backs be bent continually. [Ps 69:22–23]

This is how I parse Greek verbs:

- I use a three-letter combination in square brackets (e.g. [PMI] for Present, Middle, Indicative) after a verb, which I underline.
  1. First letter indicates the tense. Tense deals both with time and kind of action.
  2. Second letter indicates the voice. The relation of the subject or agent to the action.
  3. Third letter indicates the mood, participle, or infinitive.
- Tense:
  - P: present, continuous or linear action.
  - I: imperfect, continuous action in the past.
  - F: future, both progressive and punctiliar action.
  - A: aorist, expresses punctiliar action that has happened.
  - R: perfect, represents an action that is complete but has an ongoing resultant state of being.
- Voice:
  - A: active, reflects the subject that performs the action.
  - M: middle, the agent participates in the results of the action.
  - P: passive, subject is being acted upon by someone or something else.
- Mood/participle/infinitive:
  - I: indicative, reality, that which is actually occurring.
  - S: subjunctive, likely to occur.
  - M: imperative, a command that is possible.
  - P: participle, participles are verbal adjectives that behave like a verb and an adjective..
  - N: infinitive, verbal nouns that use the preposition "to", and they can also be used with "ing".

This is how I indicate the function of conjunctions:

- I put a letter in square brackets before a clause to indicate a logical relationship.
  - [S] - SERIES, Each proposition makes an independent contribution to the whole (and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [P] - PROGRESSION, Each proposition is a further step toward a climax (then, and, moreover, furthermore).
  - [A] - ALTERNATIVE, Each proposition expresses an opposite possibility arising from a situation (or, but while...).
  - [W] [Ed] - WAY-END (ACTION-MANNER), Statement of an action and one which tells more explicitly what is involved in carrying out this action (in that, by).
  - [/] [/] - COMPARISON, Statement that clarifies an action or idea by showing what it is like (even as, as…so).
  - [-] [+] - NEGATIVE-POSITIVE, The relationship between two alternatives in which one is denied so the other is enforced, implicit in contrasting statements (not…but).
  - [Gn] [Sp] - GENERAL-SPECIFIC, Statement of a whole and one or more statements which set forth parts of the whole.
  - [Ft] [In] - FACT-INTERPRETATION, Statement and clarifying statement; does not set forth a distinguishable part of the preceding whole.
  - [G] - GROUND, Statement followed by the argument or reason on which it stands; supporting proposition follows the supported proposition (for, since, because).
  - [I'] - INFERENCE, Supporting statement followed by the conclusion drawn from it; supporting proposition precedes the supported proposition (therefore, wherefore, consequently).
  - [C] [E] - CAUSE-EFFECT (ACTION-RESULT), One action and another action which results from the first as an automatic consequence (that, so that, with the result that).
  - [C?] [E] - CONDITIONAL, Like cause-effect except existence of the cause is only potential (if…then, if, except...).
  - [M] [Ed] - MEANS-END (ACTION-PURPOSE), One action and another that is intended as the goal or purpose of the first (in order that, that, lest, to the end that).
  - [T] - TEMPORAL, Proposition and the occasion when it occurs (when, after, before).
  - [L] - LOCATIVE, Proposition and the place where it can be true (where, wherever).
  - [Adv] - ADVERSATIVE, Main clause that stands despite a contrary statement (although, yet, but, nevertheless).
  - [Q] [A] - QUESTION-ANSWER, Statement of question and answer to that question (question mark ?).
  - [S] [R] - SITUATION-RESPONSE, The relationship between a situation in one clause and a response in another.
  - [B] [L] - BILATERAL, A proposition which supports propositions in both directions, rarely used.

This is how I use colour highlighting:

- Orange: structure indicator, conjunctions, and prepositions.
- Yellow: verbs, Greek, and Scripture reference.
- Green: keywords.
- Red: repeated words.
- Pink: imperatives.
- Blue: main idea.

