

“The Potter & The Clay”
Romans 9:19-24

Introduction:

1. Please Turn Back With Me:
 - In Your Bibles To:
 - Romans 9 - Where We've Been Looking At:
 - The Sovereignty Of God:
 - Through The Lense Of:
 - His Chosen People:
 - The People Of Israel!
2. Because - Starting Back In Chapter 8:
 - And All Throughout Chapter 9:
 - We Find Words That Describe:
 - God's Active Involvement:
 - Not Only In Matters:
 - Of Life - But Especially:
 - In The Matter Of Salvation!
- Words Like:
 - Foreknowledge & Predestination!
 - Purpose & Calling!
 - Election & Will!
 - The Meanings Of Which:
 - Are Still Difficult For Us To Understand!
3. But The Truth Is Clear!
 - God Is Sovereign:
 - Even In Salvation:
 - As He Said To Moses:
 - 9:15 - “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion!”
 - Now - Since This Is Such A Difficult Truth:
 - For Us To Comprehend:
 - The Apostle Paul Anticipates The Kinds Of:
 - Questions & Objections:
 - That Will Come Up!
 - Perhaps - As He Was Wrestling:
 - With This Truth In His Own Mind & Heart:
 - These Questions:
 - Were His Questions!
4. So - The First Question:
 - He Deals With Is This:
 - Is God Faithful?
 - Faithful To His Promises & To His People:
 - Even Though His People:
 - Did Not Believe In His Word?
 - In 9:6 - He Answers:
 - “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel!”
 - In Other Words - God ***Is*** Faithful:
 - In ***All*** Of His Promises:
 - To Those Whom Those Promises:
 - Were Intended!
5. The Second Question:
 - We Looked At Last Week:
 - And That Is:
 - Is God Fair?
 - Is God Just:
 - To Choose Some & Pass Over Others:
 - In Order To Save & Show His Mercy?

- In 9:15-18 - He Reminds Us:
 - Of What The Scripture Says!
 - And - When It Comes To The Salvation Of Sinners:
 - Paul's Conclusion Is This:
 - 9:18 - "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth!"
- So - God Is Both Just **And** Merciful!
 - If God Was Only Just:
 - All Of Us Would Remain Hardened:
 - Against God:
 - In Our Sin!

6. But That Then Leads To:

- A Third Question - Which We Find In:
 - 9:19 - And That Is:
 - Is God At Fault?
 - "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"
- The Heart Of This Question:
 - Concerns The Age-Old Relationship:
 - Between:
 - The Sovereignty Of God - And:
 - The Responsibility Of Man!
 - Because - If We Can't Resist:
 - **God's** Ultimate Will Concerning Our Salvation:
 - Then - How Can God Hold:
 - **Us** Responsible For Our Will:
 - To Sin Against Him?

7. Another Way To Put This Is:

- If God Is Sovereign:
 - And Allowed Sin To Enter Into This World:
 - Then How Can We Be Held Accountable:
 - For Our Sin:
 - Against Him - And All Of Its Effects!
 - Like His Judgment & Our Punishment?
- Wouldn't This Make:
 - God The One:
 - Who Is At Fault - And Not Man?
 - Not Me?

8. Perhaps You Have Wondered The Same Thing!

- Perhaps You Still Do!
 - But - You Must Not Do So:
 - In The Spirit Of This Objection!
- Because - Based On The Way:
 - The Apostle Paul Answers This Question:
 - It Is Clear That It Is:
 - **Not** Just A Question:
 - **To** God! But:
 - **Against** God!
- So - To Answer This Question:
 - Paul Asks Some Questions Of His Own:
 - In The Form Of A Rebuke!
 - But Then - In The Process:
 - He Puts An Even Greater Emphasis On:
 - The Sovereignty Of God In The Salvation Of Men!
- And We Find This In:
 - 9:19-24 - "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? / 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? / 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one

vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? / 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: / 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, / 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

- So - When You Struggle To See:
 - The Compatibility Of These Two Truths:
 - The Sovereignty Of God - And:
 - The Responsibility Of Man!
 - You Need To First Consider:

