

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Romans 11:7–10

⁷What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. ⁸Just as it is written:

*“God has given them a spirit of stupor,
Eyes that they should not see
And ears that they should not hear,
To this very day.”*

⁹And David says:

*“Let their table become a snare and a trap,
A stumbling block and a recompense to them.*

¹⁰ *Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,
And bow down their back always.”*

The Righteousness of Reprobation

Main idea: whereas the Lord has reserved for Himself the elect, out of their blindness, the rest He intentionally and righteously gives over to their blindness.

Introduction: Paul as a case study—unmerited (demerited!) gift of sight.

1. Electing the Blind, v7

1. Israel has not obtained, but instead blinded (hardened; had their minds closed in the current condition). This is what we deserve; beg the Lord that you would not receive it.
2. From among those who deserve this very thing, God has elected some, just as He did to Paul (cf. Ac 9:8, 12, 17–18).

2. Hardening the Blind, v8

1. The same Word that gives faith (10:14–17) hardens others (cf. Isa 29:9–10, 6:9–10).
2. This was dreadful for Isaiah to consider (cf. Isa 6:11). How dreadful it ought to be to us concerning others! And, how dreadful that possibility for ourselves!
3. “To this very day” from Deut 29:4. A reminder that hard heartedness is curse and condemnation. Also a reminder that we must have genuine dealings with God now; these are not merely abstract thoughts or ideas.

3. Condemning the Blind, v9–10

1. Quote from Psalm 69:22–23.

2. A reminder that there is real salvation for those who are in Christ. But all hinges upon Christ. If we reject Him, then any blessing that we think we have from God is a delusion, a snare and a trap!

Conclusion: is your blessedness before God a delusion? All hinges upon Christ. Come rest upon Him, give yourself up to Him, submit to Him!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 11 verses 7 through 10. These are God's words. What? Israel has not obtained what it seeks. But the elect have obtained it. And the rest. We're blinded. Just as it is written. God has given them a spirit of stupor. Eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear to this very day.

And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap. A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened. So that they do not see. And bow down their backs. Always. And then the sentence this reading. Of God's inspired. And Aaron twerked. Surely, as we have just finished.

The brief reading with verse 9 and 10 and hearing David's prayer, and knowing that he's praying in Union with Christ and as a type of Christ, About what ought to happen to those who are the enemies of God's anointed. Who The enemies, not only of David but especially of great.

David's greater son. It must have moved Paul deeply to know that he was one of these enemies. Who had been given sight? Over against what he deserved. Not just undeserved Mercy or undeserved Grace, but Contra deserved not just unmerited but demeritant Mercy from God. And yet. Apostles. He writes this letter.

Is one that although he had persecuted Christ, Had had his eyes opened and was, as we heard last week, an example of the fact evidence. Uh, to the fact that Lord had not abandoned Israel. He has always had an elect within Israel. And he is still showing. Demerited Mercy.

Um, Mercy that Opposite. What they have earned. And so, he He comes to a conclusion. Now in verses 7 through 10 reasoning, the righteousness of God, In the reprobation. Of many of. Ethnic Israel. It is true that the right response to those who question. God is. Who are you?

To to answer back to God. Uh, you are less than clay, and he is greater than the Potter. Uh, so who are you and that is the right answer to our questioning? But there are also answers to our questions and God in his generosity gives us those as well.

And he gives that to us here. Uh, and so we see that Those whom God hardens, Those whom God thickens. Uh, perhaps you've heard of Um, arterial sclerosis, where the vessels are thickened and Back in chapter nine when it said whom he Wills he hardens he uses the Greek word that is behind that word for thickening or Or hardening.

And that. That God is righteous and just and that he does intentionally, give them over Uh, to what they are. Uh, and all of that, just makes us Marvel, the more That this is not what has happened to us. If we believe And it ought to warn us. That we mustn't, just play.

