

Monday, November 27, 2023 • Read Romans 9:19–24

Questions from the Scripture text: How does the beginning of v19 suggest that these are things the apostle has heard before, in response to preaching the gospel? What have these people asked? What is the implied answer to the next, rhetorical, question? What does this hypothetical respondent say that God is wrong to do and why? Who now asks four questions in v20–24? What is the point of the first rhetorical question in v20? What is the implied answer to the second rhetorical question? What is the implied answer to the third rhetorical question (v21)? How long is the next rhetorical question (v22–24)? What does God want to do (v22)? But what does He endure? In what way? What are these vessels full of? For what have they been prepared? Why would He endure them for so long—what does He especially desire to make known (v23)? Upon what sorts of vessels are these riches made known? For what has He prepared them? When? Whom, specifically, has He prepared for this (v24a)? How did this happen? From what peoples has He prepared such vessels (v24b)?

Why does God still find fault? Romans 9:19–24 prepares us for the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the real question is not why God finds fault, but why hasn't He yet destroyed those who are at fault?**

You don't get to ask the questions, v19–20. The apostle had evidently heard this response before, “Why does He still find fault?” This is not someone who thinks he has done rightly. This is someone who knows that he has done wrongly. He just wants to blame God for his own wrongdoing: “For who has resisted His will?” The one who is blaming God's sovereignty for his own sin is forgetting that *the very One that he is blaming—by His own admission—is the sovereign God!* So the apostle answers one set of questions with another set. And the first point is that you don't get a say, because you are not God. Will you, a mere man—a wicked man—reply against God, the sovereign God? You are creation, and He is Creator. You don't get to ask the questions (cf. Job 38:3, 40:7).

God has a right to find fault, v21–22. God has as much right and power to determine our destiny as a potter has over what sort of vessel to make out of a lump of clay (v21). If He makes a vessel of wrath, prepared for destruction, that vessel will freely choose sin and be deserving of His wrath and destruction. God remains righteous; the vessel is wicked, and it would actually be wrong of God if He did not find fault! When we, who are sinful, challenge God's right to find fault, we not only have forgotten our place (v19–20), but we have done something much worse. When we challenge God's right to find fault, we have forgotten *God's* place. God is right to want to glorify His justice and power. His wrath is an expression of His perfections.

The real question is: why hasn't God destroyed us yet? (v22). The question that was asked in v19 isn't just illegitimate because it forgets our place and forgets God's place. It is illegitimate because it is actually responding to patience and goodness. A wrath-deserving sinner is only able to ask such a question because he has not yet suffered the destruction that he deserves! God is “enduring him with much longsuffering” (v22). God is long-suffering, even with the reprobate (Rom 9:22)! If you do not respond to this goodness and forbearance by turning from your sin, you have only yourself to blame that you are reprobate (Rom 2:4–5). Even knowing that you will receive destruction for that, you continue to store up wrath for yourself against the day of wrath—and you want to blame God? The real question is not why does God find fault with you. It is why is God being patient with you?!

The answer: to make known, by mercy, the riches of His glory, v23–24. Notice the difference in emphasis between v22 and v23. This difference is especially notable in the word “riches.” It is by His mercy that He makes the *riches* of His glory known. And He prepares vessels for mercy. They contribute their sin. This is what we contribute to our salvation! The sin from which we need to be saved. Vessels of mercy were no better than vessels of wrath, but mercy came and made the difference (cf. v15). v24 brings us back to the issue that began this discussion (v6). If it were not for God's desire to make the riches of His glory known on vessels of mercy, no Jews at all would have been saved. And no Gentiles either. But He has been pleased to make these riches known in the way that He has chosen. And whether talking about ourselves, or about the relative numbers of Jews or Gentiles saved, the amazing thing is that there is mercy at all—and all the more amazing for the abundance of it.

From where, in our hearts, come questions that challenge the goodness of God? If you perish, who will be to blame for it? If you are saved, what did you contribute to it? What should we see, when we consider the question of who are saved and how many? If you aren't seeing mercy in these things, where can you get this ability?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for when our hearts or minds challenge the goodness of Your election or Your work. Grant that we would honor You as the good Potter, whose mercy is glorified both in the vessels prepared for mercy and in the longsuffering with which You endure vessels prepared for wrath. Make us not only humble to submit to Your right and rule, but also amazed at the greatness of Your mercy that we might worship You rightly, we ask through Christ, AMEN!!

Suggested songs: ARP130 “LORD, From the Depths to You I Cried” or TPH425 “How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place”

(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 chapter 9. Verse 19, through 24. These are god's words. You will say to me, then why does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will? But indeed. Oh man. Who are you to apply against god? Well, the thing formed say. To him, who formed it. Why have you made me like this?

Does not the potter have power over the clay. From the same lump to make one vessel for honor. And another for dishonor. What if god wanting to show his wrath? And to make his power known endured. With much long suffering, the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. That he might make known.

