

## Romans #24 - Vintage Faith The Present Remnant

- Well, howdy, we are in a great book of the Bible called Romans. If you're new, it's in the New Testament. We're in Romans 11. And up until this point, Paul, who is the author of the book, has been telling us, how do you enter into a relationship with God? And over and over and over, he's told us, we turn from sin and we trust in Jesus Christ. The question then is, well, what if someone does believe in Jesus and/or their family for many generations does believe in the God of the Bible, has a relationship with Him, and lives under God's blessing and God's provision and God's investment and involvement in their life? What can sometimes happen is that people start to take God for granted, that they're no longer appreciative of His presence, His provision in their life. And His case study in all of Romans 11 is the Jewish people who had lived under God's blessing for so many generations that they grew a little bored with God's goodness. They had a sense of entitlement toward God's provision. And the reason that this is so incredibly important is because there's something in us that always has that same proclivity or gravity that we need to fight against. And this is even more pronounced in our day. Let me explain something, big concept, and then we'll get into Romans 11. The predominant thought in our culture today across all academic disciplines is something called critical theory. Critical theory is the opposite of what is known as traditional theory. Traditional theory is how you build something. Build a faith relationship with God, build a family, build a marriage, build an economy, build a nation, build a community, build a business. Critical theory is how you dismantle, how you disregard, how you destroy that which has been built. It would be the demolition crew as opposed to the construction crew. This is now the greatest threat to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is something that is overtaking pretty much all of the academic disciplines. So if you're in college, you've seen this in every single class. In gender studies, it leads to transgenderism. In civics, it leads to defund the police. In economics, it leads to socialism. Any discipline that you study, there is a critique of everyone and everything that has gone before. And ultimately, the reason it is so powerful and prevalent is that work behind it is demonic forces. Satan is called, in Revelation 12:10, the accuser of the children of God. That original Greek word can also mean the critic. Critical theory is just criticism. And let me say this, it's a lot easier to criticize people who are doing things than to do things. It's a lot easier to criticize what has been built than to tear it down and build something better. And the result is that what this leads to in the culture is just a wholesale attitude of criticism, judgment, entitlement, and self-righteousness from people who have opinions about everything, but pretty much are doing nothing. We call them Americans. In addition, what this leads to in the church is a great apostasy that is underway, which is one of the great themes of Romans 11, and that is that some people who would profess to be Christians are now starting to criticize the Bible. They're now starting to criticize God and what God says and what God has done throughout history. And so the way that we keep ourselves from this spirit of apostasy, which is being with God's people, but not being one of God's people, or starting in relationship with God, but not finishing in relationship with God, is first and foremost to cultivate an attitude of gratitude. To say, what would life be like if God wasn't involved? What if God never said or did anything in the history of the world? Would my life be better? Would my circumstances be better? Would our

world be better? And the answer is no. And this is the big driving concept in Romans 11, where over the course of three sermons, this is number two, we're looking at the ancient Jewish people and the nation of Israel. How God worked in and through them in the past, He is in the future, and His plan for them in what is to come in the future. Now, here's where we find ourselves, in Romans 11:11-21. And primarily, you're gonna have to fight a little bit of boredom, I'm gonna try and help you. But many of us are Gentiles, we're not Jewish. So if you're Gentile, not Jewish, raise your hand, right? We're the Gentiles. Romans 11 is about the Jewish people. This is why, this is the chapter of Romans that most of the Gentiles just skip. They're like, "Jewish people, I'm not Jewish, next page." Because it's like going to a family reunion with someone else's family. You're like, "I don't know these people and I'm not related to them and they don't matter to me." Now you need to know that by faith, this is our family. That we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that we are followers of the same God that the people in The Old Testament, the Jewish, the Hebrew people were anticipating the coming of, and His name is Jesus Christ. So let's look at what God has done for and through his Old Testament people, the Jews. Winston Churchill says this on February 8th, 1920. And I know when you got up this morning, you're like, "I hope we're talking about Jewish people and I hope he quotes Winston Churchill." And I just let you know, I got you. I'm here for you, you're welcome, okay? Just like you wanted. He says, "The Jews are the most remarkable race." Now, let me say this, Americans are not. Okay, we're not. Now, I love America. I think America is a great country, I'm glad to be here. America is so great that even people who hate it don't leave. That's how great it is, right? Right now we're trying to figure out how to secure the border, but only in one direction, right? It's not like all the Americans are fleeing. Even people who hate this country still stay here and complain about it. So America is a great country and I'm grateful that I was born here and I'm grateful for the freedoms that we enjoy. But in the history of the world, God was at work in and through the Jewish people long before we came into existence. And so he goes on to say, "Some people like the Jews and some do not, but no thoughtful man can doubt the fact that they are beyond all question, the most formidable and most remarkable race that has ever appeared in the world." These are the people who are the physical descendants of Abraham in the Old Testament. We who worship his God are also his spiritual descendants through faith in Jesus Christ. And the promise was given to Abraham that God saved him and said, "I'm gonna bless you. Your barren wife is gonna have a baby. That baby is gonna lead forth to a nation. That nation will bring us the prophets, the priests, the kings." Our Old Testament is written in Hebrew, which is the Jewish language. It was preserved by the Jewish people. It's written by Jewish people. For the most part it's about Jewish people with a few other additional people thrown in. And the whole point of which is to get us to the savior who is Jewish. His name is Jesus. Okay, so the contribution of God, it was God's work. But it was God's work through the Jewish people is really incredible. And what makes it even more remarkable is that they've been opposed throughout their entire history. They're a small people group, a small nation that historically, their boundaries were set by God and surrounding them were enemies who were opposed to them and their God who sought to destroy them. And so over and over and over, there's generation after generation from, and I've got a short list of just a few. This would include the Egyptians. This would include the Amorites, the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Persians and more recently, the Germans. All trying to eradicate, to destroy genocide against the Jewish people. I've been to