Because there have been multitudes who are in his visible. Who were thickened, who were hardened who were given over. To blindness. And so, as As the Apostle concludes this section before going on. Responding not to the hardening or the hard Israelites. Uh, that make up the majority of that Nation at the time that he's writing.

But as we move on into the rest of the chapter, we'll see that he responds primarily to God, not to the Israelites. And to the fact that this God of great electing Mercy is still redeeming and that he's given us. Reason to hope that in the history of his Redemption.

The best days were yet to come then And we were the same hope. Believe that the best days are yet to come. Ah, but those weeks for those weeks, Uh, just for tonight then we'll see in verse 7. A reminder that God elects from among the blind. God elects.

Blind. Sinners. Even as in the second place, we see in verse 8, he does Harden Blind. Sinners. And that he does. So because Uh, they are self-condemned. He condemns Blind. Sinners in verses 9. So first then he elects blind, Sinners. The elect having obtained. It is actually an interruption.

Uh, to the thought. Israel has not obtained what it seeks. But they were blinded. And if it were not for the elect, There would not be any the rest, it would be their all Blinded. In fact, he spoke of the nation as a whole. Generally at the end of chapter nine, you remember that they had a law that described righteousness, a law that would have led them to righteousness, by Grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ.

A law that attested that this righteousness was by faith, but they didn't pursue it as if it were by faith, he pursued it as if it were by works. And of course, then they did not obtain. What they seek? And so Israel, not having obtained, but instead having been blinded, and the word blinded, here is another word.

That means Harden, not that same word to which we just referred from back in in chapter nine but in this case, having the eyes or the mind closed off to any other options, They having had Christ presented to them. Have. Have rejected him and and those having rejected him God cutting off.

Uh, from them closing their, their Vision, their Glimpse that they might have had of the Christ whom they have rejected and giving them over to themselves. So that there's nothing but what they think. Uh, this is God's righteous response. God's just response to the wicked sin of skepticism. We live in an age.

In which skepticism? Considered authentic. Uh, even within the church somehow, virtuous. I was once member of a Presbytery in which there was a a church plant on a University campus, And the way they advertised themselves was inviting quote, unquote, other doubters and Skeptics Um, To come in. Among them.

Uh, but skepticism is not virtuous. Skepticism is a rejection of God as he has declared himself in his world and when that skepticism responds to the word, it is even worse. A rejection of God as he has declared himself in his word, which is to say, A rejection of God as he has declared himself.

In Christ. And so it is righteous of God for those who do not know God and as second Thessalonians 1 says obey not the gospel. It is righteous of God then to close their eyes. To harden them in the condition. That they were, it would have been righteous of God.

To let the Pharisee who called himself Saul to Hebrews and, and Paul to Greeks. To allow him to die to depart, this world in the condition of hatred, to the name of Jesus and persecuting those who are members of Jesus. Paul. No doubt felt that every day of his life, which is why he knew himself to be the chief of Sinners.

That that Christ would have been right? And just to let him die in that condition. This is what he deserved. This is what you deserve each, one of you in yourself. That you would have your mind closed off your sight closed off. So that the only thing you see are those things that you have determined to be true, those things that you have decided to, to believe, to be cut off from the life of God and the light of God, and the knowledge of God and the knowledge of Christ.

This is what every single ordinarily generated child of Adam. Descendant of Adam. Deserves. And so knowing that this is what we deserve, and there is no solution within us. Let us remember. Then, that this, the sentence is not Israel, has not obtained what it seeks, but we're blinded the sentences.

Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect have obtained. And the rest were blinded. Because it is not all who are descended from Israel. That were Israel, we heard back. And in chapter 9, verse 8 does not those who are children of the flesh, it is those who are children of the promise chapter 9 verse Verse 12.

God shows Mercy to whom he will. Show Mercy, he has mercy on whom he wills and whom he wills. He hardens chapter 9, Verse 18 from among those who deserve to be, blinded to be left to their own soul. Destroying ideas that bring them at last to receive destruction from the presence of the Lord and his glory forever from among that very group.

