

# Morning Worship 1\_23\_2022

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## SPEAKERS

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Before we take some time to get a little more deeply into God's Word together on just let you remind you rather have one other opportunity around here. And if you did get one of those bulletins on the way in, you also saw how that wrapped around that was this little flyer for our Bellfield, a small groups. Small groups are one of the most effective ways we think to not only get connected to other people around here, build up some relationships there have some people who can get to know you and pray for you and just go through life alongside of you. But it's also a way for us to grow in our relationship with the Lord as we spend some time studying God's Word together as we prayed with and for one another. And as we deepen in all of those different ways, so we have a number of different small groups that are already happening, and you are able to jump into them. If you're new, or you've not been a part of them before, we also have some new ones that are starting up this semester. And right on that sheet, you'll see just a simple breakdown of the different ones that we have running through this spring semester. If you have questions about any of those, you can find out more on the website, or you can contact the office. But we would love to have you be included in something like that, especially if you're not currently this is again, a wonderful way to get connected to some things around here. So we're trying to make it as simple as possible for you, you can sign up online, you can do that through the website or by emailing the office. To make it as simple as possible with these little forums, if you just fill it out, I'm not even going to tell you somewhere that you have to go and put it just leave it on your seat. You don't have to remember where am I supposed to deposit this after the service, fill it out, leave it on your seat, we'll go around and collect them. If you are interested in any of these groups are finding out more. That's the best way to make that happen. And we will follow up with you about that. So I'd encourage you to take some time to think about that. And to be involved in that in the ways that you are able, we are now going to get a little more deeply into God's Word together. So as I invite you to do every week, I hope that you will have scripture out and open as we go. If you have a personal Bible or Bible app that you like to use, that's wonderful. If you need something, there are red Bibles in all the pews there and once again this morning will be in the New Testament in a letter that's called Romans, right after the four Gospels and the book of Acts, you'll find Roman so have that out. We'll be in chapter 11 here this morning. I have one younger brother, and my wife is an only child. So I have two kids, my brother has three kids, whenever the nine of us get together, it's very obvious how we're all related. Nobody's confused about that. Everybody understands that connections is pretty simple to follow. My maternal grandmother was one of 14 children. They were all born and raised over just over on the north side. My mother has 81

cousins, most of them have a number of different kids and they love to get together in the summers for picnics. So my grandmother obviously knew who her brothers and sisters were. My mom, I think knows who all of her cousins are my dad married into the family, he did a pretty good job of putting names and faces together. But for that next generation down from my brother, and all of those ones, I don't really know who half these people are, we get together for these picnics for these group gatherings. And there are so many people there, I'd meet other kids. And we would all assume that we've got to be related somehow, I suppose. But that's about as far as any of it got. And even to this day, I can give you a kind of general sketch of that side of the family tree. But I'm honestly not sure how most of those branches fit together. I bring that up because when the Apostle Paul was writing to the Christians in the ancient city of Rome, he wrote to a diverse community and they weren't always sure how exactly they fit together. They had some questions about how are we related to one another? What are the points of connection here? What does it mean for us to be in this together? The reasons they had these questions are that many in that community came from an ethnically and culturally and religiously Jewish background. Many others came from an ethnically and culturally and religiously Gentile that is non Jewish background, and they weren't sure if God related to all of them in the same way. They weren't sure what it meant for them to be in a community together. They knew that they believed in Jesus that was the common denominator. They didn't really know how all of these other factors came into play or how that might influence the way in which they lived and worshiped and served the Lord together. Most of you know that we're in the midst of an extended study that we've been doing in this letter that Paul wrote to that congregation we call that letter Romans. It's one of the most famous portions in Scripture it's full of just deeply profound and really soul stirring truths. It also has some parts that can be a little harder to understand just at a first glance, all of it though, all of it is incredibly vital, incredibly relevant even for us. As we were sitting here today, so we're gonna get back into it here this morning. But before we do, I mean by you once more, to pray with me. Great and gracious God we thank you for the time that we have to be here together. Gord quiets are distracted minds. Calm are distraught hearts. Let us see Hear what it is that you have to say today. And let us respond in ways that demonstrate our love for you, and our love for others. Father, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts would be acceptable in Your sight, we pray this, in the name of Jesus. Amen. If you have been with us through any of this time that we've been studying this letter, or even if you just read Romans on your own, and you're familiar with it, you know that the first eight chapters are full of some of the most famous phrases, and verses and expressions in all of Scripture. And it all builds up to this really stirring crescendo at the end of chapter eight, when Paul says, Because of this, because of the gospel, because of what Jesus has done, since there's nothing that could possibly separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord, it's big, just triumphant declaration. And then as we've seen, we get into chapters nine through 11, it kind of feels like maybe you're riding your bike along the pavement, all of a sudden, you hit some sand and you're trying to ride your bike through Santa just it's a little a little more difficult. There's a little more i challenging ideas going on here. Maybe we're not sure all these references that Paul is getting at Chapters nine through 11 have some pretty nuanced theology, they do have some difficult concepts there, we can acknowledge that. But remember, as I shared with you many times what the context is of this group to whom Paul is writing. Many come from a Jewish background, many from a Gentile background. So there were a lot of questions that were coming to their minds as they were being faced, or being presented with the good news of the gospel. One of the most pressing questions, especially for the Christians coming from a Jewish background was, Well, if God had made these promises to Abraham, and through Abraham to the nation of Israel, but now, not only are the Gentiles being brought in to be part of the Kingdom of God, but there are many Israelites who have not accepted Jesus, then how does all this fit together? What what's going on here? That was one of the biggest questions that they had. And as we learn, look at our time here this morning, and this particular passage, this is one, it is very easy to just get down into the theological weeds, and there's some fascinating stuff there. I enjoy talking about it. I'll follow up with any of you if you want to afterwards. I don't want to get so far down in there, though, that we

