

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 14- Luke 14:15-24

259- The Glory of the New Covenant

October 12, 2014

Luke 14:15-24

15 When one of those who were reclining *at the table* with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

16 But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

19 "Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

20 "Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

21 "And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

22 "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.'

24 'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

To the Glory of God

Now it is said that the most important real estate in all the world is 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.- at the White House. And periodically the President hosts a dinner- usually in the State Room- where dignitaries from all over the world come to eat with the most powerful man in all the world.

Recently two people crashed a White House State Dinner. Two people just walked on into the White House- without being invited and without being on the guest list, and they walked up and shook the President's hand, and they took pictures of themselves standing next to the President, and it really developed into quite a scandal- because these two people were not on any list and they basically just crashed the party.

But when the President of the United States invites you to come to a dinner- you come, and then you can brag about being invited to an official dinner at the White House for the rest of your life.

To be invited to any dinner- at any house is an honor, and it reflects how much the host thinks about you. Usually only family and a maybe a few friends are invited to a family function and to dinner- and so it is the highlight of your week, or your entire year to be asked to attend certain dinners. And absent a life and death situation- you do everything in your power to come. And when you go to an invited dinner like that- you wear your best and you are on your best behavior.

During the 2nd World War- American soldiers were captured on the Philipian Islands in early 1942 and spent the next three years in prison camps. A man that I used to work with when I worked at the ship yard was like this. He was part of the Bataan Death March and was a prisoner of war for over three long years.

Mr. Donnavan was made to work long hours under brutal conditions and his ration was a handful of uncooked rice and half a rusty can of water- every other day. And he told me of great horrors as cultured and educated men became like animals and would kill another human being in a second if that meant he could get something to eat. Going without food- over an extended period of time- changes your entire perspective about everything- including the value of human life and even your view about God.

Now 2,000 years ago in the Middle East- things were not as prosperous as they are here in American in the 21st Century. People were basically very poor and life was very hard. The average Jew in

Israel during the days of the earthy Ministry of Jesus- rejoiced and thanked God that he had just enough food to feed his family for one day- because that man would personally know about many families who had young children in them that actually and literally starved to death. So the thought that you had enough food to feed your family for a whole day or a week or even a whole month was a luxury that few people could ever know.

The battle to have enough food to eat was a daily battle and one that was on the minds of almost everybody that you knew. How to get enough food for that day and how to prepare it was the main topic of conversation of everybody during those days.

And during those days- people were literally lying on the sides of the street begging for food- all along the roads- there were emaciated children- staring out at you from the hollow eyes of someone just before they die of starvation- all that was common in Israel.

And in the midst of all that- here is the incarnate God- giving a Parable to self-righteous Jews- who have been totally deceived by the demonic false religion that they themselves had created- and the Parable is about being invited to a big dinner.

And the gist of this Parable is that the people who have been invited to a very important dinner refused to come and they refused for the flimsiest of reasons, and so the host tells his servants to go out and invite the worst people in the world to take the place of those who were originally invited and yet refused to come.

Now remember the setting here. Dr. Luke has already spent 14 verses of Chapter 14 going over the issue of humility as Jesus gives one Parable after the other that basically all say the same thing- that the only people who are going to be in Heaven are those who have been graced by God to understand that there is no good thing in them, that they have nothing about them, and nothing that they are doing that makes them attractive to God. And so the point of all that Jesus has been teaching up to this point is that unless these people repent and beg God for a Mercy that they do not deserve and a Grace that they cannot earn- they will never see Heaven.

The point is that all their religious duties and all their sacrifices and all their ceremonies and their rituals and all their washings, and sitting down and counting the seeds that are going to be planted in their field and paying tithe on ten percent of their seeds, and all their

prayers, and all their long drawn out cries and tearing their garments and shaving their heads- all of that has not brought them one inch closer to God than the prostitute down the street.

In other words- Jesus is telling these Jews that their religion is all wrong, and that if they understand what they are doing and believe in what they are doing- they cannot possibly be saved. And this is the way it is with false teaching in our day.

People ask me all the time if it is possible for someone who attends a particular religious group to be saved. And my answer is always the same. If they do not understand what they are being taught and they don't believe what they are being taught- then, yes, there is hope and they could possibly be saved. But if a person understands false doctrine and he believes that false doctrine about the essential elements of Salvation- then he cannot possibly be saved.

In order to be saved- you must believe the Truth about Jesus and the Truth about yourself and the Truth about Sin and the Truth about Forgiveness. Any false teaching about those issues will result in the person who believes them being deceived and remaining lost. And anyone who has previously believed false doctrine about those issues must first reject that false doctrine and embrace the Truth before he can be saved.