1. ***The Position Of God!***

- Which Is What We Find In:
 - 9:20a - "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"
 - You May Ask:
 - "Who Is God?"
 - To Hold Me Accountable:
 - For What He Himself Allowed!
 - But - God - Through Paul:
 - Asks - "Who Are You?"
 - Who Are You:
 - To Question God?
 - You Need To Remember:
- The True Nature:
 - Of Your Reality!
 - In Paul's Question:
 - He Provides The Answer!
 - You Know What You Are?
 - You Are But A Man!
 - "O Man!"
 - And - As Man:
 - You Don't Have The Capacity:
 - To Understand The "Deep Things Of God!"
 - The Matter Of God's Sovereignty In Man's Salvation:
 - Is Way Above Your "Pay Grade!" And Infinitely So!
 - You Also Need To Remember:
- The True Nature:
 - Of Your Response!
 - "Who Art Thou That Repliest Against God?"
 - God Welcomes:
 - Honest Questions!
 - Questions That Are Asked:
 - From A Humble Heart!
 - But - This Question - This Objection:
 - 9:19 - "Why Doth He Yet Find Fault?"
 - Comes From:
 - A Hardened Heart!
 - And So - In Response:
 - Paul Deals With The Spirit Of This Question!
 - You Have No Right:
 - To Question God In This Way!
 - He Does Not Answer To You!
 - Instead - God Is Always:
 - True & Just & Right - And:
 - You Answer To Him!
 - So - The Bigger Question Is This:
 - Are You Coming To God:
 - As His Challenger - Or:
 - As His Child?

- Remember The Position Of God!
- Psalm 100:3 - "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves!"
- But Then - You Also Need To Consider:

2. *The Purpose Of God!*

- Which Is What We Find In:
 - 9:20b - "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"
 - Paul Draws From & Quotes:
 - Isaiah 29:16 - "Shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"
 - Paul Wants Us To Think About:
 - The Relationship Between:
 - A Creator & His/Her Creation!
 - A Designer & His/Her Design!
 - **IE:** Think About The Things You Might Make! Ladies - Food! Men - Projects Around The House! Children - Art Projects!
 - What Would You Think:
 - If That Pot You Are Stirring:
 - Talked Back - Or:
 - That Nail You Are Hammering:
 - Said Stop - What Are You Doing To Me?
 - This Is Obviously Ridiculous & Facetious!
 - Well - In The Same Way:
 - It Is Ridiculous For:
 - Man To Question His Maker!
 - God Has The Absolute Right:
 - To Form You & Make You:
 - "Thus!"
 - And This Includes Everything About You!
 - God Can Use:
- Whatever Materials:
 - He Wants!
 - And - He Did - Didn't He?
 - Genesis 2:7 - "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground!"
 - And - What Did God Say To Adam:
 - After He Disobeyed & Sinned Against God?
 - Genesis 3:19 - "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return!"
 - You Have No Right:
 - To Question God:
 - "Why Hast Thou Made Me Thus?"
 - Also - God Can Use:
- Whatever Methods:
 - He Wants!
 - And - He Did - Didn't He?
 - When - In Genesis 2:7 - He "Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul!"
 - And - Not Only That:
 - How Did He Then Form Eve?
 - Genesis 2:21-22 - "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; / And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man!"
 - So - You Have No Right:
 - To Question God:
 - "Why Hast Thou Made Me Thus?"
 - As A Man / As A Woman!
 - Though Today Many Do! **IE:**

- But - We Need To Remember:
 - The Purpose Of God!
 - He Is Our Creator - And We:
 - Are His Creation!
 - And - You Need To:
 - “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth!” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)
 - But Then - You Also Need To Consider:

