

“God’s Vindication of His Righteousness, Part 2”

A Study of the Book of Romans

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Key Truth: God vindicates his righteousness by showing that he exercises his Mercy freely.

In these verses, Paul gives us an exegetical key (mercy), that helps us navigate a theological quandary that’s been daunting the Christian Church for centuries – God’s Sovereignty vs. Human Responsibility. To begin understanding this seeming contradiction is to recognize that they both are correct. God’s mercy, then, may be the key to reconciling the truthfulness of both God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. Why do we need mercy? Because “all we like sheep have gone astray; we’ve turned – everyone – to his own way.” (Isaiah 53:6). We’ve sinned willfully and deserve punishment. Why do we pray for mercy? Because God is free to give it or withhold it from us, and therefore, since he’s not obligated to give us mercy; we must ask for it from his gracious and compassionate hand.

DISCUSS

Read **Romans 9:10-18** and discuss with the group a statement or concept that stood out to you or impacted you in part two of the sermon entitled “**God’s Vindication of His Righteousness.**”

DIG IN

1. God’s Mercy is not based on Human Goodness. (Romans 9:11-15)

What specifically was Rebekah told about Jacob and Esau (v. 12)? Why was it important that this was decided before they were born?

Read Psalm 5:4-5: What does this verse say about those whom God hates? How does this help us understand Romans 9:12-13?

Why is it important that God’s mercy toward us is not based on our goodness or badness?

Read Psalm 145:8-9: In what ways does God show his mercy to all people? Why might we call this benevolent mercy?

In what ways is God’s saving mercy different than his benevolent mercy (see Ephesians 2:4-5)?

2. God’s Mercy is not based on Human Will. (Romans 9:16-18)

Read John 1:12-13: In what ways do these verses speak of both God’s sovereignty and human responsibility?

In what ways should we understand that God’s saving mercy is not based on human will or exertion (see Titus 3:4-5)?

Why was it important that God harden Pharaoh’s heart in refusing to let the Israelites go (see Exodus 9:12-16)?

DO

What lessons do you learn from these verses that you will take with you throughout the coming week?