On my sermon preparation sheet, these are the questions and an explanation:

1. **How has the author organised this passage?**
   a) An outline: The author's organization (or structure) is a way of talking about the shape or form of a biblical passage. Beneath the surface of each passage is an underlying arrangement of material and a logic that the author has used to organize the passage. And each part of the passage has a role to play in that structure.
   b) Tools: Identify the text type, and any grammatical tools used to identify the structure.
   c) The emphasis: The structure will reveal an emphasis that the author is making.
2. **How does the context inform the meaning of this passage?**
   a) Literary context: How do the passage that comes before and the passage that comes after relate to your passage?
   b) Historical context: The historical situation or circumstances experienced by the first audience at the time when the book was written.
   c) Cultural context: The setting in the daily life of the people/characters in the book and how that will have been understood by the first audience. This is distinct from historical context in that it does not relate to a particular audience in a particular place at a particular time, but the details of life that the people/characters in the text had in common. Anything that requires extra-biblical knowledge should be treated skeptically.
   d) Biblical context: Is the author citing or alluding to some previously written Biblical passage? What connections could the author have reasonably expected his first audience to make.
3. **What is the main point the author is arguing to his audience?**
   The author's main point is a way of talking about the aim of a passage as a whole. It can be descriptive or prescriptive. It is not simply a summary statement. But rather, it is the idea of which the author is trying to persuade his audience. As you work on articulating the author's argument, please keep in mind that it needs to be specific enough to the passage that it clearly comes from the particular passage (and not any other passage), it is for the first audience, it should be one single sentence that is both short and clear, and captures the argument of the passage.
4. **How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?**
   What part of the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ) is in view? Every part of the Bible, every passage of Scripture, in some way relates to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What parts of the passage connect to the gospel? The connection must be legitimate and textually driven.
5. **What is the main point you will argue to your audience?**
6. **What applications will you make? a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.**
   The main point of a sermon is the fundamental statement of what you, as a speaker today, are trying to convince your audience today. It will certainly be intimately related to the author's main point for his original audience and it will consider the gospel connection. It should be well reasoned and, perhaps, articulated as the result of proof (so depending on premises and building arguments).
7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.

On my sermon preparation sheet, this is how questions relate to one another:

- 1 a) should be driven by the text.
- 1 c) should be driven from the outline in 1 a).
- 2) should be directly relevant to 1 c).
- 3) cannot be disconnected from 1 c), and should be clarified by 2).
- 4) must be found in the text.
- 5) cannot be disconnected from 3), and should be driven by 4).
- 6) should flow from 5).
- 7) should structurally relate to 1 a), and make the argument in 5).

Sermon preparation worksheet

Passage: Romans 11:1-10

1. How has the author organised this passage? *a) An outline, b) Tools, c) The emphasis.*

a) 1) If any are saved, they're saved by grace (Romans 11:1-6)

a) Personal testimony (Romans 11:1).

b) Biblical precedent (Romans 11:2-4).

c) Theological principle (Romans 11:5-6).

2) All that are lost, are hardened for doom (Romans 11:7-10)

a) The Lost are Hardened (Romans 11:7).

b) The Hardened are Incapable (Romans 11:8).

c) The Incapable are doomed (Romans 11:9-10).

b) I identified discourse (which uses some Hebrew poetry) and used syntax analysis. I paid attention to the verbs (especially rejected, foreknew, and hardened), conjunctions (especially the but in verse 4), prepositions, and repetitions.

c) God is completely faithful to save a remnant by grace, and completely just to harden the rest in unbelief.

2. How does the context inform the meaning of this passage? *a) Literary, b) Historical, c) Cultural, d) Biblical.*

a) To demonstrate that His Word has not failed despite Israel's widespread unbelief (Romans 9:30-10:21), Paul proves God is still faithfully keeping His promises by graciously preserving a remnant of believing Jews in the present age (Romans 11:1-10), which itself serves as a guarantee of His sovereign, future purpose to mercifully restore the nation as a whole (Romans 11:11-32).

b) In Romans 11:1-10, Paul corrects Jewish Christians in Rome who may have struggled with doubt and shame, assuring them that God had not abandoned His covenant promises to Israel. And he corrects Gentile Christians in Rome who may have been tempted toward arrogance and a sense of superiority, reminding them that justification was, and is always, by grace alone.

c) 1) God has a covenant relationship with Israel as His chosen people. While that is not automatic insurance of salvation for every Israelite, there Is still assurance that God's will remain faithful to His covenant promises.

2) God's preservation of a faithful remnant through national judgment is a pattern throughout the Old Testament.

3) "The Table" represents prosperity, fellowship, and blessing. For a Jew, it could symbolise the spiritual blessings of the Law, the temple worship, and the covenants (Romans 9:4-5). The irony us that their greatest blessings have become a snare.

d) 1) Romans 11:3 cites 1 Kings 19:10, 14. Paul cites Elijah's complaint establishing biblical precedent for the appearance of total apostasy, setting the stage for God's corrective revelation of the remnant.

2) Romans 11:4 cites 1 Kings 19:18. Paul cites God's response proving God has always preserved a faithful remnant for Himself, even in times of widespread unbelief.