God has elected. To save. And so, if you find yourself doubting, if you find yourself skeptical, if you hear that, that's a sin and it's true that it is, do not hear that. It is a sin from which there is no hope or a sin for which there is no health here.

That it is a sin that puts you in the very class of those from among whom this. Saving God, elects to save. To whom God shows Mercy. Plead with him, who shows Mercy to Sinners. That he would open your eyes, not close them, that he would open your mind and your heart to give the light of his knowledge, the light of the knowledge of the Creator that he puts That he gives to every man against which so many suppress, that truth and unrighteousness, the light of the knowledge of him and his divine nature that he makes evident in all the creation that so many suppress,

Uh, that truth that so many suppress in unrighteousness, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

That God gives when he removes the veils, the veil from the heart, even as he so clearly commuted communicated to Paul what it was that had happened to him on the road of road to Damascus by giving him that blindness, that then, by the preaching of the word of ananias, He would have what seemed like scales to fall from his eyes.

And know that this word that he was now going to preach to the Gentiles is the means that God uses to take away blindness and give men to see Jesus as the Living, God, who died and rose again for them and to rest in the Lord, Jesus Christ. God elects.

From among the blind. And so, that's the first thing that the Apostle says, here, in this passage in which he's teaching the righteousness of reprobation. And yet, don't you ever consider the righteousness of reparation? That's the opposite of election. Reprobation is refers to what God does in determining to pass over.

Those who have rejected him as opposed to Those whom he elects election refers. To what God does in choosing? But don't you consider the righteousness of reprobation ever apart from the glory of election? That election? That is according to Grace. Even as. He combines the two takes the two together in this, passage this evening.

Well, God elect from among blind Sinners, but he also hardens blind. Sinners. He says that here in verse 8, just as it is written. And he quotes first from Isaiah, 29, God has given them a spirit of stupor. And do you remember it's not been that long since we were in Isaiah 29, that was The, the woe that fell upon Ariel Ariel, which was, which means the lion of God and a couple verses into that chapter.

He identifies the lion of God as Jerusalem. Those who knew God, those who considered themselves to be the blessed of God, those who, who thought that they found greatness in themselves. But to trust in self and trust in schemes leads to trust in man and to trust and Idols.

And they had rejected, God and And so it was even in response to another rejection of God by his people. This wasn't the first time. This is the greatest time that Israel ever rejected God. When God the son, the word became flesh, he came to his own and they knew him not.

And they rejected him but that wasn't the first rejection of the Lord by Israel, they had made an entire history of doing. So, And so, the Apostle again, you remember in last week's portion he quoted from First Kings, 19, when their rejection was so complete that Elijah thought he was the next Noah.

Was that there was only one left in the face of the Earth. Who belonged to God and yet, even there, God had elected from among blind, Israel, seven thousand, he reserved and blessed God, for those two words, Yes, I think there are two words also in the Hebrew for himself.

So, the Apostle now quotes from another place, Isaiah 29. Uh, verse 9 and the same idea in verse 10 of that chapter. God has given them a spirit of stupor, and then very soberly. Very soberingly for us. He combines that quote from Isaiah 29 with the quote from Isaiah chapter, 6 eyes, that they should not see years that they should not hear to this very day.

And he attaches Another. That last bit from Deuteronomy 29. A little bit, ironically in a, in a little bit of an ironic manner, he attaches it. And we'll consider that in a moment, but this combination, then of the spirit of stupor that he was right to give them. For their rejection of him.

So that Isaiah who comes and preaches? And we read the book of Isaiah. It's such a Christian book, isn't it? And bless God many Jews even have been converted. By means, especially of chapter. Chapter 53 of Isaiah, but Isaiah was not told. In his call to preach that he was going to have a particularly effective Ministry.

Did he Many of us. Remember, and, and desire that the spirit would produce in our hearts. The same response, when the newly atoned for and cleansed Isaiah tongues, still burning as it were from the coal, that is too hot for a fire angel to touch without tongs. God says, who will go for us?