the nation of Israel a few times and when I was there, I saw a few Jewish people wearing these T-shirts that has a list of all the nations that have invaded them and are now destroyed and no longer exist. And it was a succession of some of the most powerful empires in all of human history. And so their story is sort of the David and Goliath story. Everybody's trying to take them down but they're still standing tall. This is one of the evidences that God has a kindness and affection, a blessing toward the Jewish people. Many about 300 years ago there was a French philosopher named Blaise Pascal. One of my personal favorites, he was a Christian. And King Louis, the 14th of France asked him, "How can you possibly believe in miracles? Go ahead and prove to me any miracle that your God has ever done." And here's what the philosopher Blaise Pascal said. He said, "Why the Jews your majesty?" The Jews. He's like, just look at the Jewish people. They still exist and everyone's tried to destroy them. In addition, God told Abraham that he would bless him and make his people a blessing to the nations of the earth. Ultimately, that blessing was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, the descendant of Abraham, who is Jewish, but there are many blessings that have also come to the nations through the Jewish people. Let me read this to you. At least 208 Jews and people who are at least a half or three quarter Jewish in their ancestry have been awarded the Nobel Prize accounting for 22% of all individual recipients worldwide between 1901 and 2020. And constituting 36% of all U.S. recipients during the same period. In the scientific research fields of chemistry, economics, physics, physiology, medicine, and corresponding world and U.S. percentages are 26 and 38% respectively. Among women laureates in the four research fields, the Jewish percentages, world and U.S. are 29 and 43% respectively. Of organizations awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, 20% were founded principally by Jews or by people of Jewish descent. Since the turn of the century from the year 2000 to the present, Jews have been awarded 25% of all Nobel Prizes and 27% of those in the scientific research fields goes on to tell us that Jews currently up make up, and this will blow your mind, 0.2% of the world's population. And right around 2% of U.S. population. What that means is a very small number of people have made a very large contribution to all of the academic fields that blessed and are a benefit to everyone who lives on planet earth. That's incredible. I'm Irish, we're the Gentiles, okay? Just think about your people. What have your people contributed? Okay? Not much, amen, not much. My people were Irish. What have we contributed?

- [Congregation] Potatoes.

- Potatoes, beer, and a horrible form of dancing. That's all we've contributed. Have you seen the Riverdance? That's how you know we don't have the spirit of God. We've got potatoes, beer, and we're doing the Riverdance. That's our only contribution to human history. If you eradicated the Irish, it'd be like, "We didn't even notice the difference." So we didn't make a big contribution. Meanwhile, you just think about Jewish people. Their contributions are a blessing to the nations and it is God blessing through these people. Not that they all know God, but God sometimes is gracious and kind to a group of people. Now so just think of it for a moment. Imagine if we remove the Jewish people from human history, the difference our planet would be experiencing presently. In addition to all of the advancements in research in the sciences, the Jewish people are the ones who largely preserved the concept of monotheism. That there's only one God. And

the ancient world every group of people have their own God. And their God liked them and he didn't like the other people. Well, God told Abraham I'm gonna work through you to bring forth one God who blesses and loves all the nations of the earth. Monotheism, not multiple gods. Just one who's over all peoples. In addition, it was the Jewish people who largely preserved for us an understanding that no King or political leaders should be worshiped as divinity or God. In the ancient world the King was considered God. It was a counterfeit of the kingdom of God. And it was the Jewish people who said, "We don't worship the King." This is why I need you. They got in trouble. They weren't gonna worship the Pharaoh as God. This is why when we looked at the book of Daniel, about a year ago, the Jewish people got in trouble 'cause they weren't gonna worship the Babylonian King. They wouldn't worship the Persian King. When it came to the days of the New Testament and the time of the writing of Romans they're living in the Roman Empire. And they had something called emperor worship. And so if you were a citizen you were also to worship the emperor as God. And you would say, "Caesar is Lord." And God's people said, "No, he is not." There's a Lord over that Lord. That's the Lord of Lords. There's a King over that king. He's the King of Kings and ultimately we know his name is Jesus Christ. And we still see this in some modern day countries like North Korea, where the whole State is a cult and it's run by a demonic leader who pretends to be God and people worship him. It was the Jewish people who preserved that. A lot of what we're born into our decisions that were made generations before us. And we have no appreciation of them because we don't stop to consider what our world would look like even geopolitically, if God hadn't spoken and acted previous to our coming. Number three, the Jewish people preserved the rule of law. This is because the God of the Bible, he rules through laws. He says certain things are right and wrong. And God doesn't change what He has said because God got it right. The first time every generation comes along and says, "We believe God, you've made some mistakes." And he's like, "No actually, I've not." I'm not going to change my laws, you need to change your behavior. It's called repentance. And that ultimately God rules through laws. And this is the only way you can get justice. See, in most ancient cultures as well as in most modern countries, might makes right, survival of the fittest. If you are the one who has the bigger gun or you're the one that has the bigger bank account or the better attorney, you get to do whatever you want to do. But under the rule of law there is the hope there is the aspiration for justice because ultimately the law rules over everyone. This includes the 10 commandments which is the heart of the law in the Old Testament. Things like, "Don't murder anybody, don't steal anything. And don't testify in court and lie, giving false witness." Our entire system of justice is built on this assumption, this presumption, that there are fixed unchanging laws that come from a law-giver, who is the highest in unchanging authority. In addition, the reason that we have science is because we don't believe in pantheism and payment deism, that all of what we see as the physical world is just sort of haphazard and it is disorganized and it is chaotic. The belief of the Bible is that there is a creator and He is an orderly God. And He is a God who is consistent. And as a result, we can have scientific experimentation because there is consistency in order to the world that God made. All of these are gifts that come from God through the Jewish people. And it is one of the reasons when they adhere to the values and convictions of the scriptures even if they don't know the God who wrote them, there's still an ability for them to succeed because they're operating within the paradigm that God intended. In addition, this includes humanity and equality. See if you believe

in evolution that we're part human part animal, you come to the assumption that there are some people who are more evolved than others. And this is where we get racism. And those people are saying, "We need justice and we need a quality." My question is, why? If you don't believe there are laws why are you so concerned about justice? And if you don't believe that we're made the image and likeness of God why do you believe there should be equality between people? See what we have is we have the Christian ethic but we don't have the Christian convictions. That ultimately we've walked away from the Bible and we've simply borrowed, and stolen, and robbed a few concepts that we think benefit us while we reject and edit those that we do not want to adhere to or abide by. But ultimately the reason that we believe in equality, and this goes all the way back to the Jewish people, is because God made us in His image and likeness. And we're not part human and part animal. There are animals and there are people and God clearly delineates between the two. And he saves people from all races, tribes, cultures, languages, and people groups. He's a global God. And lastly, this also includes marriage and family. Marriage was created by God. It was carried forth by the Jewish people. Most of the surrounding nations were largely throughout their history, polygamous, lots of adultery. No one raising their children, men not taking responsibility, thinking about a good time and not a good legacy. Now I'm gonna blow your mind, especially if you're under 25, hold your seat. I'm gonna say a few things, okay? First of all, God made marriage, not the state. That's why the state has no right to re architect marriage 'cause it didn't create it. It's only supposed to enforce it. Number two, marriage is for one-

- Man.