Remember, dear friends- Christianity is the only religion in the history of the world that teaches that we are forgiven and saved based on what we *believe* and not on what we *do*. What we do- how we live our lives- is only important *after* we are saved. So how we live our lives, what religious ceremonies we partake of, what rituals we follow, how moral or how immoral we are- none of that has anything at all to do with being forgiven and initially justified.

We are not justified by works, dear fiends- not even good moral religious works. We are saved by Grace, and we are saved through the gift of "Saving Faith", and all of that is by and through a Sovereign Act of God alone. God the Holy Spirit comes down to where we are- in the filth and wickedness of our darkest moment and He forcefully and violently steals us away from satan and he forcefully imposes upon us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe.

And God the Holy Spirit does all this *before* we ask for it and *without* us co-operating with Him in it, and with those new eyes that can see Truth, and with those new ears that can now hear Truth, and

with that new heart that can now believe Truth- we repent of our sin and trust in Jesus Personally and in His finished Work- and God saves us to the uttermost.

And God the Holy Spirit lives inside of us- to transform our nature and give us the gift of love for God And He then writes the Law of God on our hearts and empowers us to love and serve God joyfully. And that is why we become convicted of sin and why we become convicted of our old ways, and so God touches us like the angel touched Jacob after he wrestled with him all night long, and when God touches us- we begin to walk differently than the world. And *that* is the point where how we live and what we do begins to matter- *after* we have been born again and justified.

And so because it is true that we are saved by what we *believe* and not by what we *do*- then what we believe is very important and we have a great need to hear and to know and to understand and to learn and to grasp and to believe and to love Divine Truth.

And the more Jesus draws a clear distinction between these purveyors of false religion and Himself- the angrier these guys are getting at Him. They don't think His teachings are good at all- they think Jesus is the devil sent from hell to tear up all that these men have been working so hard to build for many centuries. And you know what- they're partially right. Jesus was sent by God- not the devil- to shatter their hold on the people by speaking Truth to them. And Jesus plans to draw a very clear line between Himself and these men so that everybody can see that the Pharisees and Jesus are not in unity at all with each other.

It is very important to understand that Jesus never went along to get along. He never sought to find "common ground" with these false teachers. Jesus never sought to minimize their differences so they could all hold hands and sway back and forth and sing "Kuhm-Bah-Ya". He confronted these false teachers to their face and called them to repentance.

Now contrast that with today. Today many people in the modern Church think it is the highest sin of all to divide between people over Doctrine. The common logic today by the modern Church is that division over Divine Truth is worse than just about any sin at all. And so to prevent this division- rather than teach Divine Truth so that we can learn it and change to come into conformity with it- Divine Truth is

marginalized and minimized and compromised and left out- so as to preserve the fiction of unity among the people.

Today in many quarters if you are against abortion and for the troops and wave the flag and are against homosexual marriages and say you love Jesus- than that means you are on your way to Heaven- regardless of what you believe about Jesus.

So Jesus has been talking about Humility- real humility- not this pseudo-humility that refuses to learn and know Truth- but *real* humility that agrees with God that we are all sinners, and that if we have any hope at all in being forgiven and saved- we must bow before Jesus and repent.

And in verse 14- Jesus completes His Teaching on Humility by saying that it is a reflection of the condition of our heart to want to be seen at the head table- and who we invite for dinner. And He completes the Teaching by talking about something called "The Resurrection of the Righteous".

Now the Jews were looking forward to the Resurrection of the Righteous, and they saw this event as a very lavish celebration in the very Presence of God. They saw it as a glorious banquet. And that was the way the Prophet Isaiah described it in **Isaiah 25:6-9** where he said,

6 The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, *And* refined, aged wine.

7 And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation."

And Jesus knew what these men believed about this. So when Jesus speaks of the Resurrection of the Righteous it happened to be at a lunch at this Pharisees house and somebody begins to think about the fact that it is going to be wonderful when we all get to the great banquet of God. And so in verse 15 Dr. Luke says this man spoke out and said,

"Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

Now this statement shows two things:

- This shows that all these Jews thought they were going to be in God's Kingdom
- This shows they didn't accept what Jesus had just said about them

Jesus had just finished telling them that they were too proud to enter the Kingdom of God. But they had nothing but scorn for the comments of Jesus, if indeed they bothered to process them at all. These men were convinced that they had *earned* their place in Heaven with God because of all their supposed observance to the Law and their adherence to their own man-made traditions, and so they thought they were going to be the righteous people in the Resurrection of the Righteous, and surely they were the ones who were going to sit at the head table with God Himself.

