

## Romans #25 - Vintage Faith The Future Remnant

- If you've got a Bible go to the book of Romans, it's in the New Testament, we're in chapter 11. We're taking the better part of the year going through this amazing, epic, incredible historical book of the Bible. And as we're in Romans chapter 11, I was trying to figure out this week, how do we make it interesting? Because what Paul is talking about is the history of the Jewish people and he was Jewish so it meant a great deal to him. But most of us are Gentiles were non Jews, it kind of feels like you're going to a family reunion for somebody else's family, it's hard to really know what's going on. And then it dawned on me cause I love you I was praying for you this week. God's word is not old, it's eternal, that means it's always timely because it's timeless. And what Paul is talking about in Romans chapter 11 is exactly what we are experiencing and dealing with both personally and also nationally today. Let me set the stage, so because we were made to worship, to glorify, to live for a God who is greater than us, there's something in us that longs to be part of something bigger and better. And so we have these loyalties, these allegiances, these alliances, for some people they're totally devoted to their nation and that's patriotism. Some people are totally devoted to their political party, that is political party adoration. Some people are absolutely committed to their religious traditions and their routines and rituals. Some people are committed to their identity politics, their sex, their gender, their ideology, or their preferences. Some people are totally utterly committed to their family, no matter what family sticks together, family defends, protects, stands up for one another. And Paul had all of these. So his nation was Israel, his political party was called the Pharisees. He's a guy so that's his identity, in addition, his family or the Hebrew people. So these are the people and things that he has the highest allegiance to until his life totally changes and he meets Jesus Christ. And then he demonstrates for us the difference between people that we love and Jesus who we are loyal to. And what happens in our day is the same thing that happened in his day. What if your nation? What if your political party? What if your identity? What if your religious tradition? What if your family is not in obedience to Jesus? What if they are adversarial or indifference to Jesus Christ? Well, then you've got a decision to make. Number one, you're going to side with people against Jesus. And he told us in this section of Romans, that's called apostasy. That's where you said you were with Jesus but then you turned your back on him to be popular, to be accepted, to be received by people who are opposed to him or against him. The other option is to remain loyal to Jesus, still love people, but remain loyal to Jesus. And if you do that he says you're part of something called the remnant. This is the little group within the big group. These are the people who face all of the pressure to conform. And in our day, this is in almost every sphere a great demanding pressure to change what you believe, to change who you are loyal to, to change what you are ultimately in allegiance to I'll give you an example. So recently somebody came up to me and they're having a conflict with somebody else. And they said, "Pastor Mark, I need you to cover my back. I need you to take my side." And here's what I said, I said, "I can't do that." I said, "I never take the side of people, I take the side of what's right." My hope and prayer and goal is not to be loyal to my nation, not to be loyal to my political party, not to be loyal to my religious tradition, not to be loyal to my identity politics, not to be loyal to my family, but to be loyal to my Jesus who is overall people in things. And if you're on

the right side, then I'm for you. If you're on the wrong side, I can't be for you because I'm for him. And it doesn't mean I don't love you but it does mean you need to change, that's called repentance. You need to stop doing what is wrong and start doing what is right. And this is what we find ourselves in. How many of you are feeling this nationally, politically, religiously, morally, sexually? How many of you were and you're like, "You just described my whole year. That was all of my classes." Lots of pressure to go apostate. And here's what Paul is saying, "Love everyone, but loyalty is ultimately totally exclusively to Jesus." Because it's not about who we're for it's about what we're for and we're for whatever is for Jesus. So that being said, he's gonna talk in specific about a group of people, the Jewish people, the Hebrew people. God started his work on the earth with a guy named Abraham showed up and said, "I'm gonna give you a son." He saved Abraham. I'm gonna give you a son for him is gonna come a nation through the nation are gonna come the prophets, the priests, the Kings, the Old Testament. Through this nation is gonna come Jesus Christ who's gonna be Jewish, but he's gonna be the blessing and savior of all the nations of the earth. And then Jesus comes in many of the first Christians were Jewish, including Paul. And then by the end of the first century, the majority of Christians, their Gentile, not Jew and a lot of the Jewish people that hate Jesus. And the question is, well, what is God doing? And did God feel? And how does this work? And so he opens this concept that I like to call the mystery box. So I wanna talk really fast. You guys excited? You should be. This is awesome, this is awesome. We're in the Bible Romans 11, 25 through 27 the mystery box. Lest you be wise in your own sight. The key is this God decides who is wise we don't decide. You can go to college and have a lot of knowledge but not a lot of wisdom. You've been to a college. There's a lot of knowledge, not a lot of wisdom. Not a lot of people walking around knowing how life works. You can have more degrees in Fahrenheit and zero wisdom. And what happens is we're wise on our own sight, wisdom is determined in the sight of God. God decides who is wise it is not we who decide. Less you be wise your own sight, I do not want you to be aware of this mystery. There's our big word, mystery. Brothers, he's talking to fellow Christians. A partial hardening has come upon Israel. Some of God's people, the Hebrew people, the Jewish people, they've hardened their heart toward God. But this is until the fullness of the Gentiles. Those of us who are not Jewish we're Gentiles that's us, has come in and in this way, one of the most debated verses in the whole New Testament we'll get into at the moment, all Israel will be saved as it is written. In quotes, I think it's Isaiah. The deliverer Jesus, we need to be delivered, will come from Zion that's the kingdom of God, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob, and this will be my covenant, my relationship, my promise with them when I take away their sins. So here's what he's saying in the Old Testament, in the old covenant, before the coming of Jesus, the majority of people who were believers in God, worshipers of God, followers of God, servants of God, they were primarily Jewish people. So Abraham is the beginning of the Jewish people. And so the nation of Israel, Jewish, the holidays, Jewish, the feast, the festivals, Jewish, the language of the Old Testament, Jewish, the priest, Jewish, the prophets, Jewish, the Kings, Jewish, see a theme. There's a lot of Jewish we had salad Jewish and Jewish for dessert. It's a lot of Jewish going on in the Old Testament, but there were some Gentiles those of us who are non Jew, there were included. So there's a country called Nineveh, really bad guys. And God calls a prophet named Jonah to go preach to the Ninevites. He's very unwilling. So God throws him in a fish and pukes him up on a beach. Moral of the story is do what God says.