And he says, here, am I send me? And praise God for that. And may we may we all Rejoice to say the same thing. But we perhaps don't think quite as often of what he is saying by verse 11 which Lord, how long? And what happens in those two verses, Well, he's told that the word that he's being sent to preach, even this glorious salvation word, what a wonderful section of Isaiah.

We are in right now, chapter 40, and chapter 41, and And it's Full of sweetness for us and Christ to the end of that book. And yet that very word. Would be a means by which God would Harden his people. They would have eyes, but they wouldn't see. And they would have ears, but they wouldn't hear.

And their hearts wouldn't understand. You see the same word? Of the Gospel by which God gives Faith as we heard just a few weeks ago, in chapter 10, verses 14 through 17. He uses it to give Faith to But the same preaching of the same word hardens others. Yes, we need the means of Grace.

But we need Much more the grace of God in his means. So let us look to God. Not to give us as we deserve in his means. But let us look to God, to give us as his grace. As his grace gives to, Whom he is redeeming. How Dreadful it was for Isaiah.

To consider what his ministry would do. And we too ought to think that way. And when we think about the word being preached and the word going out in evangelism and the word going out in missions and when we speak to our loved ones and our friends, and our neighbors, and our acquaintances, Pleading with God, that he would come by his spirit in redeeming power to give life by that word.

To give sight. By that word. Lest they be hardened, the lest they be blinded? God and Deuteronomy, 29. And Speaking blessing to Israel. And I said that adding that to this very day at the end of the, the quotation here as he's making this combination combo quotation. Is a little bit ironic because, whereas, in Isaiah 29, and Isaiah 6, he was taking away blindness.

In Deuteronomy 29, he's talking about what the Lord had. Given them to. And yet he had hardened them. He says, you have seen All that Yahoo I did before your eyes in the land of Egypt of pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials, which your eyes have seen the signs, and those great wonders.

Yet, Yahweh has not given you a heart. To perceive. And eyes to see and ears to ear. To this very day. Hard-Heartedness is curse and condemnation. How desperately they needed, what the Lord would give them. They had not been given eyes to see and heart to perceive, but he would come in the next chapter in chapter 30 and verse 6 and he would say not, you must circumcise your hearts.

But Yahweh will Circumcise your hearts. And so, he takes Isaiah. 29 and Isaiah 6 and and Deuteronomy 29. And he combines them all to remind them that this is not one moment in time. In which the Lord presents himself in which the Lord presents Deliverance. And his people need from him, not just the proclamation of the of Deliverance, not just for him to tell them his gospel.

But what we need for him is to give us eyes and ears and heart. That's what they needed in Deuteronomy. And there were few who believed and many who rebelled, that's what they needed in Isaiah. And there were a few who believed and many rebelled. What they need in Romans.

And there are Many, who believe. Remember, the myriads Of Jewish Believers that he will meet. Uh, more than we. Than we know for sure of at any other time in the scripture history. Praise God. And yet many We're rebelling, but this language to this very day. As Moses spoke, that 40 years.

After The Exodus reminding, another generation. That they must be given by God eyes to see, and ears to hear and hearts to understand. This is not a, an abstract lesson in theology. So that we may argue whether or not reprobation is true, or reprobation is right? Or election is true.

This is something that is a reality to this very day. Even now 2 000 years or so after the Apostle wrote it, it's a reality to you today and tonight that you who deserve to be hardened are hearing the gospel by a preacher who is sent by the god of electing Grace, who gives Faith by that gospel, that you may plead with him not to receive, according to what you deserve.

But to plea receive, according to his mercy, according to what Jesus deserves. That you would have real dealing with God. Yourself. And your creator. And that it would be saving dealing now. That I might be damning dealing later. Because indeed, he does condemn the blind. Is as we've been saying this evening blindness is not, merely a spiritual inability.