3. *The Prerogative Of God!*

- Which Is What We Find Next In:
 - 9:20 - “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”
 - Here - Paul Draws From:
 - A Very Common Illustration In The Old Testament - And The Relationship Between:
 - A Potter & The Clay!
 - And - The Point Paul Makes:
 - Is Clear!
 - “The Potter” **Does** Have “Power Over The Clay!”
 - **Complete** Power!
 - There’s:
 - The Right Of The Potter:
 - To Do Whatever He Chooses To Do:
 - With The Clay That Is On:
 - His Potters Wheel!
 - “Power” - Right / Authority!
 - It’s His Clay!
 - He Either Bought It - Or:
 - He Dug It Up Himself!
 - It’s Now In His Hands:
 - To Do With It As He Sees Fit!
 - And - This Is Essentially:
 - What We Are & What You Are:
 - Before God!
 - Job Understood This:
 - Job 10:8-9 - “Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. / Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?”
 - Isaiah Understood This:
 - In Isaiah 64:8 - “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand!”
 - And So - There’s Also:
 - The Reason Of The Potter:
 - To Do Whatever He Chooses To Do:
 - With The Clay!
 - “Of The Same Lump” Paul Says:
 - He Can “Make One Vessel Unto Honor, And Another Unto Dishonor!”
 - Though - Both Vessels Are Useful:
 - One - He Can Make:
 - For Special Use - While The Other:
 - He Can Make:
 - For Common Use!
 - But Its All Based On:
 - The Prerogative Of The Potter!
 - And - This Is True:
 - Of God Himself!
 - And - We Need To Remember That:
 - He Is The Potter - And:
 - We Are His Clay!

- **IE**: Playdough!

- And - The Lump:

- That We Are Made Of:

- Is Like The Clay That Jeremiah Saw:

- Being Worked In "Potter's House" In Jeremiah 18:1-6!

- "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, / Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. / 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. / 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make [it]. / 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, / 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay [is] in the potter's hand, so [are] ye in mine hand, O house of Israel!"

- And - So It Is With Us!

- Because Of Our Sin - We Have Become Marred Clay!

- And God Can Do Whatever He Chooses To Do With Us!

- Some - He Will Turn Into:

- A Trophy Of His Grace:

- By Showing Us Mercy!

- Others - He Will Leave Marred:

- As We See In 9:22-24 - Which Shows To Us:

4. ***The Plan Of God!***

- Where Paul Asks:

- "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: / And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, / Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

- Now - This Question Is Sort-Of An Incomplete Question!

- But - I Think The Idea Is This:

- Can You Still Reply Against God & Will You Still Accuse Him Of Being At Fault:

- "If God" Chooses:

- To Suffer With:

- Some Vessels:

- Marred With Sin!

- But Also Chooses:

- To Save Others?

- So - Even Among People Today:

- From The "Same" Sinful "Lump" - There Are:

- Two Kinds Of "Vessels!"

- There Are - The "Vessels Of Wrath!"

- But - How Does God Deal With Them?

- He Chooses To:

- Suffer With Them:

- With - 9:22 - "Much Longsuffering!"

- Who Are These:

- "Vessels Of Wrath?"

- They Are Sinners:

- Who Have Been Hardened By & In Their Own Sin!

- Like Pharaoh:

- They Hardened Themselves:

- In Rebellion Against God!

- But - Also Like Pharaoh:

- They Were Hardened By God:

- In Recompense For Their Sin!

- But - Think About:

- How God Deals With:

- These "Vessels Of Wrath!"

- See:

- God's Desire!