- Man.

- One-

- Woman.

- Woman.

- Here's, what's crazy. There's men and women. Crazy. I know some of you are in college and you're like, "I heard about spectrum." Yes, spectrum is a demon who writes curriculum for universities. But God says, true story, but God says that gender is binary, male and female. That ultimately marriage is for one man and one woman, and that they will bring forth children and they are to stay faithful to one another and raise those children. And ultimately, when we operate within God's designed decree there is blessing for generations. When we walk away from that all of our culture begins to collapse. As a result, there is broken family, broken marriages, broken homes, and there are broken legacies. And then we think that the government can take God's place and fix the problems that we've made. But eventually they run out of other people's money and the problem continues. The result ultimately is if he removed the Jewish people every single aspect of our current life from our economics to marriage, to the rule of law, to science and experimentation is forever altered. Things are much different and

nothing is much better. And then it removed from history, if you remove and eradicate the influence of God through the Jewish people, faith, you remove Abraham, you remove the entire Old Testament. You remove everything that was written pointing to the coming of Jesus Christ. You remove Jesus coming into human history as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy. You then lose Christianity and the church, which is the biggest most global multicultural bilingual movement of any sort or kind in the history of the world. And the early Christians were largely Jewish. And they saw Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism. Paul, who is writing this is himself Jewish. He sees Jesus as the fulfillment of Judaism. The first believers in Jesus were considered a sect of Judaism. Acts 2:46 says that they worshiped in the temple courts. So they saw themselves as still Jewish, both ethnically and also spiritually. And then by the end of the 1st century there were some Jews who really did love Jesus. And there was a number of them who hated, despised him, had no regard for Him whatsoever. And the question is, well, God has loved your people for a long time, How come your people don't love him? Your people were waiting for Jesus. He finally showed up and many of you don't seem to care. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew and you're the Hebrew people. How come you're not excited that your people got chosen to be the blessing of the nations of the earth through Jesus? How many of you have ever thought about it for a moment That so much of what we believe is built on the foundation of Jewish belief and many Jewish people don't love Jesus? It's really weird. It's like, "Hey, we're reading about your family, and we're translating from your language and we're studying your books and we're worshiping your guy. How come you guys aren't as excited as we are?" So he begins with this question. That's my introduction, okay? If you're new, that's an introduction, okay? It's an introduction. Romans 11:11-15. Why don't Jews love Jesus? What happened? "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?" So Jewish people tripped over Jesus, The question is, will they stay down forever? Will they eventually get up again? He says, "By no means, rather through their trespass, their sin, their ignorance, salvation has come to the Gentiles." That's us. Those of us who are not Jewish, we're the Gentiles. "So as much to make Israel jealous. "Now, if their trespass means riches for the world, and if they're failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean? Now I'm speaking to you Gentiles." So the apostle Paul, who was Jewish is talking to those of us who were Gentiles. He's the apostle to the Gentiles. Peter is the apostle to the Jews. Peter stays in Jerusalem, ministers largely to Jewish people. Paul hits the road and goes preaching to us Gentiles. He says, "I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" Here's what he's saying. Jesus came as the fulfillment of Hebrew, Jewish, Old Testament prophecy, and many Jewish people stumbled, tripped over Him. Part of this is they were offended by Him. And we explained to you why many Jewish people, when Jesus came into this day, they have no regard for Jesus, because of religion and tradition. Jesus comes and they choose their religion and their religious traditions over their God. What can happen is over time from generation to generation. So I got saved at the age of 19. So I didn't grow up knowing and loving Jesus. But now my kids know and love Jesus. And Lord willing, my grandkids will know and love Jesus. And by God's grace, this will continue for generations until Jesus comes back, would be my hope. The people with my last name love Jesus until He comes back. Now that being said, imagine if every generation just

