

Hopewell ARP Midweek Sermon
Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Romans 11:22–24

²²Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

Beholding Our Good and Severe God

Main idea: when thinking about our current spiritual state, our future state, or that of others, the most important thing to keep in mind is the character of God, Who is abundantly good but by no means overlooks sin.

Introduction: continued personal (singular, grammatically) application

1. **Behold your God.** cf. Ex 34:5–7
 1. The severity of God.
 1. Makes a clean break and a straight cut. He doesn't compromise one way or the other
 2. Who is a better case to see this upon than church members, like Israel, who have everything else except Christ?
 3. If Israelites were cut out, and other such branches were cut out, surely you must be also, if you don't have Christ!
 2. The goodness of God.
 1. He is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in kindness and emmet—covenant love and covenant faithfulness.
 2. Who is a better case to see this upon than those who were strangers to the covenants and household of God, without God, and without hope in the world?
 3. If God would and could save even these, then surely for those who came into this world within the covenant, or whose ancestors have been a family within the church, there is especially reason to hope that they may yet be grafted back in
 3. The benefit of being from the “good” tree (cf. 9:4)

2. **Behold God in relation to yourself: continue in the goodness of God, and don't think of yourself apart from Him, which may lead to...**
 1. ... pride, as if salvation came from ourselves or could not come to others
 2. ... indulgence of the flesh, as if salvation can coexist without continuing in the grace of God (cf. Ac 13:43)
 3. ... dependence upon self, as if continuing comes in some other way than grace
3. **Behold God in relation to the lost: don't think of the lost apart from God, which may lead to...**
 1. ... an evil sort of sympathy with the wicked, in which we may indulge the idea that God is somehow unkind
 2. ... an unbelieving sort of despair, in which we think they cannot be saved.

Conclusion: oh how needful are the divinely appointed times of worship and the divinely prescribed habit of meditation, that we would live, looking to God!

(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 23 through 2 through 24. These are God's words. Therefore, Consider the goodness and severity of God. On those who fell severity. But towards you goodness. If you continue in. His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, For God is able to graft them in again.

For if you were cut out of the Olive Tree, which is Wild by Nature, And were grafted contrary to Nature. Into a cultivated Olive Tree. How much more will these? Who are natural branches. Be grafted into their own. Olive Tree. Amen. The sense this reading of gods inspired And Aaron tort

Some of us were. Having conversation. Lord's Day Afternoon. About perseverance and how God has given us. Wonderful books in scripture. Uh, Affirm the sweet Doctrine that Those whom Christ redeems, and Those whom Christ, brings to Faith brings to himself. He surely will perfect. He surely will preserve. He surely will bring into the fullness of his glory.

And, Two of the great books in scripture on this particular theme being song of songs. And how the king the groom, when he determines to take for himself his bride and he's going to make her his. However, she starts out, she will be glorious with the king's glory and enjoy the fullness of his love forever and Revelation that those who belong to Jesus.

The Conquering. Shall be fully Redeemed by him that he is in control of, and in Authority over. Where they are and what they do, he knows them. He knows where they are, he knows their Works. He knows what they're going through and he is He is. Undaunted undefeatable and they will persevere to the end.

And so there's this sleight of hand. Then that comes by way of faulty. Bible, interpretation where the song of songs is made a romance book about human love. And the Book of Revelation is Has made a future newspaper book for us to Try and figure out the particular events.

That come between now and the close of the world and perpetually thinking now, is the close of the world. Uh, well, there is a danger here in Romans chapter 11, because it is so interesting to think about. And to ask the question of what is going to happen with ethnic Israel between now and the return of Christ, will there be a great Revival and Reformation and we have good hope to think so and to believe so even in our passage tonight but in our portion from last week in verses 16 through 21, and in our portion this week in verses 22 through 24, the Apostle has changed from that plural.

You. That was in verse 13 for I speak to you plural, Gentiles and he's been using the singular. Individual, Roman Believers. Now, Desiring that each of them would take. Personally, the particular applications that he's making in this part of the chapter and so if we're so focused on how many Israelites will be saved and when will this happen?

We will miss what the Apostle is doing, especially in verses 16 through 24, in bringing home, these personal applications. And of course, the Holy Spirit did not want this to be taken personally ownly by those individual. Roman Believers who were gathering individual Believers in Rome who were gathering at the time gathering for church at the time that this letter was addressed to them by the Apostle and read and preached in the public worship of that church.