Nonetheless, he gets out of the fish, he walks into town, he's a reluctant resistant prophet. He only says a few words and there's this massive revival from the king down, hundreds of thousands of people get saved. All of a sudden he's a guy who's really frustrated and he's an accidental Billy Graham. And he's very frustrated about that. But a whole bunch of Gentiles got saved. In addition, when God's people went into the nation of Egypt and they were delivered by God, it says that many of the Egyptians who previously worshiped the pagan false gods, they followed God's people of Israel because they converted to the worship of the God of Abraham which ultimately is Jesus Christ. There's also some Gentiles in the Old Testament that are named like Rahab who was a prostitute that got saved and God loved her and she loved God. There's another girl named Ruth, the whole book of the Bible is named after her. She comes from a Moabite line that is the product of incest and she too is a Gentile. The point is in the Old Testament, it's mainly Jewish but there are some Gentiles included. By the end of the first century when the apostle Paul writes the book of Romans, the majority of Christians are Gentile not Jewish, the teams have flipped. It used to be mainly Jewish, a little bit of Gentile now it's mainly Gentile, a little bit of Jewish. In our day this has continued that we have been grafted in he said previously to where today in the nation of Israel there's about 7 million people who live in the nation of Israel, and the number of worshipers of Jesus on planet earth is a few billion. Most of us are Gentiles within the nation of Israel a huge percentage tragically are atheist, it's one of the most populous atheistic countries by percentage, after the Holocaust they determined that there was no God. A percentage of them are reformed Jews which means liberal or progressive or wrong, any of those words work together, they're synonyms. And then this is gonna happen for an hour so just buckle up. So we should have seat belts on these chairs by the way, that would be a good idea. And we should have oxygen masks that deploy for the religious people, I'm gonna talk about that with the board and see if I can get some funding for that. Nonetheless, what happens then what was I talking about? The Jews, you got to give me more than that. Come on, what was it?

- [Woman] Reformed Jews.

- Okay there was Orthodox Jews, thank you very much. There's one homeschool mom that was taking notes and knows exactly where I left off thank you very much. So there are some in Israel who are the Orthodox Jews they're still trying to do with the Old Testament says even though they can't cause they have no temple priest or sacrifice, I don't know what they're done. And then there's the reformed Jews who are just the liberal, progressive, or wrong as I said, and then there's also a high percentage who are atheist. But out of that, there is a small percentage of believers who do love Jesus and they're Jewish people in the nation of Israel and they're part of the remnant. They're still waiting for the second coming of Jesus. And the question that Paul raises, and it means a lot to him because the Jewish people were both his nation and his family. The nation of Israel, that was his nation. How many of you love our nation or you're kind of worried about it? Our nation is a mess. Billy Graham once said, "If God doesn't judge the United States of America, he owes Sodom and Gomorrah and apology." That's where we're at and that was a while ago. It's not gotten better, okay? It's not gotten better. And so ultimately this was his nation he had concerns about his nation, the Hebrew people were also his family. How many of

you you see where your family's out or going or extended family? And you're concerned you're like, it's not looking good, I'm very concerned. And especially if you meet Jesus, now you see all the people in your nation, in your family who don't know Jesus. You're like, man, I wish they knew Jesus, is there any hope for them? What is God's plan for them? And so what he's looking at is he's looking into the future and this is prophecy 25% of your Bible. Am I talking fast?

- [Woman 1] Yeah.

- I got a lot to say So I'm gonna auction off the Bible verses for an hour, that's what we're gonna do here. If this doesn't work out, I'm gonna sell stuff as an auctioneer, that's what I'm gonna do. I'm really excited, I got a lot to say. If you want you to go to [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com) we'll post the sermon, the transcript, the notes, daily devotions, get what you pay for it's all free, you're welcome. Nonetheless, try and keep up. So where we find ourselves, he's looking into the future, which is prophecy. Prophecy is God telling us the future that he rules and reigns over. 25% of your Bible at the time of its writing was prophetic in nature anticipating future events that God was promising. Paul hears prophesying. He's looking into the views like, okay, God, I know there was a lot of Jewish people who love Jesus and now there's a lot of Gentiles, before Jesus comes back, what's it gonna look like at the end? Is there any hope for the Jews? Is there gonna be some sort of great revival or miraculous turnaround? And he says this, I think it's in 11:26. All Israel will be saved. And this is where one of the biggest debates erupts in the whole New Testament. And there are people called theologians they're scholars, they have PhDs, and they go to war over this verse. Don't worry, nobody's gonna get hurt. If you've seen these guys, they're not capable of injuring anyone. They're not. These are nerds. They're gonna throw a syllogism at each other but not punches so everybody's gonna be fine. Nonetheless, what happens with the theologians they all start fighting over what this verse means. It could mean a whole bunch of things. I always say anytime you get four scholars, you get seven opinions. So there's a whole debate about this. I think the two most likely candidates are number one, before Jesus comes back at the end of time, all Israel will be saved. It could be that God just says, "I'm gonna save all the Jewish people that are alive right now." Could God do that?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Yes He could do that. And if he does, great God's God he gets to do whatever he wants to do. That's one of the benefits of being God you kind of get to do what you want. So he could save everybody who is physically Jewish. The other interpretation is that there are those who are physically Israel, those who are spiritually Israel those who are born of Abraham, those who are born again in Jesus Christ who is the God of Abraham. He began this section, Romans nine through 11 as a unit of thought. He begins this section in Romans 9:6 not all who are descended from Israel, belong to Israel. What he's distinguishing between are those who are physical descendants of Abraham and those who are spiritual. Those who would hold that position would say at the end of time, God is going to have a massive revival, he's going to elect, choose predestined people. That's the context of Romans nine through 11. Those are the big themes we've been studying together. That at the end, he's going to add to the kingdom before the