And so this statement by this man was really a pronouncing of blessing upon their own heads. This is a kind of toast to themselves- affirming that they had completely rejected the indictment that Jesus had just given them.

And so this comment by this man allowed Jesus to take this discussion to the next level and give another Parable here- so in verse 16- in response to what this man just said- Jesus says:

Luke 14:16b

... A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

Now from the way Jesus says this- we can see that this dinner was "big" meaning that this was not a small event for just a few close friends. This dinner was large and extravagant and huge, and that means that the man who gave the dinner was very wealthy and powerful. So this is like being invited to the White House for a State Dinner with the President and other dignitaries.

Now in our day- the invitation to eat with the President at the White House would come in a very personal, formal way like you get at a wedding or to some grand scale banquet. And that invitation would

identify the event, and it would tell you where the dinner will be held and when, and the time you're supposed to be there and how to dress.

But back during Jesus' time- invitations weren't given like that. There is an excellent resource written by Alfred Edersheim- called *"The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah"* which goes into great detail about life in Israel during the first century. And Edersheim says that the actual day and the actual time of a dinner invitation was left open back then. The invitation would only say that the dinner would be some time in the future at a certain person's house- because you lived in a world without clocks and a world without watches and smart phones, and schedules and life in those areas moved at a much slower pace. And the host had to kill the animals and he had to clean them and he had his slaves cook the animals, and they had to get all of the vegetables and everything else you wanted, and so the invitation couldn't be specific as to the exact day and time- but you knew that you were invited. So back then there would actually be two invitations.

The first one told you that you were invited as an honored guest and the second one is found in verse 17- let's read that together:

and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

Now, as Jesus is telling this Parable- the Pharisees are all nodding their heads because they understand exactly what the setting is to His Parable. Back in **Matthew 23:6**- Jesus rebuked them by saying,

They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,

So these Pharisees are getting all excited hearing about Jesus telling this Parable about a great feast at some important person's house because they had been to so many of them and because they enjoyed them so much.

These self-righteous lost people understood how much of an honor it would have been to be invited to something like this and so they were right with Jesus- listening to Him and nodding their heads.

And so at this important dinner in Jesus' Parable- all the animals had been killed and skinned and prepared, and everything had been gathered, and everything was ready, and the slave has now told

everybody who is invited that everything is ready- and now it is time to partake of the blessing of the meal, and these Jews are just hanging on every word that Jesus is saying here and then Jesus just blows their minds with what He says- beginning in verse 18:

Luke 14:18-20

18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

19 "Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

20 "Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

Ever since they got the first invitation- the guests have all been in a state of great anticipation about this important dinner that is coming at some point in the future and now that the moment has arrived- all these people begin making excuses and don't go to the dinner? What is going on? What is Jesus talking about?

Now these Pharisees already thought that Jesus was a fraud anyway, and now as He gets into this part of His parable- they know He's lost His Mind. Nobody would ever do this. This is just plain rude. This is considered outrageous and unacceptable behavior. This would never happen. I mean a wealthy and powerful man has invited people to a great feast and his staff has gone to all the trouble to prepare a massive meal at the last minute- you say I'm sorry I'm not going to come?

In fact, according to some ancient near eastern traditions- to treat a host like this would be a declaration of war, because when you are invited to a meal with someone that was an extension of friendship and when you refused- that was a statement that you wanted no friendship with that individual. And so this would be a declaration of war.

And the Pharisees standing and sitting all around Jesus were now looking at each other in shock and in disgust and saying to each other- *"This is an absurd Story. Nobody would ever do that, let alone all the invited guests- so what is Jesus trying to say here?"*

And the social dictates of that day would demand that if somebody did excuse themselves from such an invitation- that there had to be a

very important and unforeseen event that had suddenly come up- that was a matter of life or death- and so Jesus- knowing their hearts- began to give them a sampling of the excuses that the guests gave to the host- look again at the end of verse 18:

Luke 14:18b

... The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

Now the absurdity of this first excuse would not have been lost on the Pharisees who were listening to Jesus that day. This means that this man in Jesus' Parable had bought a piece of land- "sight unseen". In other words- he paid good money for land that he had never even laid eyes on before, and now- at the very moment that he was going to sit down and eat with this dignitary- he has to suddenly go and check out the land he had already paid for? This would have been a slap in the face to the host.

