

Life Church Message 2011-12-11 - Down, But Not Out

- **Down, But Not Out (Romans 11)**
Pastor Rocklyn Clarke - Sunday December 11, 2011
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- **New Material**
 - **Preparation**
 - **Down, But Not Out**
 - **Preparation - Romans 11**
 - **Standing Issues**
 - From a word Bishop gave me:
 - Make sure people do something with God's message.
 - Make it plain:
 - Use accessible language.
 - Use modern day parables based on every day occurrences:
 - Sitting at a stop light
 - Driving through a green light
 - Approaching a yellow light
 - Being cut off in traffic
 - Going shopping
 - Going to a mall
 - Going to school; sitting in class
 - Going to work; sitting in your office;
 - Keep it simple.
 - Use illustrations of truth out of my own experience.
 - Impart faith to obey the Word and receive God's promises.
- **Introduction**
 - Welcome to another service at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
 - Welcome Cards -
 - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
 - These cards do two things for us:
 - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
 - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
 - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
 - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
 - **Please use this card:**
 - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out

before,

- to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
- to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.

Please include your contact information unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.

- Transition

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- **Read the Passage - Romans 11**

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot,

have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

- **Exegetical Idea**

God did not reject Israel; he saved a believing remnant ("Israel" within "Israel") by grace, he used the unbelief of the others to extend mercy to the gentiles, and he will use his mercy to the gentiles to win over those Israelites who are willing to believe.

- **Homiletical Idea:**

Down, but not out.

- **What does this mean?**

- Paul is explaining to the mixed (Jewish and gentile) Roman church what has become of all God's covenant promises to Israel.
- There has always been a believing remnant - an "Israel" within "Israel". Elijah discovered this - 1Kings 19:11-18

- The scriptures foresaw the unbelief of the rest (i.e. the non-remnant) - Deuteronomy 29:1-4; Isaiah 29:10-14; Psalm 69:22-23
- The rest can still be saved if they turn from unbelief.
- God is using Israel's partial hardening to show mercy to the gentiles, but he will ultimately save National Israel. - Isaiah 59:20-21; Isaiah 27:9; Jeremiah 31:33-34
- This seems to indicate that there will be a national revival among the Jews at some point in the future.
- The Jews have been bound over to disobedience so that they too can receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to the gentiles.

- **Is it True? Do I believe it?**
 - Consider how even the believing Jews treated the gentile believers - initially insisting that they be circumcised.
 - Consider people like Sandy Kulkin, Jews For Jesus, etc.
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- **What difference does it make? So What?**
 - We've seen that God's plan left Israel down, but not out.
 - We should be praying for revival among the Jews - especially among the ones we know.
 - God's plan leaves others down, but not out too!
 - Consider the way the relationship between church and unchurched people today parallels the relationship between Jews and gentiles in the first century.
 - Many church people reject the real gospel in favor of a works based salvation.
 - Many church people reject and persecute the unchurched.
 - Ministries that reach out to the unchurched without imposing a lot of rules on them are often rejected by more traditional church ministries.

- **Conclusion**
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- **Altar Call / Welcome Cards / Communion ?**

- Welcome Cards - refer to script
- We're almost ready to close this portion of our service, but first we want to give you a chance to respond to what you've heard.
- Earlier in the service we mentioned the welcome cards and we encouraged you to begin filling them out.
- Right now we want you to complete your welcome card. We especially want you to use this card if:
 - if you're a first time visitor
 - if you've never filled one out before,
 - if you want to tell us about a decision you made today,
 - if you want to ask us for more information, or to give us feedback.
- Please be sure to include your up to date contact information unless we already have it.

- **MC & Worship Team continue with tithes, offerings, and worship**

- **Benediction - Numbers 6:24-26**

““The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.””

- **Men's Prayer**

- **Life Group Material**

- **Life Group Word Material**

These are sample discussion questions / topics. Your life group leaders may choose to adjust these questions, substitute new ones, or spend the Word section of the meeting in a different way altogether.

Scripture taken from the [HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION \(NIV\)](#).

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- **Romans 11:1-24**

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: “Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”? And what was God's answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

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Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

In this passage Paul describes a remnant from Elijah's time (7,000 who didn't worship Baal) and also a remnant from his own time (believing Jews).

- Are the situations in the church world today where you see a remnant? Discuss.
- Have you ever had a conversation with any Jewish people about salvation through Jesus Christ? If so, how did the conversation go?

- **Romans 11:25-36**

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

Gentiles have received mercy as a result of the Jews' disobedience.

- Is there anyone you know personally whose disobedience has resulted in mercy for you? Discuss.
- Can you think of anyone you know who might receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you? Discuss.

- **Scriptures For 12/11/2011 Life Church Sermon**

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1Kings 19:11-18

The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”

Deuteronomy 29:1-4

These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb.

Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them:

Your eyes have seen all that the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all

his land. With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those miraculous signs and great wonders. But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.

Isaiah 29:10-14

The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers).

For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I don't know how to read."

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men. Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."