The riches of his glory. On the vessels of mercy. Which he had prepared beforehand. For glory. Even as whom he called, not of the jews, only. But also, Of the gentiles. So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent word.

Well, the apostle had preached the gospel enough times to. Unregenerate centers and even to partially Sanctified. Sinners. That he had often heard. This response in verse 19. Why does he still find fault? And the answer. Is because you're faulty.

It is amazing that as God opens up to us. The good pleasure of his mercy. That with those who. Hatred. Like esau. With those who. If he gave us over to ourselves, we would be Pardoned. Like pharaoh. Because he purposed to show the riches of his glory. By showing mercy.

By showing undeserved. Contra opposite deserved. Kindness. God bears, patiently with those. Who deserve breath. And it's not telling about him at all. That we would respond to hearing that by saying, Aha. It's god's fault. I'm wicked. That's what the kind of question in verse 19 implies. Why does he still find fault for who has resisted his Will.

In other words, i know that i am evil. I know that i have intended evil. I know that i have done the evil that i intended. But because god intended to do good. Through the evil. That i Intended and did because i am evil. I am gonna call god, the evil one.

That's the logic of verse 19. And for us because we still have so much fleshliness. Left in ourselves. We can even see. Sadly. Some of that logic, that idea should be so foreign to us. So disgusting to us. So obviously wicked. That we would do like he did. And Chapter 3 with.

Another one of these. A statements that He's heard and responds to his preaching and say of the ones who say, Our hearts should. Uh, should immediately respond to first 19 by saying their condemnation is just Who speak this way. And that's actually helpful for us. To consider. The, the question.

Of what god is doing with the wicked. Uh, from back in chapter 2, Beginning a chapter 2.

Where he? Uh, he says verse two, we know that the judgment of god is according to truth. Against those who practice such things. I mean that should be the obvious answer. To verse 19. And so the question becomes not. Why does god still find fault? But how can it be that god has not destroyed us yet?

And you continues in chapter 2. Do you think this? Oh man. You who judge those practicing such things and doing the same doing the same that you will escape, the judgment of god. For what's one of the reasons why he thinks he will escape the judgment of god? Well because the judgment of god hasn't fallen yet.

So verse 4, Or do you despise? The riches. Of his goodness just like riches of his glory, which is later. In our passage this morning. But do you despise the richest of his goodness forbearance and long suffering? Not knowing that, the goodness of god, leads you to repentance. But in accordance with your hardness, And your impenitent heart.

You are treasuring up for yourself wrath. And the day of wrath and revelation. Of the righteous judgment of god is the same thing here, isn't it? In chapter 9. God is enduring. With patients with long suffering vessels, prepared for destruction. And how are they vessels? Prepared for destruction. Not simply by god creating them and saying, haha, i'm destroying them.

No, it's righteous wrath. It's righteous judgment. Their created willing creatures. And they will evil. And they do evil. And so the judgment of god against them is a righteous judgment. Those, are you say, how can it be? That he's long suffering with them. Long suffering or patient, not just patient.

But good. And kind. And we know that the answer in this passage is that He is long suffering with them for the sake of showing mercy to the elect. To the vessels that are prepared for mercy. Vessels, by the way. Which are not inherently of themselves. Of a different nature.

They're of the same nature. It's one lump. In the in the illustration that uses in the image that he uses. And yet, god, Wanting to show the riches of his glory. The riches of his glory in the vessels prepared. For mercy. He does. He wants to show Verse 22.

He wants to show is wrath. His wrath is right. Against sinners. You know, he shows his wrath against the sin of vessels prepared, for mercy too, doesn't he? There's no greater display. Then the show of god's wrath at the cross. How itself forever? It's not going to be as great, a display.

Of God's wrath. That's what happened. When christ the god, man. The son bore the wrath of god for the sins of those. With whom he had united himself. With whom he had identified. Himself. And so it's right for god. To walk to show his wrath. It's right to god.

It's right to god, to make his power known. Indeed, for holy angels. And for sanctified and glorified saints. It is a generosity of god to make these things known. Because the knowledge of god and the knowledge of his glory, and the knowledge of his attributes, Is the greatest blessing and the greatest good and the greatest joy.

That we will have. That a creature can have and we will have it forever. And so, it's not just Technically. Legally right for god to want to display his wrath and justice. Just as much as it is for god, to want to display his mercy. It's faithfulness. It's goodness.

But it's also generous of god. To want to display these things. There is a generosity to the creature. In the creators. Displaying his own character. But here. One display of his character. Is being. Put off, it's being Uh, patiently endured with much long suffering to use the language of verse 22, why?

Because, He wants to make known the riches of his glory. On the vessels of mercy. You see the display of his wrath and his justice. On those who don't believe. On those who are rightly hardened. And you notice that the hardening even is a leaving to themselves. It's their hard hearts.

It's their impendant hearts. From chapter 2. Um, that wrath Rightly falls upon them there. When his wrath falls upon ours and It falls upon our sin. In our union with christ. And so wrath and mercy are both displayed more fully at the cross than they. Then they are in any other place.