second coming of the king a lot of Jewish people. Let me give you an analogy and what he's saying here, don't be proud. So let me use a sports analogy. How many of you like sports? You like sports? Me too. I didn't play any, but I like watching. I'm not very flexible. If I drop something, I order another one on Amazon, I'm not super flexible. But I do like watching sports and what sometimes happens in a sport is that there's somebody who's in the starting lineup, and then maybe they disqualify themselves. They do something so they get taken out of the game and maybe then they have to sit out for some games so somebody else comes off the bench and takes their position. This is kind of what he's saying in human history that God has done with the Jewish people. They were on the field, and then some of them kind of they hardened their heart, disqualified themselves, they're off the field. So us Gentiles were in playing the position. He says, "But don't get arrogant and proud, be humble, be wise cause eventually, God's gonna bring the Jewish people back on the field and they're gonna finish the game." And what this means is there is a great hope for the nation of Israel in the end. How many of you watch a sporting event but you watched to the very end because you never know? You just never know, right? You never know at the end it could just flip in an instant. Also momentum shifts, oh my gosh, that was crazy. Look at the fumble and the pick six and the on-site deck. Anything could happen. And what it seems like God has planned for the Jewish people some crazy turnaround at the end of history. You're like, oh, they don't love Jesus. Oh my golly, there's a real mass revival coming. We need to love the nation of Israel, we need to pray for the people of Israel. They are the people that God brought the word of God and the son of God through into human history and God apparently is not done with them. And then the question is, well God, how are you gonna do this? Where are you gonna do this? When are you gonna do this? And he introduces a very important word. I am fancy so I brought an aid for my instruction. So this is a box, what does it say on it?

- [Congregation] Mystery.

- Mystery, mystery box. So what he's saying is there's a lot of mystery and what you need to have in your Bible study is a mystery box. The mystery box is where you put things that you're just not sure about. So what Paul says is this is all a bit of a mystery. It's not known, it's known by God, it's not known by us. We can't fully understand it, God's got it all figured out. And so what happens is when you become a Christian, when you first become a Christian what's in the mystery box? Almost everything. Almost everything. And then what happens over time is, you study some things you're like, oh I think I understand that I can take that out of the mystery box, and now I understand it. As well as how many of you have been a Christian for a very long time? Very long time. Let's do this, 20 years raise your hand. 30 years, 40 years. 50 years, we gotta hurry because these people can't keep their hands on much longer. They're not young, 50 years. Do we have 60 years in the house? 55? 60? How many years?

- [Woman 2] Since I was eight at 74.

- 74 been saved since she was eight. That's awesome. That's awesome. For those of you that are older saints do you still have questions in your mystery box?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- You do. Sometimes when you get older, you put stuff back in. God, I thought I had it figured out I do not, I do not. And so everybody's got to decide what goes in the mystery box, what stays in the mystery box. So let's do this. You give me some potential issues and I'll tell you whether or not they belong in the mystery box. Give me an issue.

- [Man] Baptism.

- Baptism. Okay, so there are two teams like the Crips and the bloods. So the way this works, there are the pedobaptists and the credobaptists. The pedobaptists will baptize babies usually by sprinkling because if you submerge them, it's abusive. And then there are the credobaptists who will only baptize people who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, and we do that not by sprinkling like we do with the baby, but by immersion, should that go in the mystery box?

- [Woman 3] No.

- [Woman 4] Yes.

- [Woman 5] No.

- We are clearly unclear on this issue. So can you be a Christian and go to heaven and disagree on this issue?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Yes. So what I would say is there are people who believe the Bible, love Jesus, disagree on this issue, it's okay to put it in the mystery box, but if you baptize the baby you're wrong. Next. I love having a mic. The rapture, okay, the rapture. And some people are thinking, I hope pastor Mark gets raptured as soon as possible. Okay so the rapture. So the rapture is this the rapture is not something that exists historically within Christian theology, the early church fathers did not believe in the rapture. It came out of a prophetic prayer meeting of the Seventh Day Adventists which tend to be called some of the time. And someone at the prayer meeting a woman gave a prophecy that the church was going to be raptured. From that came a whole doctrine called the rapture. So you didn't know this. This is where being a nerd is helpful, it's like being on jeopardy. All of a sudden you're like, I know someday I'm gonna use that. Thank you man, for mentioning the rapture. So the way the rapture works is there is something called remnant theology... Wait, wait, wait, wait, I'm going too fast. I'm going too fast. I'm 50, I gotta slow down. So when it comes to the end, there are two views. There's something called replacement theology where God worked through the Jewish people and now they've been replaced by the Gentiles. There was something called dispensational theology. Dispensation means that God works differently in different dispensations of history. It's the two people of God theology versus the one people of