He wants you to take this personally tonight. You individually. He wants the This personally tonight, if we can use a better form of English, that makes the distinction. And so there's continued continued personal application here, and it comes. It comes even in. The very First word or the second word here in our English, therefore, consider and the word that's translated.

Consider here is not actually a thinking word but a seeing word therefore look therefore behold. Set your eyes upon now it does mean consider. It's not telling us that we can actually visually see God, it's using that language. For talking about directing your attention to God. And how often when we're reading the Bible, and we're in some passage and we're trying to figure out what does it say that I should do?

The. The thing that we need to be doing in the passage first and foremost is seeing what it says about God, who is he, what does he say? He is doing, what does he say? He will do in us, what is he like, what does he want us to be?

Like it it comes out of our response to him, especially when you get into passages where it's history and there's Wars and and there's a plot and it's so interesting and we can get lost in that. Uh, the first great thing to do wherever we are in the Bible, is to turn our eyes to God, to look at God and consider him.

And what it's saying about him and that's what's true about the word is also true about the world. What is God doing? And it's also true about our own lives that we would behold him. And so that'll be the the In these first first and these three verses first, behold, your God and particular behold the goodness and severity of God.

Second behold, God, in relation to yourself. And here, we're especially thinking about this. This language of his goodness to you. If you continue in goodness, in that goodness in his goodness. So behold, God, in relation to yourself in the second place and in the third place, behold God in relation to the Lost now.

You, of course, have many things that you're thinking about, and we can discuss later. How helpful it is to, to take this approach of beholding, God, and then putting those things in context of him because everything is in context of him. He is the God, who is he is The God, Who created all things, and we're actually coming to that great conclusion.

At the end of this chapter, all things are from him and through him and to him to him, be the glory forever. Amen. But for tonight, behold your God and particularly his goodness and severity. Although, after he says it that way, he takes it in the opposite sequence. So we will do, so, as well, severity and goodness.

And then, in the second place, behold, God in relation to yourself, and in the third place, behold God, in relation to the Lost first. Then behold your God. Look at God. With your heart by faith. And one day, you will look at God with your eyes. For your Redeemer.

The god, man, is one Divine person and just as Mary bore God in her womb. So you will look at God with your eyes because he has taken to himself a human nature, but before the word became flesh and dwelt Among Us and Jesus fully revealed God. And what he is like as one who is full of grace and truth, there was one who was permitted to behold the trailing of God's glory.

God himself. Hiding him between literally a rock, and a hard place covering him so that he wouldn't be destroyed. But he was to see, then not God so much with his eyes as with his ears for as God, covered Moses. And the cleft of that rock and his glory passed by Yahweh announced his own name.

Yahweh descended in the cloud

Uh, christophany even as there is this revelation of God and the theophany and the glory that is passing, by a pre-incarnation appearance of the Lord Jesus. God, the son, God the word announcing to Moses, Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood with him. There and proclaimed. The name of Yahweh and Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed.

And so you have Yahweh standing with him in this pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus and you have Yahweh passing before him as he's hidden in the cleft of The Rock. And he's given now by By the Lord to see him by way of the ear. He always passed before him and proclaimed.

Yahweh, Yahweh God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abounding in goodness and Truth. Keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Behold the goodness of God. By no means. Clearing the guilty. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. And the children's children. To the third and the fourth generation.

Behold the severity. Of God. And so, as the Apostle calls us this evening calls, each of us individually personally to heed this word for ourselves. Look at your God, look at the goodness of your God. And look at the severity of your God. For when God himself declares his name Whether to Moses or whether in Jesus, Who has every bit as severe and a king of justice and Vengeance and wrath.

When God declares himself to you, he declares both his goodness and his severity so that you will take both the heart so that you will see yourself rightly, so that you will see the Lost rightly and respond to him rightly in your own life and respond to them. Rightly.

In your own life. And so he gives us here, although he says, first behold the goodness and severity of God, he starts with the severity on those who fell severity and this, this word here, this language for the severity of God here. Is language that you can see still in the English, some of its original uh some of its original meaning, some of its etymology where it comes from severing.

A clean cut. Not allowing any Of blending or blurring or or leaving of Of fibers. It's a clean break. A straight cut no compromise at all. He cuts exactly. According to righteousness, Now for us, we use the word severe now. To mean, overly rigorous. And harsh. In fact, if you look up in in some of the lexicons that says this word means harsh, Where it actually means severe.