added their own tradition, added their own bit of religion, added a few rules and legalisms and preferences and control mechanisms to what the Bible says. Imagine that this went on for a few thousand years. By the time Jesus arrived this is what happened to the Jewish people. There was faith, but then every generation would plant around that seed of faith, religion, tradition, legalisms, rules, and control mechanisms, preferences, and prejudices. The result is eventually there's so many weeds that it chokes out the fruitfulness of the plant in the center of the garden. And that's what happens. That some of you, you need to know that much of what you believe may not be connected to God, or from the word of God it may be religion and tradition that was given to you either from your family, your church family, from domineering religious people, legalistic folk, people who are high control and performance oriented. They tend to add a lot of things to what God says. And they tend to command a lot of things that God does not command. The result is that eventually when people encounter the real God they're offended by Him. 'Cause He doesn't operate the way that they do. Let me say this. It's not just enough to repent of sin. You all need to also repent of religion and tradition. And this is one of the great faults and failures of Bible teaching. We say, "You need to repent of your sin, repent of your sin, repent of your sin." And we don't tell the religious people, and the traditional people that they need to repent of their religious and traditional sins. There's a story in the Bible. I didn't put this in the other sermons but it comes to mind. There's a story of the prodigal son. There are two brothers, which one is the sinner? They both are. One acts like a Gentile. He's just drunk and crazy. And then the other, he acts more religious and traditional. And when the father pours out grace, he's very offended by grace 'cause the brother didn't behave right. He's very judgmental. You and I need to make sure that we don't just repent of our sin, but we repent of our religion and tradition. If not, we will trip over Jesus. We will be offended by Jesus. It was the religious leaders who conspired with the Roman leaders to murder Jesus because they chose their traditions over their God. They chose their religion over their God. They chose their legalisms over their God. What Paul says is when this happened the Jewish people had very little interest in Jesus. Now there were some Jews who loved Jesus but by the end of the 1st century, the majority of believers in Jesus, worshipers of Jesus were Gentiles. The Gentiles got super excited about Jesus. They're like, "Oh, we love that Jewish guy. Let's plant a church for Him. Let's write books about Him. Some guy get a guitar, play songs, we'll sing. The girls will cry, we're all in. We're gonna get tattoos with Bible verses about that Jewish guy. We're gonna start kids' schools and colleges for that Jewish guy. We're gonna have conferences for that Jewish guy. We love that too. I want that Jewish guy to live in my heart. I'm all into that Jewish guy." And it was kind of unexpected, right? 'Cause before this the Gentiles weren't really agreed on much of anything. And what they were excited about was pretty much just varying degrees of naughtiness. And now there are in Israel about 7 million Jews. The majority of them are not believers in Jesus Christ. They actually have one of the highest concentrations of atheism on planet earth. Meanwhile, the Gentiles are all in on Jesus. Billions of people across the earth, in all kinds of nations and languages, all love and worship Jesus Christ, the Jewish savior and Messiah. We read the Old Testament. We're like, "I love Abraham. I wanna get to know the whole crazy family. I wish I knew Hebrew. Oh, look at that, there's prophecy. I wonder what the temple was for." And the Jews are like, "We care less." And the Gentiles, "That's amazing." It is awkward, right? Not just me, but the point. It is awkward. The point is this, sometimes God's

people are so excited about things that people who don't know God could care less about. Now the question is what is going to happen? And what he says is that God's plan is to have the Gentiles get really excited so that the Jews eventually become really jealous, okay? May I ask you this, is jealousy good or bad. See, okay, see all the single girls were like, "Bad, I dated them, it's terrible." That was a bad jealousy. The guy in the back said both, the truth is it's both. It all depends on what you're jealous for or how you're jealous of. So the Bible says that God is a jealous God. So jealousy can't be bad, but there can be bad jealousy. Jealousy simply means that someone is in my place and it bothers me, okay? So I love my wife, Grace, with all my heart. But if it was date night, and some guy pulled up and she jumped in the car and drove away, I would be...

- [Congregation] Murderous.

- Murderous, okay. I would be jealous because date night is, that's my place and it's only my place, okay? And if Grace is like, what are you jealous? Yes, yes, I'm very jealous, very jealous 'cause that's my place. And what happens is that God gets jealous when someone takes His place. So let's say there's a young woman and she belongs to Jesus, and then she meets a boy who doesn't belong to Jesus, and she has to choose is her first priority gonna be a relationship with Jesus or the boy who doesn't know Jesus? And she chooses the boy. Then what Jesus feels is jealous. And He would say, "I love you but I'm supposed to be the relational priority. And you have traded places with this boy, and I'm supposed to be the love of your life and the first priority." Jealousy is when someone is in your place. What he's saying is this, that the Gentiles will get so excited about Jesus and the Old Testament and the God of Abraham that eventually the Jewish people are going to get jealous and this will compel them to come to Christ. I'll give you an illustration. Imagine there is a dad and he's a great dad. He's he loves his kids, he plays with them. He blesses them, he provides for them. He forgives them, he puts a swimsuit on them. He takes them to the Trinity Church, he goes down the water slide with them. He gives them one popsicle for each hand. He gives them the knuckles, he kisses them on the head. This dad's awesome. He's awesome. And his kids could care less.

- [Congregant] Amen brother.

- Okay, it's you, okay. We've gotta pray for inner healing in the back. A dad just, we just hit a soft power dad, okay? But the point is that the dad has been so consistent that the kids have become indifferent. That the dad has been so gracious that the kids no longer see it as grace, they sense it as entitlement. And there's no longer an attitude of gratitude or an appreciation. So then the dad continues because of his character. He continues to treat his kids incredibly well. And then eventually it goes into foster care or adoption. He grabs a few other kids and he brings them home, and he says, "Hey kids, we got some more kids for the family. Now these new kids we'll call them the Gentiles. They're are some wild crazy kids. But now they got a dad, they've never had a dad." They're like, "It's awesome we got a dad." Dad's like, "I'll pay the bills." They're like, "That's awesome." "There's food in the fridge and food in the pantry. And you can eat whatever." "Awesome dad." "Here's a bed." "I never had a bed." "Here's some toys, here is your