3) Romans 11:8 cites Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10. Paul combines these texts explaining Israel's hardening, that God is the sovereign cause, that it results in total inability, and that its duration is ongoing.

4) Romans 11:9-10 cites Psalm 69:22-23. Paul cites David's imprecation as a verdict of ironic, judicial consequences upon hardened Israel, where their very blessings become a trap and their capacity for spiritual perception is judicially removed.

3. What is the main point the author is arguing to *his audience?*

God is completely faithful to save a remnant by grace, and completely just to harden the rest in unbelief.

4. How does this passage connect to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Grace alone saves. Not an abstract force, but God's unmerited favour, made available by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who bore God's wrath so that we may receive Christ's righteousness.

5. What is the main point you will argue to *your audience*?

You will face His justice in unbelief, or receive His grace in Christ.

6. What applications will you make? *a) To believers, b) To unbelievers.*

a) Let the staggering truth of God's grace do two things in you right now. First, let it crush every ounce of pride. You are not a part of the remnant because you were smarter or better. You are here by His unmerited favour. Feel the weight of that humility. Second, let that same grace fuel a fierce and hopeful compassion. If He saved you by grace alone, then no one is beyond His reach. Let that hope compel you, not out of duty, but out of overwhelming gratitude, to urgently plead with someone this week to be reconciled to God.

b) I need to be direct with you. Your unbelief is not a passive state. It is an active rebellion that invites God's just and terrifying hardening. Do you feel the danger of that? The spiritual stupor described in these verses is not a future threat, it is a present reality for those who resist Him. Do not mistake God's patience for His approval. But right now, in this moment, that hardening can be broken. The same God who is just to harden is also faithful to save. Cry out to Him right now, today. Acknowledge your unbelief and receive the grace that He holds out to you in Christ. Don't wait. Your next breath is not guaranteed.

7. What is your sermon title and your preaching outline? *a) Sermon outline, b) Sermon title.*

b) How God works out salvation in the hearts of men.

a) 1) God saves some by grace (Romans 11:1-6).

2) God hardens the rest in unbelief (Romans 11:7-10).

Pray

Read

[1] 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. And 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*. And 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,
> and a pitfall and a retribution to them.
> [10] Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,
> and their backs be bent continually.

Introduction

- There are about one hundred people in our church reading through the Bible this year. You may join that program at any time. Speak with me after the service. How many of you, reading through Scripture, have encountered a verse that did not sit right. Made you uncomfortable. Offended your modern sensibilities.
- How many of you have read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. And your first thought was, that's not fair. Or perhaps sat in the sermon through Romans 9. Where God has mercy on whom He wills. He hardens whom He wills. And felt a knot in your stomach.
- Let us be honest. When you read those things, it can make you question the character of God. Because it sound less like good news. And more like a threat.
- Now, that feeling. That tension. That is not a sign of weak faith. It is a sign of an engaged mind. It is a sign of a sensitive spirit. What if I told you that very tension is the key. It unlocks the stunning depth of God's grace. It reveals the sobering reality of His justice.
- Today we will walk into the heart of a tension filled passage. Stare it in the face. And I'm not going to explain away the tension. I'm going to show you this tension exists to reveal something breathtaking about God. And about us.
- Romans 11:1-10 reveals this. God is completely faithful to save a remnant by grace. And God is completely just to harden the rest in unbelief. Therefore you will face His justice in your unbelief. Or you will receive His grace in Christ. There is no other option. There is no neutral ground.
- To understand this, to see how a good God makes this choice so clear, so stark, we must open our Bibles to Romans 11.

1) **If any are saved, they're saved by grace** (Romans 11:1-6)

God is completely faithful to save a remnant by grace.

I ask, then. Paul isn't merely curious. Paul is bring to conclusion his argument made in Romans 9:30-10:21. There he asked a question. If God's word never fails, how is it that Israel unbelief is so rife? Israel's faith is faulty. Does that mean that God's faithfulness to them is faulty too?

Has God rejected his people? This is a big question. If God has rejected His people then His promises are lies. His covenants are broken. His character is flawed. He is not faithful. He is not true. He is not God. We are left without hope. If God's words have no meaning. And salvation hope has no anchor.

Paul is clear. Absolutely not! It is the strongest possible negation. Unthinkable. Impossible. It cannot be. God cannot deny Himself. God cannot break His promise. God cannot be unfaithful. It is a theological impossibility.

So Paul goes about proving this stunning impossibility. How? Three reasons. Three unshakable pillars supporting the faithfulness of God. First, personal testimony. Second, biblical precedent. Third, theological principle.

