

## #9: What Clay Tends To Say

- A Relationship Tip...

First, two general principles: 1) Extreme mood changes should always be noticed.  
2) Very often, but not always, extreme mood changes should be asked about.

- Now here's the tip: **Be very very careful HOW you ask about it!**

- We have a relationship with "Romans" .... Sort of, with "Paul the apostle." → really, with the Holy Spirit  
And here is an extreme mood change! → Romans 8 to Romans 9.

**"Nothing shall separate us...!" ← → "I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart..."**

- So here's the tip: **Be very very careful how we ask about it!**

- Asking the right questions is a very important part of (inductive) Bible study.

- Since we are asking the questions of God, we should be very very careful HOW!

**OVERVIEW**

I. ROMANS 1-3	1:18-3:20	FIRST THE BAD NEWS:	The wrath of God!
II. ROMANS 4	3:21-4:25	THE GOOD NEWS:	Justification by grace through faith
III. ROMANS 5-8	5,(6)(7),8		The benefits of justification
IV. ROMANS 9-11		<b>"The present condition and future prospects of Israel"</b>	

- Something else to ask about! **"Why these three chapters about the Jews?"**

**A. Vss. 1-5** I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that **I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.** For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 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, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

**1. The Jews were "the pilot project," and so their experience is relevant and helpful.**

**Romans 1:16** "...to the Jew first"

**1 Corinthians 10:11** ... Now these things happened to them **as an example**, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

- Paul expects someone to say: *"That's my point exactly! They were the pilot project and they are now in a state of spiritual disaster!!! How is THAT "relevant and helpful"?"*

**2. Their present spiritual condition may seem to contradict the details of the good news,|| but it doesn't!**

**B. Vss. 6-13** **But it is not as though the word of God has failed.** For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is the word of promise: "AT THIS TIME I WILL COME, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON." And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

- What we have already seen equips us to see that a lot of the promises of God are made to specific groups!

### **Romans 8:28**

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good **to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

- Isaac BUT NOT Ishmael, Jacob BUT NOT Esau.
- God never said He would treat every human being the same way.
- He never says He loves everyone equally. [ e.g. "Esau have I hated" + Psalm 5:5 + Psalm 11:5 ]
- He never says He will save every single member of every (any) group!
- ["Free will"!] He never says He will try equally hard to save everyone.
- So we have another question!

### **3. God's sovereign rule in human lives and destinies may seem to be unjust, || but it isn't!**

**C. Vss. 14-18** What shall we say then? **There is no injustice with God, is there?** May it never be! For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 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 then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

- Moses and Israel BUT NOT Pharaoh and Egypt
- Justice does not demand that everyone receives identical amounts of mercy.
- Mercy to one does not obligate God to be merciful to everyone else in the very same way. Despite what the younger brother says to the parent in regard to a privilege for the older brother!
- Entirely just is not the same thing as being entirely fair!

### **Psalms 97:2**

Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.**

### **4. God's actions may raise questions about His character, but ||who do you think you are to talk back to God?**

**D. Vss. 19-22** You will say to me then, "**Why does He still find fault?**" For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

- Here is what clay tends to say!
- It's right to see the fingerprints of God on the details.
- It's wrong to question what you see in a way that implies you are the smart one in the relationship.

Coming up the next two weeks... **Romans 9:22 – Romans 11:33**

**5. Their present condition is a grave warning**

**6. Their future prospect is a key element in our hopes for ourselves and for the whole world!**

- There's more to maturing in our faith than just asking the right questions.
- Learning how to ask is very important!
- Here's where that relationship tip shows up again: ***Be very very careful HOW you ask about it!***
- Another tip: Check in with people who really have had a real experience with God!

#### **ISAIAH**

**Isaiah 6:5** Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

#### **SIMON PETER**

**Luke 5:8** But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

**1 Peter 5:6** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.

#### **JOHN**

**Revelation 1:17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man.

#### **WORDS TO EXPRESS THE MIND OF GOD, FROM THE WRITINGS OF JOHN PIPER**

"I will not simply be analyzed, I will be adored. I will not simply be pondered, I will be proclaimed. My sovereignty is not simply to be scrutinized, it is to be heralded. It is not grist for the mill of controversy, it is gospel for sinners who know that their only hope is the sovereign triumph of God's grace over their rebellious will."

#### **Romans 3:18**

"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

#### **Proverbs 9:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

#### **Proverbs 3:13, 18**

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding.

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.