God theology. Much of it is debated in Romans chapter 11 I still have not left my tax you're very welcome. And so what happens is they believe that God worked through the Jews, now he's working through the Gentiles. He's going to wrap through the Jews because he doesn't work through both groups at the same time, he works through one on the other. Then he's gonna rapture the church then Jesus is gonna return then revelation chapter 20, Jesus is gonna rule for a literal thousand year millennial reign that says 1000 years six times. In Revelation 20, it's gonna rain for 1000 years, and then there's gonna be this massive revival of Jewish people, loving Jesus. And then the kingdom of God will be ushered in. And the rapture is to get rid of the Gentiles so God can go back to the Jews. Should that go in the mystery box? Yes or no?

- [Woman 6] Yes.

- Oh yes. I would just say the future, keep it in the mystery box as a general rule. I would say when it comes to the second coming of Jesus, I'm on the welcoming committee, I'm not on the planning committee. I don't have a chart, I don't know when he's coming. When he shows up, I will blow a kazoo, I will eat my cake, I'll be super excited. I don't know when that's gonna be. And I know some of you, you're like, "I know, I've got n times chart on an ammo boxing crap. I got this nailed down." You need to get drug tested. You don't know what you're talking about. It's fun, right? I mean, it's fun. What would you say maybe should go in the mystery box? Free will? Free will, yes, but that in the mystery box. God is sovereign over human history, we are morally responsible agents for the decisions that we make. Both of those are true. Keep it in the mystery box. Dinosaurs, someone asked, dinosaurs. Really, really, really, really? The two questions that always come up are, can I smoke weed? And were there dinosaurs? My question is, are you asking about dinosaurs because you were smoking weed? Even though they don't fit, should we put the dinosaurs in the mystery box? Yes or no? Yes, and keep them in the mystery box. Were there dinosaurs? Whee there big lizards? Did they die in the flood? Maybe. Okay I don't know. The point is simply this there's a lot of things that go in the mystery box. Now let me say a little bit about mystery. A wise person knows that there's a lot that they don't know. Anybody who's like, I got it all figured out. No they don't. Paul is the brilliant mind of human history, he is filled with the Holy spirit. He's writing a book of the Bible and here's what he says. "That to me is a mystery." If he has that category, feel free to use it. In addition, we can know truly, but we can't know fully. There is an attribute of God called omniscience. That is that God knows everything. The Bible says that we see in part and we know in part that's all we got, first Corinthians 13:12. How many of you know some things truly but you don't know them fully? How many of you are married? Do you know them truly, your spouse? Do you know them fully? Nope, you don't. You're like I gave him peanuts, they blew up, I didn't know. That's stuff you learn every day. I've been married to Grace for a long time we met March 12th, 1988. I know her truly, I don't know her fully I'm still learning stuff about her. God is infinite, His knowledge is all knowing. And the truth is that it requires some humility for us to say, "I know God, I know God knows everything, I don't know everything." In addition, there is what I call closed handed versus open-handed issues. Closed handed issues, we need to hold with certainty open-ended issues, we can hold in the hand of mystery. And so for me, I would tell you this, this is me as a Bible teaching pastor, that the Bible is God's word. It's true, it's our highest authority, it's the only perfect thing on earth.

That the centerpiece of the Bible is the personal work of Jesus Christ. There is one God, three persons, father, son, and spirit we call it the Trinity. We sinned against this holy and righteous God, He sent his only son, Jesus Christ into human history. God became a man. He lived the only perfect life in all of human history, the life without sin. He went to the cross, He substitute himself, He died in our place for our sins. He rose from the dead, He conquers death, He forgives sin. He defeats the demonic, He's the way the truth and the life. And no one makes it in the kingdom of God without turning from sin and trusting in Jesus Christ, and he's coming again to plant his foot on the planet that he made and to declare himself king of kings and Lord of lords ruling over all forever, Amen? Open hand, speaking in tongues. Good for you, I don't know. How old is the earth? Old enough, it's working great. There are things that we keep in the open hand these things we hold with certainty, these things we can hold with mystery. And this allows us as God's people to have unity and diversity, because we want to be a thinking community, a studying community. And we wanna allow people to be in process and come to conclusions. And the truth is oftentimes in the Bible what is the mystery is not what God's gonna do but how's he gonna do it? And when is he gonna do it? And where's he gonna do it? I'll give you an example. One of the great mysteries in the Bible Paul talks about elsewhere in a book of the Bible called first Corinthians chapter 15. It's the great chapter in the whole Bible on the resurrection of the dead. So what it says is that the resurrection is a mystery so we can know it truly, but we can't know it fully. So when it comes to the resurrection, there's a lot of mystery and people tend to have questions they're like, "Well, how old will I be?" I don't know, we'll see. What will I look like? Am I gonna have hair? Am I gonna be tall? Am I gonna be old? Am I gonna be young? I don't know. If a baby died, will they be a baby forever in heaven? Well, I don't know. What if I was cremated and I resurrected as ash man? And then it rains and I go outside, do I turn into mud man? Like what happens? I don't know. We'll get there, ash man, we'll see. I don't know, it's a mystery, it's a mystery. We just don't know till we get there. So we know what God's gonna do but a lot of the times the why and the how and the where and the when it's a bit of the mystery. In addition, there is a difference between secrecy and privacy. This is important with God and it's important for God's people. Secrecy is what we tend to think of when someone has something that we deserve to know and they're keeping it from us, privacy is it's just none of your business. So if somebody comes up and they're like, "So how much do you weigh?" That's privacy. That's privacy, right? So what happens is that God has things that he doesn't tell us. You know why? It's none of our business. Because it has nothing to do with us. When God says, "I got a play it for the Jewish people at the end." It's like, "Okay God, tell me all the details." He's like, "You don't need to know, you're actually not involved. I've got this all taken care of this is not your business, this is privacy. I'm just telling you what I'm doing, but I'm not telling you everything because you're not part of it, I've got it all nailed down. I'm just letting you know what I'm gonna do, I'm not giving anything for you to do." There are things that God doesn't tell us because we don't need to know. We just need to trust the God is the one who ultimately does know. But let me say this about the mystery box. All of us as new Christians start with a lot in the mystery box. Over time you can learn some things and say, "I'm gonna take that out of the box I think I know I have an answer." Sometimes you can put it back in the box you're like, "I thought I knew it now I don't know." And that ultimately we all need to have a mystery box and we need to give each other permission to be in process, to learn, to study. There shouldn't be pressure to