missed some of the heavy questions that would have been on the hearts of Paul and a lot of the people in the congregation some of the questions that I think were on their hearts that we'll look at here this morning, are these first is God, always faithful to His people? Second question is, what is the basis of our relationship with God? And then third, who belongs to the people of God? Who are the people of God? So these are, again, pretty significant questions. Even if we don't understand all the concepts, we hear those ones, I hope you can hear those ones and recognize those are meaningful those those are questions that I have perhaps even had, in my own life in one way or another. Is God always faithful to His people? It's the basis of our relationship with God, what's it grounded upon? And then who, who is a part of the people of God, who are the people of God? So we'll look at those, try to go through them here. And then I'll offer you just some, some implications, some applications that I think come from how the way in which we answered them from this particular section. Here's the first one those we look at this first question, we'll do so by looking at verses one through five. Is God always faithful to His people? Is Romans chapter 11, beginning in verse one, this is again the word of the Lord. I asked then has gone rejected His people. By no means, for I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, God has not rejected his people who need for new. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars and I alone and left, and they seek my life. But what is God's replied to him, I have kept for myself 7000 men who have not bowed the knee to bail. So to at the present time, there is a remnant chosen by grace. God is always faithful to His people, despite what it may look like despite how bleak the circumstances may seem to be, at first glance, that's what Paul was getting out here in this section, remember the pressing question that they had on their minds if God had chosen Israel to be as people, and yet now many who belong to ethnic Israel? Were not accepting Jesus then has God rejected His people. So Paul asker has got rejected His people. And he immediately says, by no means he's used that phrase a number of times in this letter, and each time I've pointed out to you that the way that's written in the original Greek is the strongest possible way that you can make a negative statement there's no doubt about it is absolutely not. No, there's no question Absolutely not. God is not rejected as people. And they were following up with me saying, well, well then why then why have so many who are descended from Abraham not received Jesus as the Promised Messiah. Back in chapter nine a little bit before, this was where Paul had started to say it's about rightly identifying what is meant by Israel. He said, It's not about genetic descent. That's not the way we define this. It was in chapter nine, where he said, not all descendants of Israel belong to Israel, not all are children of Abraham, because they are his offspring. So you got to stop thinking about along those lines. It's not a genetic line of descent. It's a spiritual point of identity, says Israel is a spiritual point of identity. It's not about genetic or ethnic or cultural points of identity. It's about all of those who have put their faith put their trust in God's promises. Now, it can be challenging, though, in this section, because there are times when he uses the term Israel and his he is referring to a genetic or ethnic identification. But there are other times where he is referring to this spiritual point of identity. The point though, that he's making is this the point is this he said, God is always faithful, even if it's just to a remnant, even if it doesn't seem like there's anything that's happening out there. God is always faithful to His people. Paul uses himself as one example, in verse one. He says, Hey, I'm in Israel light. I'm descended from the tribe of Benjamin, I know that I know, it doesn't look like any Jewish people are receiving Jesus, but I am and there are others. There are those out there. And then he brings up the point of Elijah, the story of Elijah would make a similar point, if you know that story. With the prophet Elijah, this was a time when there were many in the nation of Israel who had who had turned away from God who were worshipping false gods, Ahab had killed a lot of the prophets, there was a persecution going on there. And Elijah read that point. He's saying, He's saying, there's no doesn't seem like there's anything happening here. So they've killed your prophets, if the Monster High Places, I'm the only one left and I think they're about to kill me. And and God says, That's not true. That says, That's not true, or 7000, that I have kept for myself who have not followed in these wicked ways. So he's using that as just a simple example, this would have been a very familiar one, every Jewish Christian would have known