And rigorous or and uncompromising. Perhaps, you can see it if you just say it severity. The severity of God now, who is a better case? For seeing how exacting and perfect the righteousness. And Justice of God is then church members like Israelites who have everything else, but if they don't have Christ, if they don't have his atonement for their sin, if they don't have his righteousness, counted for them.

If they don't have him himself, they must be cut out. Of God's tree. They must be cut out of God's church. They must be thrown away like a branch and burnt. Because the justice of God, the severity of God will by no means, clear the guilty. God does not take anyone to Glory apart from his Justice being fully satisfied.

In Jesus Christ. And this is what was happening to these Israelites. You remember, All that they had. In chapter 9 and verse 4 to them, pertained the adoption. They were part of the people who were called God's firstborn son to them. Pertain the glory, the glory that had been displayed in the plagues and appeared in the cloud and the fire.

And that indwelt, the Tabernacle, and then, and dwelt the temple. And even the glory, that appeared to them, when the word became flesh. And he came to his own, and his own received them, not to them belong. The covenants, the various administrations of the Covenant of Grace, the giving of the law, they were the ones who had the words of God.

The service of God, they were the ones who had the worship of God and in his word in that worship. They heard over and over again, the promises and that all had there. Yes. And there are men in Jesus. Of whom according to the flesh. Christ came Who is himself over all the eternally blessed, God?

Amen. But if they did not have him by faith. It wasn't enough to be an Israelite. It wasn't enough to be a church member. And neither is it enough for you? To be called a Christian to be called a saint, to be a member of his church, to have his word and to have your catechism and to know the promises and to participate in his worship and to descend from those who are genuine Believers, like the fathers to have all of those things but to not have him because God is a righteous and just and holy God and he will not compromise.

Even the slightest bit. Good. For that. He's too. Holy For that. If it wasn't severe. If he wasn't rigorous, if he wasn't exact, he wouldn't be. Good. And yet in his goodness and the intensity of his commitment to himself. There is this desire, not only that his power would be made known on vessels of Wrath prepared for Destruction, but to show the riches of his glory upon vessels of Mercy.

Whom he is saving.

And now, If Israelites were cut out, And other branches. Branches, perhaps that, you know. Who begin in his church, not those who are converted late in life, but those who are born into Christian homes, if they were cut out, Surely, you must be also if you don't have Christ, But praise God.

He is also good. And so, he says,

On those who fell severity. But toward you and this is still individually towards you singular. Goodness, if You continue in his goodness. He's not saying God will be good. If you are good enough. He's saying. If God has begun being good to you. Then you will continue. In that goodness.

And if you don't continue in that goodness then you know the contrapositive is also true. Don't you if you don't continue in that goodness then did you begin? In his goodness. Maybe you knew about his goodness. Maybe you thought you were good? Maybe you thought you were good to know about his goodness.

But if you don't continue in his goodness, then, You never began in his goodness.

And so he says, goodness towards you goodness, if you continue In his goodness. You see, if you have come to believe in Jesus Christ. It wasn't just because you were born in a Christian home and Mom and Dad taught, you the Bible and you heard gospel sermons. It's not just because perhaps you weren't born in a Christian home or maybe you were and you didn't come to Faith as a child, it's not just because your friend told you about the gospel at work, or maybe someone in in school in college, or Wherever it was that that you were invited to come here.

Preaching. No, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, and if you are a, a member not just of his church, but a member of him, one of the branches, that is grafted into the root and the fatness, the life and richness of Jesus's and you Then that's from God's goodness.

When you look at yourself, when you think about yourself, you looked about, you look to God first and you look to him and you see not your, your cleverness, or the, or even the path by, which he brought you to Faith, but you see him who brought you? And you say, God is so good to me.

We all have. Slightly varying paths to Don't we? But we all see the same thing. When we think about having been brought to Faith, It was so good to me. He is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abounding in Emmett Covenant, love and Covenant faithfulness that which he has committed himself to in Christ within himself before the world began.

You say, he is so good to me. And who's a better case to see this upon. Than those who did not have. They didn't have the covenants, they didn't have the word, they didn't have the worship. That didn't come up in the church. They didn't have believing parents. And yet, God, Cut them out.