know everything and there shouldn't be pressure to pretend that we know everything, that's what religious people tend to do. I'll give you an example. When I was in college, I became a Christian at the age of 19. And the first thing I had a heart for was all the people who didn't know Jesus. How many of you, once you meet Jesus, you're like, how did I live my life without Jesus? And then look at everybody else they're like, how are you guys living your life without Jesus? You all need Jesus. That was me. That's Paul's heart. So I got all the guys together. I'm in a public university, in a dorm as a freshman. If anybody needs Jesus, it's freshmen males in a dorm at a state university. If you've ever seen these guys, they're not doing good, they're not doing good. So I thought I need to tell these guys about Jesus. So I pulled them all together from my dorm floor and I'm like, "Okay, my name is Mark, I just got saved 17 minutes ago, I'm now leading a Bible study." I've never lacked confidence. Sometimes I have no idea what I'm doing, but I'm very bold in it. So that's what I did. So I pull the guys together and I said, "Here's the deal, you guys can ask me any question about Christ or Christianity, and I will answer it eventually because right now I know nothing, I know nothing." So they started with all their literally the first questions are, can I smoke weed? Are there dinosaurs? And can I sleep with my girlfriend? That's it. I'm like really, really, really, really, really okay. Yeah no dinosaur, no girlfriend, no weed. I can answer that one but the rest of the questions I had to go answer. So here's what I started doing. I took the questions that I thought maybe I could figure out, and I would study all week. I actually did more study for my Bible study than for my state education speech degree. And I got the guys I was like, "Okay, I've got some answers this week but I don't have the other answers yet." So over the course of months, many of these guys, most of them, maybe all of them, I don't remember became Christians. They started going to church with me, they got baptized, they went to men's ministry. And so what I found was, the box of misery was super important because we all started filling up the box of mystery. There were things that I pulled out for those guys and I decided, you know what? I think I do have a little bit of an answer here. There were things that I kept in the mystery box that now over the course of decades of Bible study, I've come to an answer, they stayed in the box for years. But I've preached through over half the books of the Bible verse by verse, I've got a master's degree in Bible, I got a huge library, I've been doing this for a while. There were questions in the box that I took out and now I have answers for. Truth, there were questions over the years that I've taken out that I put back in. I was like, I know maybe not. And there are still things that the guys asked me that are still in my mystery box, I don't know. I know that God knows and I know that God knows me and I know that I know God, so I don't worry about the answers I just trust God that he's got the answers. And so that's what he is saying. Now when it comes to this issue, what he says is even though there's a lot of mystery, there's one thing that's an absolute, guaranteed, encouraging certainty and that is this verse that God is faithful to generations. How many of you have seen this in your own life and family? How many of you have seen God be faithful to a lot of people for a lot of years? He says this Romans 11, 28 through 32, As regards the Gospel, the good news of the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are enemies for your sake. There are people who just hate Jesus, they're against Jesus they're anti-Christ. But as regards election, God's gonna choose some people who don't choose him, God's gonna love some people who don't love him. God's gonna pursue some people who don't pursue him, they're beloved for the sake of their forefathers. Because God made a promise to their ancestors, He's