swimsuit. Here is your popsicle, I'm gonna pray for you. Here's your Bible, here's your bike. You wanna go for a hike? I love you. You messed up, I forgive you." They're like, "We love our dad. We've never had a dad, our dad is an awesome dad." They start singing songs to dad. Oh, they love dad. They write poems about dad. They put pictures of dad on the fridge. When they go to school and the teacher's like, "Write a story about your hero." They're like, "Dad, we loved dad." The seven year old gets a tattoo of dad on his chest. He's all in, he's all in. They love their dad. Every day is Father's Day. Every cup says best dad ever. Eventually the first kids are like, "Hey, that's our dad." And then they get a little jealous. And they're like, "Well, you can't just hang out with our dad. We're gonna hang out with our dad too. You can't just sing those songs. We need to sing songs to our dad." What God says here is that he does have a future plan for the Jewish people. Romans 11, we'll get into it more next week. The big debate is, is God done with the Jewish people? No, what He says is, and this is what we covered last week, there's always a remnant that many go apostate. They're surrounded by faith but they're not filled with faith. They're among God's people that they're not one of God's people, but there is always a remnant. There's some people who really do know and love God and are filled with the spirit and are faithful to Him. Today in Israel there's still a remnant. There are Jewish people who really do love Jesus. I met him when I went to Israel. I'm on an apostolic council with some national leaders, some international leaders. We meet a couple of times a year. One of them is a Jewish leader who oversees a lot of church planning in Israel and around America. And he loves Jesus. And there are people who are Jewish and love Jesus. And what he is saying is that as the Gentiles grow in number eventually the heart of the Jewish people will turn. And I'm hoping and praying that there will be some sort of revival in the future where the Jewish people come back to the Jewish savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. So there's hope for the Jewish people. And we need to be praying for the Jewish people. We need to be praying for all people. But the way it looks is simply this, that ultimately God did not fail but His people failed to respond to His love and His affection. Now that being said, next slide, please. Here's the question. Okay, if that's what is happening with the Jewish people, what is happening with those of us who are Gentile? Okay, how did God graft us in Israel? Romans 11:16-20, "If the dough offered," and he's quoting here from numbers 15 which was the dough offering. And if in our offering he bring a different kind of dough, but it's the same big idea, okay. "If the dough offered as first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches," cause effect first and second, "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot." So those of us who are Gentiles we're the wild olive shoot, "Were grafted in among the others," those are Jewish believers. "And now sharing the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches." What happened with the Jewish people, they're like, "God chose us, we're His people. He always takes care of." And they became arrogant. Now that the Gentiles are grafted in we need to make sure that we don't have the same sense of arrogance that we don't presume upon God's grace. "If you are, remember that it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief." The way you get cut off is unbelief. "But you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear." Is gonna talk about two ways to keep from apostasy. The big overarching ideas in Romans 11, are apostasy in a remnant. Apostasy is those who are with God's people but they're not one of

God's people. That they grow up in an environment of believing in the nation of Israel. This would be you're born into a believing home. That would be today you're born into a Christian family. They went to a religious school. This would be the equivalent today of going to a Christian school or being homeschooled in a Christian home. They were educated in a Christian college. This would be like going to a Christian college. They're surrounded with faith but they're not filled with faith. They walk away from the faith even though they know what the truth is, they don't love it. That's apostasy. But there is some who are a remnant. And what he's speaking to is the remnant, the minority, the few who still hold true. And what he's saying is how do you guard your heart from apostasy? And if you're a believer, this is really important. Because as the Jewish people don't care, you could not care, as their children stopped caring, your children could stop caring. And what he says first and foremost it begins with first fruits. Now this is a strange concept for us. But first fruits in the Bible means first and best. And he's talking here about the dough offering in the first fruits. So there were many offerings in the Old Testament. But pretty much whatever your vocation was, you would give your first and best from it to the Lord. So if you're a rancher, you give a percentage of your flocks. If you're a farmer, you give a percentage of your crops. Apparently this person is a baker, and they give a percentage of their dough. And to give the first and the best, is to worship God with your first and your best, okay? And in the Old Testament this was a tithe. The tithe literally means a ten percent. So we can hear they're like, "Can you tithe 4%?" It means 10%, okay? So guess what it is, it's 10%. And for believers, we see it as a floor not a ceiling. And that ultimately the reason that we give first is we give our first and best to God because here's the big idea, God can do more with 90% that is consecrated to Him than a hundred percent that is not. If you believe that God is involved in your business and your life and your finances, you want to give to Him and invite him to use that for his purposes and to bless the rest of, and the multiply what you have. And so ultimately within this, it's an act of worship because Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, your heart is." That your heart follows your money. This is why our wealth says, in God we trust. it should say, in this God we trust. The most Americans feel far more confidence in their portfolio than they do in the Lord who is over their portfolio. And so what we see here is if you give to the Lord, your heart then follows the Lord. I'll tell you this, people who stop giving eventually stop caring about the Lord. Because your treasure follows your heart. And so by giving first, you're committing and consecrating your heart and all of your life to the Lord. And let me say this, some of you will struggle with this. I talked to a guy not too long ago. He came to me, he's a newer Christian. He says, "How much do I need to give to God? And I looked at him and said, "You need to give a hundred percent." He looked at me like, "What, no." And then I said, this, I said, "Of your sin." And he smiled. He's like, "Oh, great, no problem." With a hundred percent sin time. All in for it, how many of you? You're like, Jesus is like, "I'll take your sin." "Like, okay, do you want 10%?" He's like, "I want a hundred percent." I'm like, "Oh, you can have it." So before we give God our best, we give God our worst. And what God gives us is a hundred percent of His best. We give him a hundred percent of our worst, our sin, He gives us a hundred percent of His best. The Lord, Jesus Christ. God so loved the world that He gave us His only son. That we get Jesus in exchange for sin. This is the mystery of the Christian faith. We give God our worst, He gives us His best. We give Him our sin, He gives us His son. And then the rest of what we give Him is 10% of what is already His. See, some people say, "Why do I need to give my wealth to God?"