First, personal testimony. For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, *from* the tribe of Benjamin. Exhibit A. Saul of Tarsus. That Hebrew of Hebrews. That Pharisee of Pharisees. That blameless legalist. That violent persecutor of the church. That chief of sinners. But God. Paul is now a slave of Christ. An apostle to the Gentiles. A trophy of grace. Living proof that God saves Israelites. Paul is the first proof that God remains faithful towards Israel.

Second, Biblical precedent. 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? Lord, they have killed your prophets *and* torn down your altars. And I am the only one left, and they are trying to take my life! Elijah was in despair. Apostasy all around him. Loneliness within. He concluded he was the last faithful man standing. But he was wrong. But what was God's answer to him? I have left seven thousand for myself who have not bowed down to Baal. There is a pattern. It is written. God preserves His remnant. A remnant chosen by grace. The remnant is the second proof that God remains faithful towards Israel.

Third, theological principle. In the same way then. In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. Now if by grace, *then* it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace. Grace and works are like oil and water. They do not mix. Grace is God's unmerited favour to those who deserve His wrath. Works is man's merited effort to earn God's favour. Salvation is all of grace. The theological principle that we are saved by grace alone means God can be faithful to save whosoever He wills. He saves. By grace. Through faith. In Christ. To the glory of God alone.

God is seen to be faithful as He saves a remnant by His own grace.

Salvation is by grace alone. God will have His remnant. But this raises a terrifying question. What about everyone else? What of those who do not receive His grace? Which leads to Paul's next sobering point.

2) **All that are lost, are hardened for doom** (Romans 11:7-10)

God is completely just to harden the rest in unbelief.

What then? What about everyone else? The question hangs in the air. And the answer is sobering. It is biblical. Israel did not find what it was looking for. Israel sought righteousness. But not by faith. They sought righteousness by their own works. And so they stumbled and fell. But the elect did *find it*. They found a righteousness that comes from God. In Christ alone. Through faith alone. By grace alone.

And The rest were hardened. Here is a divine passive. They were hardened. By whom? The context is clear. God hardened their hearts. Like He hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Like He hardened the hearts of the Canaanite Kings. Like He hardened the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. Hardening is a work of God. Hardening judicial work. Hardening is His righteous work.

Scripture testifies to this reality. Hardening is not a new thing. Hardening is an old pattern. A pattern of God's just dealings with persistent unbelief. as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear, to this day. God's hardening ends in man's total inability. The hardened have a spirit of stupor. A deep slumber of the soul. A numbness to spiritual truth. The hardened have eyes that cannot see. They look upon the glory of Christ in the gospel. And they see no beauty. They see a foolish story. The hardened have ears that cannot hear. They hear the call of Christ. The pleadings of the Spirit. And they hear only an echo. A meaningless sound. This is their state. Not for a moment. Not for a season. To this day. The condition persists. It continues. Unless God in grace breaks through.

9 And David says. The sweet Psalmist of Israel pronounces a terrifying verdict. A verdict of ironic justice. Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a pitfall and a retribution to them. Behold the table. It represents every blessing. Prosperity. Fellowship. Covenant privilege. The law. The temple. The worship. The promises. All the blessings of God upon His people. But for the hardened, these blessings are a curse. Their blessed abundance is a snare. Their security is a trap. Their religion is a pitfall. Their inheritance is their retribution. Why? Because their trust is in the blessings. And not the Blesser. They cherished the gifts. And rejected the Giver.

10 Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and their backs be bent continually.

The finality of it. The comprehensiveness. Eyes darkened. No light can penetrate. No truth can be perceived. Backs bent. Not in humility. But under the unbearable weight of a judgment they chose. A rebellion they loved. A God they ignored.

Is God just to harden them? Truly. He is completely just. He hardens them, even as they first harden themselves. He confirms them in the rebellion they have freely chosen. He gives them over to the rebellion they desire. He judicially confirms them in the path they have chosen. Their doom is not a surprise. It is a sentence. A sentence upon active, persistent, unbelief.

- God is completely just to harden the rest in their unbelief to this day.
- You will face His justice in unbelief. Or you will receive His grace in Christ.

How does the passage connect to the gospel?