Of their wild Outsider Olive Tree. And that's what the wild Olive Tree is here. It's, it's an olive tree with a prefix, that means an outsider not in the garden. Not in the Grove, not cultivated. Then that the Cultivated Olive. Tree is actually a word for Olive. Tree matched with the word for good.

Who is a better case study for the goodness of God than the one who is outside? As, as Ephesians 2 puts it strangers to the Covenant. And then he brings them in. By Jesus Christ and he makes them no longer strangers and Aliens. But members of the household of God, They were strangers.

They were without God. They were without hope in the world. Maybe you are one of those And so you are and a special display. Of the goodness of God. That without any of that to begin with yet, his goodness was so determined to be expressed upon you that he cut you out.

Of. Being a stranger to him. And he brought you to Faith and he grafted you into his church, but didn't just graft you into his church, grafted you into the root. Of his. Which Old Testament and New Testament. There's one root. And it's the Lord Jesus. If God would and could save even such Gentiles as these, Roman Believers then, surely For those who came into this world within the Covenant or whose ancestors have been a family within the church.

There is especially reason to hope that they may yet be grafted back in. This is for us in our congregation a blessing that we participate in every day. For surely God's mercy to bring the AARP. Back from the brink of Destruction is not unrelated to her spiritual forefathers, and the Covenant that in which they walked with God and their prayers and desires unto God for their spiritual descendants.

And we are more directly descendant. Now, God's Providence is for many reasons, but surely. It is not unrelated to those prayers and their desires. My own families. Faith in the Lord Jesus and The conversion. Two or three three generations. Before I And yet. Being ethnically Coptic and descended from those who for the first few hundred years of the Christian.

Or those who most had the Romans 9 verse 4. Advantages. Covenant with God. And surely for Israel. And surely for those who are descendent. From Covenant families within God's church, there is especially reason to hope that. God who loves to display. His goodness will yet graft back in. After three, or four or more.

Generations. This, by the way, is the place to If you are the parent of an apostate, Covenant child. You don't hope in that proverb that says train them up in the way that they shall go. And when they are old, they will not depart from it, because if they've departed from it, you're not in that proverb anymore.

That proverb is for, when the Lord's blessing has come upon that training and he says he is going to grow them in a Grace that increases and of Faith who strength increases. And as they mature, and the Lord, it will become stronger. So that when they were sapling and you trained them straight according to the word of God and God blessed it to them, once they're an oak tree.

That's not gonna be bent. But you can come here. To Romans, 11:22-24. And say. Yes, they've been cut out. But they were natural branches. That came into the world. In God's covenant or their descended, from a family that was in his church, with his worship, with his word, with his promises.

And The God Who loves to display his goodness, even on those who didn't have all those things. Surely, we will hope in him. That his goodness will yet retrieve them. Surely. God is able, surely God is willing. This is the place in scripture to look. For that. But behold your God.

In the first place. And second place, behold God in relation to yourself, continue in the goodness of God. Don't think of yourself apart from him. Whenever a Believer, whenever we as

Believers think of ourselves apart from him, it poses at least three dangers. The first here is Pride, we dealt with that last week.

With this do not boast, do not boast, this was given to you as a gift and if it was given to you as a gift, why do you boast? As if as if you didn't receive it? Pride, as if salvation came from ourselves or could not come to others.

As if we got saved because we were somehow an easier or a better case. Then that lost person for whom we are praying. No behold. God in relation to yourself. In the second place. If we, if we are forgetful of God, then we are in danger of indulging. The flesh.

Not continuing in the grace of God. To remember. Acts 13 when, uh, when Paul and Barnabas had preached. Uh, in Antioch, not the sending Antioch. But Uh, when they had preached in Antioch and And the Believers were following them out of church. And what did they, what does it say they do?

Did it said they persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. You've begun in Grace. You've begun in goodness, good, but you must continue. You must grow, you must be Sanctified. You must be holy. You must serve your new king. You must kill the sin that is against him, and that he hates.

You must live for him. You must continue in his goodness. If you're not continuing goodness, you did not begin in goodness. If you are not an enemy of your sin, if you are not a lover of Christ, if you don't belong to him, if he is not your identity, if he is not what your life is about.

Then you don't have spiritual life.

So if we are forgetful of God and we live for the flesh, If we're not mindful of God, we're gonna we're gonna live for the flesh. We're gonna live to indulge ourselves. We're gonna live to be comfortable. We're gonna live to, to be esteemed by others. We're not going to enjoy him as our pleasure.