My question is, it's really great that God shares His wealth with me. I don't look at it that I give 10% of my money to God. I look at it that God lets me keep 90% of His money. He could have went the other way and said we're gonna do a 90/10 split. "I'm taking 90." I would've been like, "Well, it's all yours. 10% is still pretty good." But the 10/90 split in my favor? I'm super excited about that. And the problem that we have in our day is that we tend to think of worship as just songs we sing and not sacrifices we make. He's going to get into this in Romans 12, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto the Lord. This is your spiritual act of worship. And so in the Bible, when people come to worship they never come empty handed. They never come empty handed. They always bring something as a sacrifice. You can't worship God unless you come with something in your hand. Now the problem in our culture is the government has leapfrog God and taken the place of first fruits. How many of you, you don't get paid your full amount, the government was in the waterfall upstream and cut in before God and took what was first fruits. See, God wants us to give freely. The government isn't so gracious. I realized this when I was 16 years of age. I had my first job, I didn't make a lot an hour. And then I totaled up my hours and I thought I had a number for my first paycheck. And I was really excited and I got it. And the number was last. It was last. And I was like, "What the heck?" And so I looked and the government took God's place, and I looked, and the first money taken was someone named FICA. And I was like, "That's a brand new four letter F-word I did not know. Who is FICA and what the FICA are they doing taking my money? You see, I'm a wild Gentile, okay? So what he says is, first fruits, give first and best to the Lord. And then secondly, he uses this analogy from olive branches, olive trees and olive presses. That in the ancient world, the olive tree was very important for the sustenance of your business in your life and your family. You would use the olive oil for cooking, for medicinal purposes, to light your lamp. It was a multifunction agrarian staple. The result is if you have a good olive tree, you're really blessed because a good olive tree could last for three to 400 years and bless generations of your family. And you can read a lot in the Bible about olive trees and olive oil and olive presses. And even where Jesus was on the night that He was betrayed, in the Garden of Gethsemane, was literally an olive growth. He was surrounded by olive trees and olive trees are pressed for their oil in the same way that Jesus was pressed until literally blood flowed out of his body as a sacrifice for our sin. That being said, there are three kinds of olive trees according to what I've studied. And I'll be honest with you. I don't know a lot about gardening, okay? Here's what I know. It's outside. That's all I know, okay? But I did do a little bit of research. There are three kinds of olive trees and olive branches. Number one, there are those that are wild. The wild branches and trees, they're worthless. They don't bear fruit. They're not very profitable. They're useless and worthless. That is what he calls unbelieving Gentiles. That's where we start. Some of you're like, "I'm really great." Compared to the other worthless olive trees, congratulations, you're a fantastic worthless olive tree. And we all start there, we all start there wild. So those are, how many of you before you met the Lord you started pretty wild, pretty wild? I can tell, neck tattoo, I can tell. I can tell, right? I can tell. Claire Hills, I can tell. Hungover, I can tell. And there are people that are like, "Stop talking about my family." Okay, I can tell. That's where we start. We start as the wild olive branches. The second category that he speaks of are the cultivated olive branches and olive trees. To cultivate would mean you would need to have a gardener who paid careful attention and was really devoted. And what that means is that a cultivated olive tree could be

fruitful for three to 400 years, but it would require cultivation and pruning. Oh, that's a sucker branch. That's a sucker branch. That's a sucker branch. That's a sucker branch. That's an infection. That's a dangerous bug. That's a rodent. You're going to need to tend to it. To be a believer in Jesus Christ is to be grafted in and to be willing to be cultivated, and pruned. This is where a lot of Christians, they like being grafted but they don't like being cultivated. They don't want to be pruned. Some of you right now you have painful things going on in your life. It's not punishment, it's pruning. It's not because God hates you, but because He loves you. And what He knows is that there are parts of you that are still a bit wild and He needs to prune those. This is what the Bible means by repentance. I changed my mind and change my behavior by the power of the Holy spirit. Some things that were in my life need to get cut out. Some relationships, some beliefs, some attitudes some responses, some convictions, some expenditures, they need to get cut out. They literally need to get pruned away so that I could be more fruitful. So they would have cultivated all the branches and trees. And then there were those who were cut, they were grafted in. And so what he's saying is that God started with the first fruits of Abraham and the Jewish people in the Hebrew, Old Testament, and then those of us who were the wild Gentiles, we were the wild branches, we were grafted in. And what that means is that the Jewish people were there first and we were there second. That we're reading their Old Testament. We're learning from literally their physical and spiritual descendants and forefathers and mothers that we're worshiping their Jesus that we're trusting in their prophecies that God gave to and through them, that were grafted in, that were grafted in. So I wrote it down, but our faith is like a seed planted with God's promise to Abraham. It's rooted in the patriarchs. It sprouted into the nation of Israel. It brought forth the fruit of scripture in the Lord, Jesus Christ. But today the majority of believers, they're not Jewish, they're Gentiles, billions of us across planet earth. And the point is simply this, that ultimately God can work anywhere with anyone and he can graft anyone anywhere in to the faith of Abraham and the family of Abraham by faith, okay? Just think about us right here. We're all from different nations. We all started in different places. But here we are in the church because we've been grafted in to the life of Jesus Christ. And the key to being fruitful is abiding in that relationship. Jesus says, "If you abide in me and I abide in you, you'll bear much fruit. But if you don't abide in me and I don't abide in you, you can't accomplish anything." That ultimately the key is to stay grafted into Jesus and pruned by Jesus. Now I've got a little bit of a photo that kind of illustrates the big idea. At the bottom is the root or the trunk to use the language of Romans 11. At fall season it was fruitful but then new branches grew up and/or were grafted in. And now these new branches are the fruitful ones. So in Paul's mind that the Jewish people are kinda like the trunk and then the church of Jesus Christ across the Gentile nations are like the wild branches. So there's the Africans. There's the Brazilians. There's the Chinese. I don't know if there's any Christians in Canada, but if so they're right there grafted into the root, okay? They would be offended but they haven't got the internet yet. So they don't know what I'm talking about. So that being said, do you see the analogy? So there needs to be a great appreciation for us for the spiritual heritage that preceded us. Lastly, here's this big idea at the end. What is our warning from Israel? If God really used them for generations, and then they stopped caring, and now God is using the Gentiles, we need to make sure that we don't fall into that same pattern of dishonor, disregard, disrespect, presumption, assumption, and entitlement. Here's how he says it in Romans