- This passage connects to the gospel in its deepest fibre. Grace alone saves. Grace is God's unmerited favour. A favour you could never earn. A favour you do not deserve. A favour that has been made available by only one means. The death and resurrection of Jesus. On the cross, Jesus bore the full wrath of God. Wrath that we deserved because of our active rebellion against Him. Wrath we deserved because of our persistent unbelief. Jesus took it. Jesus absorbed it. Jesus exhausted it. He did this so that we may receive His righteousness. His perfect righteousness. A foreign righteousness. A righteousness not our own. This is the glorious exchange. Your sin for His perfection. Your rebellion for His obedience. Your curse for His blessing.
- As Martin Luther wrote, *Grace costs us nothing, but is cost Another much to get it for us. Grace was purchased with an incalculable, infinite treasure, the Son of God Himself.*
- By grace you get what you do not deserve. You get Jesus. This is the gospel. You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made salvation necessary. Christ contributes everything. This is how God remains both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Believers, how ought you to live?

- Grace has freed you. The crushing weight of self-justification is lifted. You no longer need to prove your worth. You no longer need to perform for approval. The verdict is in. Not guilty. You have been declared righteous in Christ.
- So let this staggering truth of God's grace do two things in you right now. First, let it crush every ounce of pride. Look at your hands. Are they empty? They are. You didn't bring anything of worth in your hands to the foot of the cross when you got saved. You are not a part of the remnant because you were smarter. You are not here because you were better. You are not here because you made the right choice while others made the wrong one. You are here by His unmerited favour. Period. Feel the weight of that humility. It is a freeing weight. It levels you. It puts you in the dust. And from the dust, you can see Christ clearly. And you can see others clearly. No one to look down upon. Only other sinners in need of same grace you've received.
- Second, let that same grace fuel a fierce and hopeful compassion. If He saved you by grace alone, then hear this, no one is beyond His reach. Not your brother. Not your sister. Not your father. Not your colleague. Not that person you have written off as too far gone. No one. Their hardness of heart is not a barrier to His grace. It is the very reason for it. Let that hope compel you. Not out of duty. Not out of guilt. But out of overwhelming gratitude.

You have received a gift you did not deserve. How can you not plead with others to receive it too?

- This is what I want you to do. This week. Not someday. This week. Urgently plead with someone. One person. To be reconciled to God. Plead with them. Beg them. Love them enough to tell them the truth. You will face His justice in unbelief, or you can receive His grace in Christ. Tell them the old story. Offer them grace. Offer them Jesus.

Unbelievers, how ought you to respond?

- Do you want to know what hardening looks like in everyday life? It is not a lightning bolt. It is a slow drip. It is the slow numbing of your conscience to your sin. That thing you used to feel guilty about, now you barely notice. It is the cynicism towards spiritual things. That eye roll when someone mentions church. That smirk at the Bible. That internal sigh during a prayer. You dismiss it. You explain it away.
- Let me tell you a story. A frog jumps into a pot of cool water. He feels fine. Comfortable. Then a fire is lit under the pot. The water warms slowly. Degree by degree. The frog adjusts. He acclimates. He does not notice the danger he is in. He is being cooked alive. And he does not even know it. That is how hardening works. Slowly being boiled alive in your sin and shame. Degree by degree. And you don't even notice.
- I need to be direct with you. Your unbelief is not a passive state. It is not neutrality. It is an active rebellion. It is a fist raised against your Creator. And it invites God’s just and terrifying hardening. Do you feel the danger of that? The spiritual stupor described in these verses. The danger of your eyes no longer seeing. The danger of your ears no longer hearing. This is not a future threat. This is a present reality for those who resist Him. Do not mistake God’s patience for His approval. His patience means He is giving you time. Right now. This moment. While hardening can be broken.
- Please. I plead with you. Cry out to Him right now. Today. In your heart. Acknowledge your unbelief. Call it what it is. Rebellion. Receive the grace that He holds out to you in Christ. It is a free gift. Do not wait. Your next breath is not guaranteed. You have heard the truth. You have two choices. You will face His justice in unbelief. Or you will receive His grace in Christ. There is no other way. Choose Christ.

Conclusion

- So we end where we began. With that tension. That discomfort in your spirit when Scripture challenges your assumptions. We asked how a good God could harden hearts. We wondered about His justice. His fairness.
- Romans 11:1-10 has answered us. Not by explaining away the tension. But by revealing the twin pillars of God's character. His sovereign mercy. His righteous judgment.
- The argument stands. God is completely faithful to save a remnant by grace. God is completely just to harden the rest in unbelief.
- Therefore this choice stands before you. Will you will face His justice in your unbelief? Or will you will receive His grace in Christ?
- There is no other option. There is no neutral ground.

The benediction

- Hebrews 13:20-21, Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.