that story to say God is always faithful to His people, he's not going to reject them. The circumstances may look dire, they may look bleak, it may seem as if there's not much happening. He's saying that God is always faithful to His people. Let's go to the second question, then what's the basis of our relationship with God? What's the basis of our relationship with God? We'll look at verses six to 10. To help us answer this one beginning, picking up again rather than verse six. He said, But if it is by grace, it's no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, Grace would no longer be grace. What then Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking, the elect obtained it. But the rest are hard. As it is written, God gave them a spirit of super eyes that would not see an IRS that would not here down to this very day. And David says, Let their table become a snare and a trap, stumbling block and a retribution for them. But their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see and bend to their backs forever. This particular section, Paul is bringing up an idea that he's touched on many, many times in this letter that our relationship with God is based on God's freely given grace, not on your efforts, not on your achievements, not on your striving. Our relationship with God is based on his freely given grace. When there are composers who are putting together a musical score, particularly for a movie, or maybe a television series, though, they'll come up with a, you know, just a very simple melodic theme, maybe it's for a character, or maybe it's for the story as a whole. And then as it goes, it's it shows up again, and again, there are slight variations, maybe different instrumentation from time to time, maybe they add some harmonies. But the point is that you hear that melodic theme. And you see that how it's helping to carry the story along the entire time, you see how it's all connected, it doesn't have to be very complicated. One of the more famous ones is just the to note theme from the movie Jaws, right? It's not complicated at all. But you recognize it, you see how it carries the entire story along, I bring that up. This is the melodic theme that Paul is reintroducing to the soundtrack of Romans at this point, when he says it's by grace, it's not coming through your works, said if it did, then Grace would not even be grace. That's the basis of your relationship with God. He said, That's all things are happening. The God has chosen a remnant that he has displayed His grace to them. It's by that grace, and he's contrasting that once again. He's contrasting that with this perspective that says, in order for God to be in this relationship with Me, in order for God to be faithful to me, the first thing I have to do is prove my value. First thing I have to do is check off all the boxes. The first thing I have to do is demonstrate my worthiness. And then once I do that, then I can rest and be comforted in the fact that God will be faithful to me, but it's only because I proven myself worthy of his faithfulness in the first place. And that's the attitude that Paul is criticizing here. He says, that's a spirit of stupor, that's going through the world, with your eyes blind with your ears deaf to what is true. He brings up a couple of references there from the Old Testament from Isaiah and Daniel, from Isaiah and Deuteronomy. Rather, he puts those two together and in a reference from the Psalms, incidentally, on the site, in chapters nine through 11. Here, there are more Old Testament quotations and references and chapters nine through 11, than there are in any other entire letter that Paul wrote, he's really anchoring everything you hear in God's continuing unfolding storyline. But he brings us up to say this has always been the case. The God establishes a relationship with his people through his freely given grace. In fact, grace and works are mutually exclusive. That's what he's getting out in verse six. He said, If it's by it's no longer on the basis of works, if it was on the basis of work, he said, Grace wouldn't be grace. These are zero sum categories. So how do we have this relationship with God, because of the freely given grace that He chooses to bestow, and he doesn't give that to those who stubbornly tried to force his hand, he doesn't offer that to those who put their confidence in themselves, he doesn't offer it to those who boast about their righteousness and the things they have relentlessly pursued on their own. God gives it to those whom he chooses. He said that before God has mercy on whom you will have mercy, those who humbly put their faith in Him, those who call upon the name of the Lord that was were sent everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. This is all grounded upon God's freely given grace. What's the basis of our relationship with God, His grace, given us all right to questions down, one to go and then a couple points application. Final question, who belongs to the people of God? Who makes up the people got where the boundaries there? Let's look at verses 11 to 24. To help answer this final one. He goes on to say this,