11:21-24, "For if God did not spare the natural branches," those are the physical descendants of Abraham, "Neither will He spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God." Those are the two relationships with people and God. It's either kindness or severity. It's either heaven or hell. It's either forgiveness or punishment. He goes on, "Severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness." That's the perseverance of the saints. The true believers don't walk away. Eventually if they do, they come back. But the apostasy is when you walk away and never return. Those who are faithful, they abide, they continue. And if they do wander astray, they return. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even if they do not continue in their unbelief will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again, for if you were cut off from what is by nature, a wild olive tree, and grafted, God saying, "I took dead branches off the ground. And I supernaturally grafted them in." God did a miracle to make us believers, contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree. How much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree? Here's what he's saying. Number one, God is obligated to no one. See we live in a day when we assume that everyone should be forgiven, that everyone should go to heaven, that everyone should be loved. God is obligated to no one. And anyone who receives anything, it is the grace of God, not the obligation of God that provides that for them. This allows us to maintain an attitude of gratitude. That what I have is a gift, nothing that I have earned. It is a gift from God. This includes salvation, the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and being grafted into the Lord Jesus Christ. God is obligated to no one, but He is good toward many. In addition, what he's saying here is this, that God doesn't have to work through you, your people, your nation, your culture, your language. God is very creative and He can just take a dead branch anywhere, grafted in, and now there's a whole new fruitful part of the church of Jesus Christ. And we've seen this as the light of faith dimmed a bit in Europe. It started to burn brighter in places like China and Africa. Today we're seeing it burn a bit brighter in places like Brazil. And so as some nations go more apostate, they have benefited from their faith heritage or from the biblical principles that guided them. There are other places that are getting really excited about Jesus and the Bible. And for you and I, we need to understand that what He's talking about in Romans 11 is not just what happened but what always happened. Not just what happened in the nation of Israel but happens in any nation that is living under some measure of God's provision and blessing. That not all Jewish people were believers but there was a blessing that came over them from God. In the same way, I don't believe that America was, or is a Christian nation. I believe that in addition to many who were the remnant that helped found and have helped to preserve and lead this nation, there was also widespread apostasy. There were those who were Unitarians and deists that are part of our history. Thomas Jefferson sat down at the white house with a pair of scissors and cut all the parts of the New Testament out that he disagreed with, including the miracles resulting in what he called the philosophy of Jesus Christ. And he took Jesus from a savior and a Lord to a philosopher and an idealist. So we just can't say that any nation or people group is pure but there's been a remnant within the nation of Israel within our nation and other nations, that did carry forth some biblical principles that the rest of us have been benefited and blessed by. And the point is, we need to ask ourselves am I gonna be part of the remnant or will I be part of the apostate? Am I going to continue to love and serve God? Or will I just take God's blessings and benefits and reject the relationship that I would be grafted into Him, that I would

abide in Him, that I would allow Him to cultivate and prune me to change me, or am I going to love my sin and my rebellion so much that I'm going to cut myself off? That's what he says. And so what he's ultimately saying is this, you can be born into a Christian family but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You could be born into a Christian church but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can attend a Christian school but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can be baptized but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can speak in tongues but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can read books about Jesus but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can study the Bible but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. You can sing the worship songs but you need to be grafted in to Jesus Christ. That it's about this life giving Holy Spirit empowered relationship through faith in and relationship with Jesus Christ. And so in the end, there are only two categories of people. And this is where Paul summarizes and concludes. Number one, those who are grafted into Jesus Christ and being cultivated. And it's saying, "Jesus, you have the right to tell me what to think and what to do. Jesus, you have the right to change my conduct and my character. Jesus, you have the right to rebuke me and to say that some things that I'm believing or ways that I'm behaving are just wrong and you're right, and they need to change. And by your grace, they can." You're either grafted in and cultivated. And let me say this friend, lots of people wanna be grafted in but they don't wanna be cultivated. I want Jesus to forgive me, but not change me. I want him to be savior, but not Lord. I want him to have a relationship with me but not a relationship that changes me. To be grafted in requires you must be cultivated. And if you refuse to be grafted in and/or cultivated, what he says is you will cut yourself off. This is what happens with apostasy. I don't like what God says. Well, but that's what He says. Therefore, I cut myself off. I want to do what God forbids me to do. No, If you do that you're cutting yourself off. How many of us know people who have gone apostate? They've literally cut themselves off. And it's either because they don't want to be grafted in or they know if they're grafted in they're going to be pruned and cultivated and they would choose their sin instead of their savior. I love you with all my heart. I'm your pastor. I want you to be grafted in. Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Do you follow Jesus? I want you to be cultivated. Are you growing and being pruned? Changing in your relationship with Jesus Christ. I don't want you to go apostate and be cut off because those branches ultimately are just thrown into a fire, and they burned forever. And I want better for you. So what we're gonna do in a moment, I want you to just consider whether you're grafted in and what areas of your life God is cultivating? I just sense in the spirit right now. Some of you are asking, "Okay, am I grafted in? Do I belong to Jesus?" And some of you are asking, "Am I willing to be cultivated? Are there areas of my life that I'm willing to have pruned?" And as you answer those questions in your own heart, prepare yourself to worship Jesus. We're gonna share a testimony with you. One of our volunteer worship leaders, we filmed this on a Wednesday night at Real Men. And I want you to see that there is sometimes this demonic hatred toward Jewish people. But that ultimately the Jewish Jesus can save anyone anywhere, forgive anything, graft anyone in, and cultivate and prune anyone of anything. And actually not only are we grafted in, we're grafted in together so that people who are previously enemy then become family. And it's a great testimony. The difference between testimony and biography, biography is we tell the story of our life, and, I'm the hero. Testimony is here's story of my life, God's the hero. And you lead worship here at the church, which is kind of unexpected provided

some of your backgrounds. So they're all wondering who you are and what you've done, maybe introduce yourself where you're from and then start your story. And I'll help navigate along the way.

- Yes, I will. Well, first of all, thank you for giving me an opportunity. My name is Johannes. I grew up in Germany. I moved here six years ago with my wife and two kids at the time. And I'm a little bit of the way I got saved. So I grew up in a very Christian legalistic home.

- Lot of rules, not a lot of relationships.

- A lot of rules, and I hated my picture of Christ. I was like, I want nothing to do with that guy 'cause giant kill joy in the sky. I don't wanna associate with Him.

- Where were you at in Germany?

- We were close to Frankfurt. About 45 minutes more in the countryside. And at the time when I was about 14, 15 years old, there was a very strong alt-right movement going on in that area.

- We were there outside of Frankfurt in the lower Ryan, Grace and I were a lot of immigration of devout Muslim families, and they hang together and they stick together, and they are a unified front and force.

- Exactly, and Germany after the World War II our identity is still really damaged. So I didn't grow up with any identity in anything. Then there was this movement that all of a sudden, interestingly enough, through music and the devil used to be a worship leader. And music is still his thing, through very strong, very, I think, demonic music, they brought us into that fold of that white supremacist-

- Almost like a counterfeit abortion.

- Yes, exactly. And I can tell you the emotions you feel. I mean, it wasn't well produced. Those were like basement recordings. People didn't really know what they were doing with their instruments, but the spirit in it was just electrifying for us. And so it united us, it gave us all of a sudden identity, it gave us unity-

- Like anthems.