But then Jesus gave the second example of somebody who had been invited to the great feast and yet thought so little of both the feast and the host that he came up with another very lame excuse- read verse 19 again with me:

Luke 14:19

Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

Now remember that we are talking about an agrarian society in Israel where everybody worked the earth, and so oxen were very important to them. And from this statement by Jesus- we know two things:

1. The fact that this man had five yoke of oxen instead of a single ox indicated that he was a wealthy man
2. The fact that he bought the five yoke of oxen without first checking them out was very bad business

Nobody who needs animals to help develop land and produce crops ever buys them without first checking them out. So this means that this excuse was not real either, and had to do with either not liking the

host or not liking the invitation or both. So the Jews listening to Jesus are really having a hard time trying to figure out what He was talking about here.

Now look at the third excuse given in verse 20:

Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

Now this is the equivalent of saying, *"My wife won't let me"*. And when somebody says that today- we just shake our heads as Bible believing Christians because we realize that this man is not the head of his house and his wife rules over him. Now the fact that this man said, *"I have married a wife"* rather than *"My wife is sick"* or *"My wife is having a bad time and I need to spend some time with her"* we know that this is a case of him being led by his wife rather than him simply being loving toward her.

Treating your wife with kindness is a godly expression of love and is encouraged all through the Word of God. In fact, it would be wrong for a man who has a sick wife at home to go and enjoy himself at such an important dinner and leave her to herself. And by staying home tending to a sick wife- he would be praised by both the Old and New Testaments.

We need to be reminded in our day that it was Jesus and the Apostles who gave dignity to women and to the institution of marriage as opposed to the demonic religions of the East and Near East- which treat women as animals. And yet it is Jesus and Biblical Christianity as articulated by the Apostles in the New Testament that are routinely condemned by those deceived by American feminism- who wage war against God's Divine Order in the Home and in the Church of male leadership and female support.

But that is not the case here. All this is- is another very flimsy excuse as to why this man cannot attend the dinner that he has been invited to. And so by that we know that the excuse that is given is not the real reason.

Now these Pharisees are getting angry at what Jesus is saying. What Jewish man of the 1st Century worth his salt would allow a woman to dictate to him that he cannot attend this very important dinner? But they are also getting a little anxious because there are elements to this Parable that resemble them- and they know it.

Now the normal response might have been that the host would gather his own personal army and go out and slaughter these people who had been graciously invited to his dinner and yet gave the flimsiest of excuses as to why they couldn't come.

But look how Jesus says the host did respond- read verse 21 again:

And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

So you have this massive banquet prepared and everybody who has been invited has given an excuse as to why they cannot come. And the slave comes back, verse 21 and reports to his master these ridiculous excuses which are samples of all the excuses given by everybody who was invited because none of them are going to come. And Jesus says that the head of the household becomes angry and anybody would say that is a just fleshly anger here. But this has been a tremendous effort with a lot of work gone into this dinner a great expense. And all these invited guests have just snubbed their noses up at the host and just walked off with complete indifference and disdain.

And as the Pharisees are leaning in to hear what Jesus is going to say next- the Lord begins to show these religious hypocrites the Glory of the New Covenant. And He is going to show them in a way that they will understand and that will cause them to hate Him all the more.

And he said to the slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame. The celebration will go on. The preparations are made. We won't cancel this event. Every seat will be filled, but it's going to be fulfilled by the most unlikely people.

Now Jesus had just told them back in verses 12-14:

Luke 14:12-14

12 "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment.

13 "But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,*

14 *and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

Now we're talking about the dirty street people here. We're talking about the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. We're talking about the beggars and the outcasts who live in the slums, who live in the shanties- the untouchables. So this powerful man tells his slave to go to the poorest sections of town, the slums. Go find the scum and the riffraff and invite them to come and sit down at my table to eat with me in this glorious feast.

And now this Parable turns from one kind of preposterous idea that the people invited wouldn't come to an equally preposterous idea that this powerful and rich man would invite the scum to his dinner. Neither of these are anywhere near reality in the society of the Jews. Neither would ever happen. The first group would never turn down the invitation and the second group would never ever be invited. The Jews prided themselves on never touching the outcasts and scorning Jesus for associating with prostitutes and tax collectors and sinners. They even confronted the disciples of Jesus as we learned early in Luke and said your master eats with sinners. These people were below the waterline of social acceptance.

But the master says go and bring them, and it would have to be brought. And the verb "bring in", in verse 21, is important. They would have to be physically brought in because they would normally resist it. You see, even the riff-raff of that day know the social protocol.

The elite all stayed together and scratched each other's back. And these people would have said look, I can't repay anything. I don't want to come to a dinner there because I'm going to be obligated to provide one in reciprocation. I can't do that. I have no capability to do that. Plus I'm not worthy to come into that place.