We're not going to live for his eyes, as we hope to hear about Lord's Day morning and if If we don't, Think of ourselves in relation to God. If we don't. If we do think of ourselves apart from God, well that'll lead perhaps not to indulgence of the flesh, but something that's much more.

Sneaky and subtle. Dependence upon the flesh. Dependence on ourselves. Do you hear how this passage addresses you tonight and says continue in the goodness of God? Not continue in the strength of your resolve not continue in the sincerity of your emotions. Not continue in the wisdom of your plans.

All of which God gives and God uses and are, there's nothing wrong with it, but you continue in his goodness. Continue independence upon him, but if you're forgetful of him, those are the things upon which you put your hope for continuing. And those are the things to which you turn when you're stumbling.

So, don't forget your God. Keep your eyes upon him and continue in his goodness. Finally behold, God in relation to the Lost. If we think of the lost apart from God, that may lead to an evil sort of sympathy with the wicked. Oh my, my dear brothers and sisters.

This error is infecting, the It is a gangrene, it is a stage 4 cancer. She is almost dead. Because we think of the lost. Apart from God, we think of them apart from his Justice. We don't think of his Justice. We don't think of his Holiness, we don't think of the Wrath that he has upon upon their sin.

And so we want to, we want to have Open Arms. And we say, come just as you are instead of saying, come despite what you are. You don't have to be better to come. But, He does not receive you.

As one who overlooks. And and compromises righteousness. So yes. The church should be a place where we are not even comfortable with our own sin. Let alone trying to make others comfortable. With their sin. And there is this evil sort of sympathy with the the wicked in which we end up talking about things like being Winsome by which, we mean being inclusive and not making anyone feel badly.

And it is wicked. Because it is not severe. Like God is severe. And if you and I are going to insist upon righteousness, Then we need to have our eyes upon God. Upon his word upon his character upon his law and even upon his grace, That is severe and will not let his children go without chastening, and will not let his children remain impure and Unholy because they must be holy in order to see him.

But failing to think about the Lost in relation to God. It also can lead to an unbelieving sort of Despair, can't it? Well, perhaps, we see their sin. And we're willing to call it sin. But perhaps we now despise them because of that sin. See how can someone like you be saved?

Or perhaps grieving over them. We are dejected and despair and we don't think they can be saved. And yet that's dreadfully unbelieving, isn't it? Because this severe God is good. And he loves to save and he's able to save. First, the Jew and then the Gentile. This is what this whole letter has been about, isn't it?

The gospel, the power of God for salvation. In it. The righteousness of God for all who believe. No one unable to be saved. But if we think about the Lost World without thinking about our God and his goodness and his power and his desire to say, don't we easily Despair and become discouraged.

Behold your God. Keep your heart and your mind full of who he is and what he's like, Yahweh, Yahweh God merciful Gracious. Long-suffering abounding and Covenant love and Covenant faithfulness. By no means, clearing the guilty. But you and I aren't good at that, are we? We do not even with our new nature.

We don't automatically gravitate. Towards remembering God. And thinking upon him, I'm so bless God. Has he not given you? Good commands. For that worship every morning in secret and with your house that worship every evening in secret with your house and the whole day a week. Delighting in the day because it's his and for his worship and he uses it to make you to Delight in him.

And has he not given you that? That. Loving wise generous prescription. To meditate. Upon him to take from those worship times and from that worship day, and make that the food for your thoughts. Stick it into your mind, meditate upon him so that you develop this natural sort of habit.

You think about yourself and the fact that you're saved and you say, oh, God has been good to me and you think about someone else and that they're under the wrath of God, you think? Oh God is so righteous and just to despise their sin and to, to have wrath against them and their sin.

But he's so good and he's still saving and he may save them. And so you think about him when you think about yourself, and you think about him when you think about others, By his

grace, by his Spirit applying Christ to you. You would follow his prescription and you would keep his Commandments and your heart and your mind would be full of your God.

And he would come into every thought and he would shape everything. You stuck out your hand to do his word bound to your hand and he would shape how you see, everything. You look at his word as a frontlet between your eyes. His word being full of his goodness and full of his severity being full of him, so that your mind will be full of him.

So that your life, Will be full of him. Oh, may the Lord. So blessed to us his word. That we wouldn't. Get consumed here. With what's going on with Israel. And mess that he comes to each one of us individually tonight. And he says, behold. Your God.