And yet for unending age as we who were atoned for and redeemed, At the cross, will be these containers. In which the Mercy of god has put on display. And it's the riches of his glory, then. That are displayed in the vessels prepared for mercy. Because the riches of his glory are displayed in his son.

And whether it's the expression of his wrath upon our sin, Displayed on his son at the cross. Or whether it's the display of his mercy in us, who have not only been redeemed by the sun and you united to the sun, but even conformed, to the image of the sun, By the time that we are glorified.

That display of his mercy. Will be forever and ever in jesus forever and ever. In god, the son. And as we discussed last week, this is one of the reasons why Um, This is one of the reasons why it's more appropriate to refer. Uh, to god's love. As inherent to himself.

Because within god, there can be no hatred. Apart from the creature. There can be no wrath, there can be no hatred. God's wrath. Is not innate to himself. That is an expression of his holiness. It is a right expression. Of his full devotion. His full adoration, his full fellowship and commitment within the godhead.

Father, son, and holy spirit. So, when there are creatures, And they do despise god. His wrath is a. Perfect, and right. Application or expression of that perfection within himself. But god's love. Is something that does exist within the godhead. From all eternity. And when we are brought into that love By the electing mercy.

And the redemption. That is carried out in that mercy. And that is applied in that mercy and that is completed when we are glorified in that mercy. It is a display of something. Outside of god or an application expression. Of something. That us, that is inherent. To who he is in himself.

So that, as we've said before, The scripture says god is love. But it does not say god is wrath. Even though his wrath is a right expression, Of one of his perfections. And so we have that he might make known the riches. Of his glory. On the vessels of mercy.

And so you see the The emphasis, the weight. In the biblical language here is on verse 23. And so, the amazing. True question. Is not. Why does he still find fault? But it's How can he? Be enduring with long suffering. Vessels prepared for wrath. And the answer is because of the greatness of his mercy.

And the brightness of his desire to show the richest of his glory in mercy, And even has long suffering with the reprobate. They ought to have responded to with repentance. Don't you know that the goodness kindness of god leads you to repentance. He said, In chapter 2. What is according to your hard?

And impenitent heart. Not according to, to Some mechanism. In the decree of god that took away the liberty of your will. No. It's according to your heart and your will. And the righteous judgment, the judgment of god when it falls upon you will be righteous. And it will fall upon you.

Even for trying to suggest that your sin is god's fault. In verse 19. So, well, should we Receive the rebuke if our hearts ever think, like this or sympathize with those

who think like this. Indeed, a man. Who are you? To reply against god. We all deserved. To be hated.

But he, Prepared. Not only. For the display of the riches of his glory. But here's how great the mercy is verse 23. He actually prepares vessels that deserved wrath. From the same lump. He prepared them for their own. Glory and diverse 23. How great is the mercy? Of this god.

To sinners. On the way, a sinner should respond to it is not saying why does he still find voltage the way, it's in a response should respond to this as by saying, How great is the mercy of this? God. And how completely i deserved his wrath. And yet that which is in him, is greater than that, which is in me.

And i will abandon myself who deserves all this wrath, and who can do nothing about it. And i will rest entirely upon him. Belong to. Even the coming to him. He gifts. So that i am able to. Wait, reject our sin, we reject our independent life. And rejoice. To be joined to jesus and belong to him.

And live a life that comes from him. By his spirit and us. Knowing that. So great does the mercy of god, that not only does he make known the riches of his glory. But even prepares us for glory. Those whom he justified. He also glorified. An amazingly. The lord has done this, not just in.

One case, which one case. Would be a glorious miracle of his mercy. But many cases a multitude of cases. Many of the jews. Paul himself being a Jew. Because he's gonna argue and Um, and a little bit. And even many of the gentiles. And so verse 19. Um, begins in this.

The potter clay section. With this wicked question. From hard hearts. Why does he still find fault? Trying to make it seem like goddess. Stingy and strict mean. But it ends with Verse 24 consideration of The actual multitudes. That god has actually saving. Even though they deserve every bit of the wrath, That the ones we're asking and the question in verse 19 are asking How great?

Is the glory of god. And how great is the display of that glory in his mercy? Amen, let's pray. Our father in heaven. We pray that you'd make us to know you as glorious. And to see and respond to ourselves rightly. And to see and respond to you rightly.

So that we would continually be amazed at your mercy. And rejoice to belong to you. And praise your name. And confess your rightness. And your faithfulness. Hundredness. Forgive us for, when Our allegiance to man and our remaining fleshliness. Removes consideration of who we are and who you are. And enters into, Logical maneuvering, that casts doubt.

On the greatness of your mercy and the justice of your wrath. Oh lord. We are Ashamed that there is so much of this still in our minds and hearts, And we look forward to the day when you have cleansed us from all in righteousness. So that we may praise, you rightly forever.

Help us to do so more now. We ask in jesus name. Amen.