faithful to generations for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. That is so encouraging, Amen. That is so encouraging when God gives you he doesn't take from you. When he gives you love, He doesn't take his love. When he gives you a relationship, he doesn't take his relationship. When he gives you forgiveness, he doesn't take his forgiveness. When he gives you Jesus, he doesn't take Jesus. Let me say this friends, there are a lot of relationships that we have that there are betrayal, that people take back their love, their devotion, their commitment. Your God is a God you can absolutely 100% count on that His commitment to you is irrevocable. That's amazing. We've all had people who've betrayed us. Not our God, He's never betrayed anyone. For just as you were at one time disobedient to God we all start there rebellious, foolish, but now have received mercy. This is the keyword, it shows up here four times make note of it. You have received mercy because of their disobedience so they to now have been disobedient in order that by the mercy, there's our word again, shown to you. They also may now receive mercy there's our word again. For God has consigned all the disobedience, all people have sinned and are separated from God, that he may have mercy on all. God is a merciful God. Here's what he's saying that the reason that God still has a hope and a future for the nation of Israel is because he made a promise to their forefather, Abraham. Abraham was of Gentile, not a Jew. He was a pagan, not a believer. He came from a godless family, he was a godless man, part of a godless nation, part of a godless, demonic, cult and religion. And God looked at the earth that said, "Everybody's bad, but I'll love that guy." If God picked the good people, then no one would get picked. This is where we all begin. We begin as sinners and God is the one who seeks and saves. This is the whole context of Romans nine through 11. God determines, God predetermines, God pursues. God loves, God chooses, God, elects. We make our choice, that is sin God makes his choice, that is to save. And so ultimately, because God made a promise to Abraham that God would be faithful to his offspring for generations, God's gifts and calling are irrevocable some translations will say without repentance. See what it is friends, we repent because we're wrong. God never repents because God is never wrong. This is where you need to be very careful. Even people will say, "Well you just need to be like Jesus." There's one thing that Jesus never did that we need to do. Repent. Jesus was never wrong, we're wrong. Jesus never had to change, he was perfect. We're imperfect, we need to change. What he says is that God's calling and gifts are irrevocable or without repentance, God doesn't change his disposition toward us, He doesn't change his mind to us. But the problem is that God loved people, but people didn't love God. And so even today, Christianity is filled with Gentiles but very few Jews though there are some who are part of the remnant. And the question is, if the people are unfaithful will God still be faithful? Friends this is so wonderful, we just live in a day when there's so few faithful people. There's so few people that you can just count on and depend on. Isn't it nice to know that in a world filled with unfaithful people, we are ruled by a God who is faithful to every single one of his people? That's amazing to me. And that's what Paul is saying that God is going to be faithful to his people, because God is faithful to his promises. He introduced this theme in Romans 3:3, what if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? The answer is no. The point is this friend, in almost all of our relationships, we treat people as they treat us, we respond to their character. So if you're nice to me, I'm nice to you. You're mean to me, I'm mean to you. You pick a fight with me, I'm gonna fight you. You said something about me, I'm gonna say

something about you. And this is the whole reason the internet exists. And here's what happens. God says "You're faithless, I'm faithful." My response to you is not based on your character, but my character. This is amazing. Paul says it clearly in second Timothy 2:13, "If we are faithless He remains faithful." Because he cannot deny himself. We can deny him, but he cannot deny himself. Friends I want you to know this, if you're a Christian, who's walked away from God, God is still faithful to you even if you've been faithless toward him. If you've had a season of string wandering, rebelling or being the prodigal, you've been faithless to him, but he's been faithful to you. If he loved you, he has never stopped loving you. If he pursued you, he's never stopped pursuing you. If he's forgiven you, he'll never stop forgiving you. If he's adopted you, he'll never stop adoring you. This is our God. And the existence of the Jewish people is in large part positive evidence that God has been faithful to the Jewish people, the descendants physically of Abraham. There's a philosopher, theologian, sociologist, he's a specialist in the area of religion. I don't believe he's a believer but his name is Houston Smith and he writes a book called "The Religions of Man". Here's what he says, "Jewish survival cannot be explained by natural forces." Everybody's been trying to kill the Jews forever. We have already quoted the judgements of a sociologist that quote by every sociological law, the Jews should have perished long ago. To which we may now add that of a noted philosopher, Nicholas Berdyaev, he says quote, "The continued existence of Jews down through the centuries is rationally inexplicable." Here's the point, God said to Abraham, "I'm going to bless you, and through you I'm gonna bring Jesus as the blessing to the nations of the earth." Many of the Jewish people have been blessed by God but they've been faithless toward God but God will still be faithful toward them. That he has a plan for the Jewish people at the end of human history. Let me just speak very plainly. I love you with all my heart, it's an honor to be your pastor and teach you the Bible. I love it, I just love this. So here's what I want you to know though some of you are blessed by God, but you don't know God. And you think that you're okay with God because you've been blessed by God. This was the story of the Jewish people. They're like, our nation is preserved, we have peace, we have prosperity. God has blessed us, God has been good to us, God has been patient with us. God's been generous toward us, God's been faithful toward us, and they started to take their grace for granted. They stopped being mesmerized and amazed by the goodness and the mercy of God. How many of us, this happens in our own life. God's been so good to us for so long they were no longer astonished by it. How many of you God has been blessing you or he's been blessing your family or maybe he's been blessing your family for generations. And here's the thing just because God has blessed you doesn't mean that God has saved you. And sometimes people think, well, my life is going great, God must be fine with me. No, God is good, but you don't have a relationship with him. See blessings help in this life but they do nothing when this life ends, that's where salvation is the only way toward blessing. Let me just tell you this. These people were blessed, but they were not saved. God was good to them but they did not have any relationship with God. And so what he's saying is at the end, God will be faithful and many of them will have a change of heart toward God because God doesn't change his heart toward his promises. Let me just say this, you need Jesus. Now you have a nation but your allegiance, your loyalty can't be to your nation it needs to be to Jesus who rules over your nation. You could be committed to your political party but your loyalty ultimately needs to be to Jesus who's over all politics and political parties. You can love religious tradition but your loyalty needs to be to