It is a rejection of God. It is a rejection of Christ. It is. The worst. Immorality. The quote here is from Psalm 69 verses 22 and 23 and bless God, he could have quoted. Uh, let their table become a snare and a trap and so forth. Maybe not those exact words.

Not those exact words, but there are many places. In the Salter in particular, in which he could have quoted that the enemies of Christ must perish for their rejection of God's anointed. David, of course, is writing as God's anointed. He had the oil poured upon him. He was anointed as the king after God's Own Heart.

He was the one by whom God gave Israel rest from their enemies and he was the one to whom God had promised that a one of his offspring a king from his line would would Reign forever and ever. And so there are many places in the psalter from which he, he might have drawn a quote to where the enemies of David perish under the condemnation of God because indeed David is a type of Christ and we know that all of the enemies of Christ will perish.

The wrath of God forever, but he quotes here. And we won't take the time to go through the psalm as a whole. It's, it's not because it's not worthwhile or Or because we're in a hurry. It's a long Psalm but but sometime, look at the psalm as a whole, from which, this election is taken, it is a Redemption.

Psalm, it is a Salvation song. The the section of the psalm that is calling out for God's Vengeance. Uh, upon his enemies is actually Small in proportion to the rest of the Solomon, which he's crying out for forgiveness, and he's crying out for help and he's crying out for deliverance.

And he's crying out to be brought into the the Blessed presence and praise of God forever. So that even here by the particular Psalm from which he quotes, the Apostle is doing similarly to how he inserted that the elect have obtained it in verse 7. There is real salvation for those who are in Christ.

When you come to God, as someone who deserves to be blinded, you don't merely ask that you wouldn't be blinded that you wouldn't be hardened. You call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that everyone who does so will be saved. And you do. So knowing that, even as you do, the only way that call could come from your heart.

As if the other prayer had been answered.

But you don't have to trouble yourself. With your election or your reparation. You cry out to God as David was throughout. Psalms, 69 knowing that everything, for which he cried is bound up in Jesus Christ, because God, glorifies his son. As the one in whom alone, he saves. And yet that does doesn't.

Show us that God is righteous. To condemn all those who reject this son. The son of his glory. The one in whom God offers Mercy to all Sinners. And if we reject him, Than any blessing that we think we have from God is an illusion. A snare and a trap, the picture in Psalm 69 As David's enemies who have rejected God's anointed.

And they're all around table, enjoying the produce of the land enjoying the produce of the promised land. No doubt considering themselves successful and blessed. As they have their Feast. And David says, don't let that be the last word. If they're rejecting you Lord, if they are rejecting your Christ your anointed Then let that table be a snare and a trap to them.

And indeed that was the condition of many Israelites at the time. They had rejected the Lord Jesus yet, they still considered themselves. The blessed of God. Occupying, their land enjoying the produce of the land. And Paul says, no. Do not think. The blessing is found anywhere else. Except in Jesus Christ, it is not found in being an ethnic Israelite.

It is not found in having the, the produce of a small tract of land in the near East it all hinges, upon Christ. And so it is today. There are many who are in the church and consider themselves blessed of God, because they are church members, And particularly in our own land.

There are many in the church who are wealthy and comfortable. And they thank God daily. They speak words of Thanksgiving, thank them, maybe attach some emotion to them, daily for all of the bounty that they have. And yet Christ is not their life and sin is not their enemy and they don't live as those who Rejoice over God, who has delivered them from the guilt of their sin and they don't live as those who are devoted to this God, who has delivered them that they should serve him and love him and enjoy him himself in all of their blessing.

And their tables are snares and traps.

Because they think themselves blessed of God because they are comfortable in the world.

All hinges. Upon Christ. Rest upon him rejoice in him, give yourself up to him. Have no pleasure in anything unless that pleasure is ultimately in him, do nothing. That cannot be done in his name.

Submit to Christ belong to him. And you will praise him forever. Who has given you. By electing Mercy. The very opposite of what you deserve. Amen.