so I asked him Did they stumble in order that they might fall by no means rather through their trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now, if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean? Now I'm speaking to you Gentiles. In as much then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean, but life from the dead, if the dough offered his first fruits is holy, so is the whole lump. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you although a wild, all of shoot, were grafted in among the others, and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches, if you are remembered is not you who supports the root of the root who 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. But you stand fast through faith, so do not become proud. But fear. For God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you note, then the kindness and severity of God, severity toward those who have fallen the God's kindness to you, provided you continue in this kindness otherwise, you too, will be cut off. And even they, 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 are cut from what is by nature, a wild olive tree and grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will ease the natural branches be grafted back in to their own olive tree? It's kind of interesting metaphor that Paul uses. We'll get into that here in just a moment. The takeaway from that section though, is this that the people of God are those whom God graciously calls to himself, and they come from every tribe, and language in nation. That's the point he's making with this illustration. This imagery of roots and branches is one that comes up a lot of places in Scripture. It's a common metaphor. It's used in the prophets, for example, in Jeremiah 33, the Lord says that from you, I'm going to establish a righteous branch there, he's talking specifically about Jesus, and he says, His kingdom, His priesthood, they will never end. There's this imagery then of trees and branches and roots in Jeremiah 33. You may be more familiar with John 15, where Jesus said, I am the true vine. You are the branches. He talks about abiding in him and being connected to him. So they're not none of those aren't all making the exact same point but it's a common piece of imagery. And the imagery here is of an olive tree. This was made a lot of sense to that audience we I mean, we can we can get it, we can understand what he's basically getting out here would have made a lot of sense to that audience because back then even still today, the cultivation of olive trees is one of the biggest things in the Mediterranean region, that's a major point of agriculture and production, even still in the Mediterranean region has been for 1000s of years. So this was a very effective metaphor from them. Paul is saying, You know how sometimes people will graft in branches from a different olive tree in order to produce the full harvest that they're looking for. So it's an illustration, like most illustrations, don't, don't press this too far. And also look, Paul's not trying to give horticultural or abora cultural techniques here. So they may not bear up on that full weight. The point is a simple one, the image is a simple one that we are trying to get here. He's saying you have been brought in, there have been more brought in and some of those who may be seem to be there in the first place we find out actually aren't. The route is Abraham and his descendants, the broken off branches are those he's talking about. He thought, hey, I'm genetically descended from Abraham. That's the only thing I need. He says, No, that's not the point of connection. So he's referring to the broken off branches. Those who are grafted in then are those who have placed their faith in God's promised Messiah, the Gentiles. They weren't a part of ethnic Israel to start with. But they're shown to be a part of spiritual Israel because they put their faith in what God has done in Jesus. So he's talking about those who have been brought in, it's about the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God. There are some really interesting comments here, I'm just going to acknowledge them, we won't be able to get into all of them. Right now, there's some really interesting comments about how this is happening in order to make Israel jealous, so that some of them then will actually put their faith in Jesus, he talks about the full inclusion of Israel, some very intriguing comments about some branches who were broken off and getting grafted back in and some who thought they were there and find out