Jesus who sometimes calls you to repent of your religious tradition. You can love your nationality, you can love your ethnicity or your people but your loyalty needs to be ultimately to Jesus Christ. You can even love your family and you should love your family but your loyalty should be to Jesus Christ. And let me say this just because Jesus has been good to you and a lot of people that you love, doesn't mean that you know him until you've turned from sin and trusted in him. So let me tell you this, the most important decision you will ever make is what you think about Jesus Christ. The most important thing about you is whether you reject or receive Jesus Christ as God and savior. And Paul's driving argument is this, that all of God's work in history is of no benefit to you unless you turn from sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. I love you with all my heart. I don't want you to just hear sermons, I want you to know Jesus. I don't want you to just go to church, I want you to go to heaven. I don't want you to just sing songs, I want you to sing songs in the presence of God forever, and that's why we're here. And so where Paul is driving all of this he's saying that ultimately, God has a plan for his people, and ultimately it's all going to be made possible by mercy. See none of us can stand before God and say, "I was a good person." Oh you weren't. God, I tried hard. You need to be perfect, that wasn't good enough. When our government doesn't give is mercy, what social media doesn't give is mercy. What a teacher on an exam doesn't give is mercy, what an employer in a performance review doesn't give is mercy. What we tend not to give one another as mercy. Here's the good news, our God gives mercy. And if you would like to receive mercy he uses that word four times, mercy, mercy, mercy, mercy. You and I need mercy. We need mercy from God and then we need to share that mercy with others. This world is sorely lacking in mercy. This is not a grace base but a law based world where people are destroying one another rather than encouraging one another. And let me tell you this, if you want mercy his name is Jesus Christ. And what happened on the cross is this. Jesus took your place and endured wrath to put you in his place so you could receive mercy. The only reason that we can receive mercy is because the wrath that we deserve went to Jesus in our place and as a result of his death for our sin, we now receive mercy because he is the one who took the wrath. And so I would love for you to receive mercy His name is Jesus Christ. You give him your sin so that he endures the wrath, He gives you mercy so you receive life, Amen? And then he concludes with this. God is not a concept to be mastered, but a person to be worshiped. This is so awesome. I get really excited about this. Because what happens in Romans is one of the most brilliant articulations of faith and belief in God in all of human history for one of the most explosive minds inspired by the Holy Spirit. Romans was the ignited flame that erupted in the protestant reformation. We have been learning about Jesus from Romans for generations. And Paul is just inspired of God to tell us who God is and how great God is, and what God does and what there is, newness of life through faith in Jesus Christ and then he reaches a point where he can say anymore so it's time to sing. There's just a point where we try to take what the Bible says and we try to reduce God down to a concept to master. He's not a concept to master, He's a master to worship. That's who our God is. There's a place where our three pound fallen brain mine went to public school, reaches its limitations very quickly and there's nothing left to understand. It's just time to worship. There's an old British theologian named G.K. Cheston and he says this, "The poet only asked to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head, and it's his head that splits." The point is this God, heaven, salvation, eternity, it's too big

to fit in your head. And so the key is to get your head into God's presence where you can be among God's people and you can sing God's praises. That's exactly what he does here. How many of you are the creative RD types? Creative RD? You got colored hair, you have jeans with holes and you paid for it. It's not like you worked a job and wore them out. How many of you the whole time I'm yelling you're painting or you're drawing or you're scanning? How many of you are artists? You have piercings in places you shouldn't you look like a fish rack at a taco store. You know what I mean? Like what's that piercing? You're the creatives I wore converse so you let me be your pastor. I'm trying, okay? How many of you creative types of like so many big words can we just sing? Bring out the band. I wanna cry. Where's the guy with a guitar? I wanna feel it. I wanna raise my, I wanna do a little this. How many of you that's you? Oh come on, I can tell. There's a lot of ladies raising their hands and then there's a couple of guys in denial so here's how we do this. Here's what he says he just breaks into song. He gets real creative and already Romans 11, 33 to 36. You gotta say it like that. You gotta be like, can't do it like that. That's how atheist read Romans 11. We read it like this. Just try once it's fun. Come on, ready? One, two, three. Oh, that's great, thank you so much. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. He just loads it up. It's like a monster truck rally, I love that. You'll pay for the seat, we only need the edge. It's just that way. It's so great. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways. I love that. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Nobody. There's always one guy's like, I know he's in the back of the class with a Christian score. I know. No, you don't, you ain't paste in school, you just put your hand down. You don't know what you're talking about. Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who's been his counselor? Who has God schedule an appointment with so he can learn stuff? Nobody. Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? Who's got something to God needs? God needs nothing, God needs nobody. God made everything out of nothing, God saves people out of nothing. God needs nothing, God needs no one. God's doing fine for. From him and through him and to him are all things to him be glory forever, Amen. Pastor Mark, please explain this loudly. Okay I will, thank you for asking. First of all, he talks about who God is because you know what, we oftentimes get so enamored with who we are. Selfie, what's your personality? I'm a J-E-R-K I took the test and that's just how it came out. I'm a T-U-R-D, that's just how I came out, that's my personality. Shouldn't have said that. But what happens is we get so enamored studying ourselves, sometimes we don't just stop and look up and go vertical and go, "Okay, who's God?" Like who's God? I know who I am, I look in the mirror every day and then I just deal with the disappointment. But when I look up, who is God? He says that God has first and foremost wisdom. Now we live in a day where there is a lot of education but there's not a lot of wisdom. You can go to university, you can see people with more degrees than Fahrenheit and no wisdom, none whatsoever. Wisdom is how to navigate life, how to find and walk in the will of God according to the word of God. What he says is that God's wisdom is deep. You've ever seen sort of film from the bottom of the ocean. It's just deep and it's dark and it's overwhelming. God's wisdom is so deep that we can't get to that depth. The good news is though that his wisdom is filled with his richness meaning He gives it lavishly and abundantly. That God gives us wisdom through the Holy Spirit of wisdom. So when you're in a trial or a crisis you're trying to navigate the minefield that is your life on planet earth, God says, "I know the way, let me direct your steps to close to me. I have wisdom to help you get into the future." So let me say this, if