And this is a picture of how these men had completely missed the very Heart of God toward the lost and how they never really wanted the Glory of the New Covenant to come in. These men worked very hard not to be like the dirty Gentiles and the sinful people of their day, and they had successfully cut off the people who were at the greatest need from any hope of ever coming to God for forgiveness and Salvation.

But as ridiculous as this whole thing is- Jesus is not finished yet- now read verse 22 again with me:

Luke 14:22&23

22 "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.'

Now you have to *forcefully* bring these in because they're going to resist you just because they know they can't pay me back. They know they don't belong here in my house with me at my table- they're dirty and unclean and sinful. And so when you go out- it's going to be a more difficult task- so you have to *compel* them to come in. Those people don't even have houses inside the city. They're not allowed to even go into the city. They live outside the city. They are the highway people. They live in the brothels, and the inns, and the roadhouses and along the road and they live in the trees and in the bushes.

And their hard to reach because they're scattered farther away and so you're going to have to compel them to come in because if the people were inside the city, at least they've been accepted into the city. If they have a hard time accepting the fact that they could come to a banquet like this, these outer people are going to have an even harder time. So you really do need to compel them. And the idea of the word compel here is a very strong word.

And by this time in His Parable- the Pharisees are looking at Jesus with their mouths open. What is Jesus talking about? What Jew in their right mind would send his slaves out to compel the dirty and sinful gentiles to come into His House to sit at His Table and to eat with Him at His feast?

And then Jesus looks them right in the eye and tells them the meaning of this Parable- read verse 24 again with me:

Luke 14:24

For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

Now at this point- the application of the Parable takes it into a completely different direction. This Parable has been in the third person

up to this moment. A man, giving a dinner, he sent his slave, and the people made excuses. It's all in the third person.

But all of a sudden in verse 24, we move into the first and second person. So this is no longer the story. This is the application. When Jesus says,

"For I tell you."

He's now directing this Parable at those Pharisees who were sitting right there listening to Him. So this is no longer the man in the Parable and the people who rejected his invitation- this is now Jesus Christ, the sinless Lamb of God, and these religious false teachers who were sitting there around Him on that day.

Now this phrase "I say unto you", or "I am telling you", appears six or seven times in the Gospel of Luke. And every time it's when Jesus applies a story to the audience that is right there with Him on that day. So when Jesus says,

For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.

He is no longer talking about the man in the Parable and his dinner- He is talking about Himself and the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God during the Resurrection of the Righteous. So Jesus is talking about Heaven. And He is talking about the heavenly celebration. Salvation, Eternal Life.

So Jesus is telling these men that they will be totally excluded from the heavenly banquet. Which means they will not be in the Kingdom of God. They will not be among the blessed- nor will they be there at the Resurrection of the Righteous. They will miss it all.

Now these Jews still believed that because of their physical Abrahamic ancestry- that they were the seed of Abraham, and because of their keeping of their traditions- they were going to be in the Resurrection of the Righteous.

But they are not interested in the Message of Jesus Christ or in Jesus Christ Personally. And so when the true Gospel of Salvation came- they wanted to stone Him. These men have no interest in the banquet of God if Jesus Christ is the Door to the banquet hall. They have no interest in the banquet of God if Jesus Christ is the Way.

So these religious Jews are the fools with the frivolous excuses- who hold onto everything except Truth and will follow anybody but Jesus.

So God has been dishonored by these men. God has been scorned. God has been affronted. His goodness and His generosity and His kindness have been treated with utter contempt. And so this is a righteous, just anger- and they know it. They would have said it in their minds. Whoa, that man in the Parable has every right to be angry, and Jesus is telling them that God has every right to be angry with those who reject His Son.

And in **2Thessalonians 1:8** tell us in strong, strong language, unforgettable language, that when the Lord comes He will deal out retribution to those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and they will pay the penalty of eternal destruction.

But this condemnation of the Jewish religion is the Glory of the New Covenant and the rejection of the Jew is the gathering of the Gentile- please turn with me to read **Romans 11**

11 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he pleads with God against Israel?

3 "Lord, *THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.*"

4 But what is the divine response to him? "*I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.*"

5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God's* gracious choice.

6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

8 just as it is written, "*GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.*"

9 And David says, "***LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.***

10 "***LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.***"

11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

14 if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will *their* acceptance be but life from the dead?

16 If the first piece *of dough* is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "*THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.*"

27 "*THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.*"

28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God's* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

30 For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

31 so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

34 For *WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?*

35 Or *WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN?*

36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

Amen. Let's pray.