- Anthems, it was powerful.

- Were you a musician at that time or were you involved musically?

- I was just getting to play the guitar. So I always loved music. I just found a recording of me leading at a birthday party, a bunch of neo-Nazis in old SS hymns. And now I'm leading worship-

- [Mark] Old Nazi Germany hymns?

- Yes, which you don't sing them here for sure. Yeah, there it is. Look at that.

- [Mark] So that's you with the guitar?

- [Johannes] That's me with a guitar.

- [Mark] And how old are you?

- [Johannes] I am about 20 years old. Yeah, so I was still pretty young.

- And you're fully into Nazi propaganda, white supremacy.

- Yes, and here's the thing. And you taught that so well on Pharaoh and how his heart got hardened. I had a conscious obviously, and I had concerned teachers, I had praying parents. They didn't know what to do, but they were praying. They were reaching out to me, but I chose to harden my heart. Every time I knew like this isn't right. I shouldn't celebrate this kind of a worldview. And I would dig deeper. I would find my own science about anthropology and why there is white supremacy and white-

- Evolution, and we're more advanced, certain people are more primitive.

- Exactly, yes, it builds your own alternative reality. And it brought me deeper and deeper and deeper into this stuff. And I was so lost. We were so isolated. So were you into violence, crime, drugs? Well, how, I mean-

- Yes, it starts with music. It starts with the drinking in the party but as you dig deeper you're not a skinhead anymore drinking beer, you becoming an activist. So we were planning attacks. Some of my friend's friends went to prison. We were in marches. We would go out and reach out to young kids. I had music-

- [Mark] Recruiting in counterfeit of evangelism.

- Exactly.

- [Mark] So is that an event you were at?

- Yes, that was actually one of the events where God really touched my heart. So this is actually 2007. I think I got saved in 2006, but I didn't have that 180 degree. And there was a pastor who just started a small Calvary Chapel in Germany of all places-



- Yeah, good Bible teaching movement.

- Good Bible teaching, and he started a series on the devil and the demonic. And I, my eyes were just like, what? It struck such a nerve because he didn't start with Jesus. He started with the devil and I was very familiar with that stuff. Unknowingly, all of a sudden I understood so much of that hate, that just demonic destruction that I was worshiping.

- Were there cultic parts to that?

- Yes, so there are strong ties to the very like pagan, Germanic worship, a lot of black metal and satanic kind of blending in. So I saw some crazy things and I heard some crazy things. So I knew all of a sudden in that church, I felt like, "Okay, this is the real deal. I'm on the wrong side." But it took me longer to come out of the grave. I think He called me right there. And we sing, I ran out of that grave. It took me a year to crawl out that grave.

- kinda stumbled out.

- Our pastor reached out to me and said like, "Hey." 'Cause he was the only one I was kinda open to. I was still very skeptical of the church, Christians. And he reached out and said you should come to this conference. There's a worship. It was actually a leadership conference from the Calvary Chapel movements there. And I said, "Yes, I need to be there, I kinda don't want to, but I really know I need to be there." I went there. I can tell you it was all of a sudden I was out of the grief. The worship, I was weeping. I was telling these guys about my story. They were laying hands on me. They were praying for the Holy spirit to do a work in me. And that just set off a complete new life. And I was very alone at first 'cause I said bye-bye to my friends, and they said bye-bye to me because when you leave these kind of movements it's not like, "Yeah, see you later." It's like, you're done. You can be glad if we not find you somewhere alone and something happens. And so I was just for a few months, I didn't have internet, I didn't have a TV at home. I was just reading the Bible. I was often on my face crying. It was so clear to me all of a sudden. But I celebrated and justified and glorified the most crazy hatred against God's people. I was glorifying the craziest genocide ever happening. It was so clear to me like I deserve nothing but hell. I am the worst sinner of all. And I can identify when Paul says that about himself. I just really felt that. And God saving me and calling me out of that grave, that was 100% him, 0% me, and that is my testimony.

- Amen, that's awesome. So did you start working for a Jewish ministry then?

- No, so that story, it's interesting. So we were part of a small church planned in Dusseldorf and we were doing outreach one day and we had somebody from the Jews of Jesus come over, which is a messianic, Jesus believing-

- So you're on their team now?

- I'm not working for them but I did evangelism with them. And the guy didn't know it.
- So you're out doing Jews for Jesus evangelism in Germany?
- Yes, that's Jesus, right? That is crazy.
- Yeah, you were chosen brother. I'm just telling you here-
- And I told him. I told him later, like told him my story and we hugged, we cried. And he said the same thing to all the people in the room saying, "That is the miracle from God that we see here."
- And then how about ministry, marriage, What's it been like since then?
- Well, I met my beautiful wife who's actually snuck in the back, I think somewhere to hear this. And my wife, Leah, we met in 2007, later. And then we, yes, there's a family right there. And we got married in 2009. And yeah, we've been in ministry ever since.
- [Mark] You guys lead worship together.
- We lead worship together. We started the worship ministry at the church plant. And it's just that grace of God and now being able to lead His people in worship, versus what I used to do with my guitar before is still is just an absolute miracle to me.
- It is. Well, we love you, we thank you and your family for serving.
- Thank you.
- Last thing I would ask, if somebody is hearing this and they're like I've done some stuff that I'm not sure can be forgiven. I know that Jesus can forgive and there's grace for some but some of the things I've done, I'm not sure there's grace for me. Just in closing, what would you tell that person?
- If there's grace for me there's grace for you. Because the Bible, Jesus says, "If you only hate your brother is as if you kill him." So I am literally a mass murderer. I am responsible in the eyes of the Lord for genocide. That is my heart and that's how God saw me. So that's how lost I was. So whatever you did, whatever you believe, whatever you've done, there is hope for you and please don't keep hardening your heart. He's giving you chances He gave me, many, many chances. And please don't harden your heart 'cause it's gonna drive you deeper and deeper and deeper into whatever you're into or away from the Lord. And don't wait, come to Him running now. If there's hope for me, there's hope for you.
- Amen, we love you, thanks for this worship with you.

- Thank you.

- I'm so glad. Amen.