you disagree with God, you're wrong. If you disagree with God, you're wrong. If you think that God's way is not the best way, you're wrong. If you think there's an alternate way other than God's way, you're wrong. God has wisdom and He says he has knowledge. What this means is God knows everything, we don't. There's so much arrogance, there's so much pretension, there's so much assumption and presumption in our culture. How many of us have gotten partial information, rushed to a conclusion and we were just wrong? Tell everyone on social media this is what they're doing, this is what happens. And what it says is the God has all knowledge. How many of you thought something totally true till you got a little more facts and evidence you're like, ah, that's not what it is? God knows everything so here's the big idea. Don't doubt him, trust him. Don't disagree with him, trust him. Don't argue with him, trust him. Just because you don't see it doesn't mean he doesn't see it again. Again, we know in part, we see in part. And it says his judgment is a God who is wise, knowledgeable and judges. We live in this crazy, demonic, insane day where people judge God it's the craziest thing all the time. Well, I don't think that should be in the Bible, I don't think they should say that, I don't think God should do that. I think we should edit it, I think that's a mistake. Here's my question, who the freak are you? I didn't curse. I curse in my heart but I did not curse. Like who are you? I mean, it's crazy, right? Like right now on Facebook there's some guy like I disagree. We don't care, we don't care. The nations were not waiting for you to be born. Prophecies were not anticipating your coming for thousands of years. And in 2000 years, we won't be singing songs to you. You know why? You're not that big of a deal and you don't know what you're talking about. Or you think I'm stupid? No, I know you're stupid, I'm just pointing it out that's part of my ministry. Because here's the big idea we take ourselves so seriously, we take God so lightly. And there's people just judging God all the, well I don't think anybody should go to hell. Why not? You have a lock on the door of your house, you're a hypocrite, you don't let everybody in. It's just common sense. We don't judge God, we're judged by God. None of us are gonna die, stand before God, He's gonna say, "Okay, there's the throne please sit in it and then render your verdicts." There's gonna be one seated on that throne his name is Jesus Christ, and we're all gonna give an account to him. And he says his ways are inscrutable. What that means is you're not gonna figure it out. I can't worship a God I can master, I can't worship a God I can control. The real God is so big that his ways are inscrutable, they're unsearchable. And you just reach the point you're like, I don't know. I know God, and God knows me, and I know that God knows everything, I just don't know what God's gonna do, and I don't know how God's gonna do it. So here's what Paul does he says, "Let's stop arguing, let's stop speculating." Let's start singing, let's start worshipping. And when I saw this week, it was so incredible. I was so excited. I was reading Romans and I thought, okay, I see a pattern. Paul will teach for a season, he'll come to an end of a thought unit and then he'll just stop. And he'll go up to God and worship what we call doxology. Praise, adoration, thanksgiving, celebration for who God is and what God does. So Romans one through eight is a unit of thought. He closes it with a doxology, Romans 8. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. That's awesome. So Paul's role in Romans one through 8 reaches in he's like, "That's all I got, the rest is a mystery. Bring up a band it's song time." And then Romans nine through 11 he rolls forward again. And this is his next deck

doxology, and then 12 through 16 that will start next week and I got a new study guide for it I'm really so excited gonna be great. Bring your friends and maybe there'll be your friends afterwards we'll see it'll be great. And 12 through 16 he's got another unit of thought. And then he ends with a doxology at the end of Romans 16, he says and I quote, "To the only wise God, be glory forevermore through Jesus." Here's how it works. Study as an act of worship stop and sing and surrender as an act of worship. There's a point where your understanding ends and that's when your worship and praise begins. And what he says is that ultimately everything is from him. Everyone comes from God, everything comes from God. God is the creator and is sustained through him. The breath that you enjoy, the planet that you live on, the gifts that benefit you, the abilities that God has entrusted to you, all of that is through him. You were created by God, you are sustained by God and He will return. The Apostle Paul says to him, "You come from God, you live for God, your meaning is found in God, your purpose is found in God, your destiny is found in God, your eternity is found in God, and we're all returning to him, everyone, and everything." And what he's saying is until that day comes when the Lord Jesus returns, that time in the middle is the time of witness and worship. We tell the nations about Jesus and we sing the praises of Jesus. So we're gonna bring the band up we gotta sing a little bit. We've learned all we can learn, now we gotta sing and surrender to the God who knows all, Amen? So let me close with this verse while the band comes up. To him, to him not to you, not to me, not to the nation, not to the political party, not to the religious tradition, not to the family, not to the economy, to him who rules and reigns over everyone and everything. His name is Jesus Christ. He is the king of kings, He is the Lord of lords. He is the maker of heaven and earth, He is the sustainer of all people in things, He is returning to be the ruler and judge over all. To him and to him be glory. Glory is this. Jesus came the first time in humility. He came as a humble marginalized, poor peasant. He died, He Rose, He returned to heaven. Right now Jesus Christ, I have such good news. My Jesus is not in humility, He's in glory. He's not in poverty, He's in riches. He's not suffering, He is healed. He is not dethroned, He is in throne. Right now Jesus Christ sits on a throne. He rules and reigns over kings and kingdoms. He judges nations. He's coming again to call his saints from their graves so that we can sing his praises together forever. And until we see him, we surrender to him until we see him, we sing to him because to him alone, be glory forever, and all God's people said Amen.

- [Congregation] Amen.