- We Must Never Forget That:
 - God Is A Holy God!
 - Who Cannot Stand Any Sin:
 - In His Presence!
- And So - God Has A Holy Desire:
 - To - 9:22 - "Show His Wrath & To Make His Power Known!"
 - And - God Is "Willing" To Do This! Its Something He Wants To Do! Its Something His Holy Nature Demands For Him To Do!
 - But - Then We Also See:
- God's Delay!
 - He "Endured With Much Longsuffering The Vessels Of Wrath!"
 - So - Even In Wrath:
 - God Remembers Mercy!
 - Even To Sinners:
 - God Reveals Himself As "Longsuffering, And Of Great Mercy, Forgiving Iniquity And Transgression, And By No Means Clearing The Guilty!" (Numbers 14:18)
 - God's Longsuffering Is Seen:
 - In The Life Of Sinners - But Also:
 - In The Life Of The World!
 - Can Anyone Blame God, When He Has Been So Longsuffering To Sinners Like Us?
 - Also See:
 - God's Decision!
 - Because - Even God's Patience & Longsuffering:
 - Has Its Limit!
 - These "Vessels Of Wrath" Are Then "Fitted For Destruction!"
 - God Only Punishes:
 - Those Who Deserve:
 - To Be Punished!
 - So - Is God At Fault:
 - If Sinners Reject:
 - His Longsuffering Toward Them?
 - And - By Doing So:
 - Are More & More "Fitted" And Prepared For:
 - The Judgment They Will Face?
 - But Then - Further:
 - There Are - The "Vessels Of Mercy!"
 - And - How Does God Deal With Them?
 - He Chooses To:
 - Save Them!
 - 9:23 - "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory!"
 - Who Are These:
 - "Vessels Of Mercy?"
 - They Are Sinners:
 - Who Have Been Softened From Their Sin:
 - By The Gracious Hands Of The Potter!
 - Like Abraham & Isaac & Jacob:
 - God Softened Them:
 - Through His Mercy & Grace!
 - So That:
 - Like Abraham & Isaac & Jacob:
 - They Submitted Themselves:
 - And Humbled Themselves:
 - Before Him As Their Lord & Savior!
 - And - Think About:
 - How God Deals With:

- These “Vessels Of Mercy!”
- Think About:
 - How God Deals With You:
 - If You Are Trusting In Jesus Christ Today!
- The Willingness Of God’s Mercy!
 - 9:23 - “That He Might Make Known!”
 - God Wants To Show Himself:
 - And Make Himself Known!
 - Not Just:
 - His Wrath & Power & Holiness:
 - But His Mercy & Grace:
 - Even Toward Undeserving Sinners Like Us!
 - Also See:
- The Wealth Of God’s Mercy!
 - What Does He Want To “Make Known?”
 - 9:23 - “The Riches Of His Glory!”
 - God Is A Glorious God!
 - But - What Is The Greatest Display Of His Glory?
 - As Paul Wrote In:
 - 2 Corinthians 4:6 - “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!”
 - The “Riches Of His Glory” Is Found:
 - In Jesus Christ!
 - **IE:** And Just Like The Brightness Of A Light In A Dark Room - So Does Light Of Jesus Light Up Our Dark Hearts!
 - Also See:
- The Wideness Of God’s Mercy!
 - God Sought To “Make Known The Riches Of His Glory” - To:
 - 9:24 - “Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”
 - After All - Didn’t Jesus Himself Say:
 - John 8:12 - “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life!”
- And So - It Is Upon Those:
 - “Vessels Of Mercy” - That God Chooses:
 - To Shine The Light Of His Glory Upon:
 - 9:23 - “Which He Had Afore Prepared Unto Glory!”
 - And This Makes Your Future, As God’s Own Child, Bright & Sure!
- So - Is God At Fault:
 - If Sinners Are Shown:
 - His Mercy & His Glory?
 - Isn’t It Jesus Who Came:
 - “To Seek And To Save That Which Was Lost?” (Luke 19:10)

Conclusion:

1. So - Even Though:
 - It May Be Difficult - Even Impossible:
 - For Us To Reconcile All Of This:
 - In Our Minds - That Does Not Mean:
 - That It Is Irreconcilable - Or:
 - Irrational!
2. Which Is Why:
 - God Himself Says This:
 - To Both Vessels Of Mercy & Vessels Of Wrath:
 - Isaiah 55:6-9 - “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: / Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. / For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. / For as the

heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts!”

3. So - Do Not Respond:
 - To These Truths:
 - About God’s Sovereignty In Salvation:
 - As A Challenger:
 - To God!
 - Instead - Won’t You Respond:
 - As The Creation Of God!
 - As The Clay Of God!
 - And Even As - The Called Of God!
4. So - Even Though:
 - God Is Sovereign!
 - You Are Still Responsible:
 - For Your Response To Him:
 - As Your God, Your Creator:
 - Your Potter, And Your Savior!

- * How Will You Respond To God Today:
- As Your Creator? Will You Bow?
 - As Your Potter? Will You Submit?
 - As Your Savior? Will You Believe?

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