they aren't. I'm not going to get into all that right now, for a couple reasons. One, those are some things we're going to get into next week. Next week's passage really gets into those ideas. But also it obscures just the simple point of the illustration that he's trying to get out here. I want to make sure we grasp that. The main point is that God's promises fulfilled in Jesus are not confined to ethnic Israel, but they are extended to the nations. They're extended every people who call upon the name of the Lord and faith. And this is not a plot twist. Some people in the congregation when it isn't, Where's this coming from? It's not a plot twist. It's not anything new. The original promise that God made to Abraham was this. He said, in one of your descendants, the nations will be blessed. And he's talking about Jesus. We see this come up again and again in scripture you heard a little bit ago in Isaiah 49. And Isaiah 49, is where the Lord said is too small a thing if all I'm going to redo is redeem the tribes of Jacob, he says, That's too small of a thing. Instead, I'm going to bring my lights to the nations my salvation to the ends of the earth. With this little illustration, then he Paul is driving home this point that the people of God are all of those in everywhere in every place whom God brings to himself through faith in Jesus. And he's saying to those who belong to he's speaking to the member, couple of different groups within the congregation and you see his focus shift, and chapter 13, verse 13, where he says, now I'm speaking to you Gentiles. So he knows there's some different listening groups in his congregation there. When he's speaking to those who are ethnically descended from Abraham. He's saying, it's not about that point of connection. That's not the thing that matters most. Please don't mistake that. When he's speaking to the Gentile believers here. He's saying you can rejoice that you have been now brought in but you can't boast as if you somehow replaced Israel said you've been grafted in, you're now a welcome part of that. And that's only because of God's grace. So the people of God are all of those whom God calls himself people from every tribe and language. And nation is Revelation seven, nine says, Alright, so those are some of the questions that were really heavily upon the hearts of the congregation on Paul's own heart as he was writing it. The ones I want to make sure that we see as we're looking at this, but now so what, as always, my intent is not just to offer you some interesting points of information or maybe give you some theological interpretations to a challenging passage. There are some really significant takeaways here. So I'm just going to briefly try to sketch them out for you three of them to correspond to these three questions. First takeaway is this God is always faithful to His people. God is always faithful to His people. Remember that whenever you individually feel overwhelmed, remember that when it feels like nothing's going away, you think that it's supposed to that you can't look around and see signs of blessing anywhere. Remember that God is always faithful to His people. And remember that nowhere in Scripture, does God say you will never experience hardship. You will have perfect health and fabulous wealth. Never does he say that. Instead, Jesus says in this world, you will have trouble but take heart because I have overcome the world. Jesus says I am with you always to the very end of the age, I will never leave you or forsake you. Jesus says, I am making all things new. So remember that whenever you are feeling overwhelmed, God is always faithful to His people. For us together, then we ought to remember this as well that God is always faithful to His church, even when it appears overwhelmed. It's been a hard season for the visible and institutional church. I think we all know that it's pretty obvious. I saw some recent research just came out from the Barna Group said that nationwide, about one in three people, one out of every three people who had regularly attended church prior to the COVID 19 pandemic have stopped doing so since then. And there's a lot of hand wringing about that there's a lot of hand wringing about perceived loss of cultural influence, or acceptability. And like Elijah, we may say, Lord, I'm the only one left and I think I'm about to die. That can be a kind of self pitying attitude, though, because remember what God said here, remember what Jesus said, Jesus said, I'm not going to lose anyone that the Father has given to me. He said, I'm going to raise them up on the last day, Jesus said, I'm building my church, I'm in the gates of hell, we're gonna overcome that. So even for us as we're together, it's not about how things always look outwardly it's not and it's definitely not about just cultural prestige, or privilege or anything like that. It's about is God being faithful to His people? And the answer is yes, he always is, he always will be. second takeaway is this. Once again, this letter tells us that we have to repent of our self righteousness, and we have to rest in God's grace. It is not

about who you are, or what you have done. Your relationship with God is not based upon that. I'm not the world's greatest public speaker, a preacher, believe me, I know that. But we have spent so much time on this concept that if I have not communicated that to you now, by this point, I don't know how I possibly could. Let me just try to drive it home one more time, though, simply by reading verses five and six to you. So two, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace, but if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works otherwise, Grace would no longer be grace. That's what it's about. So any one of us that is boasting about anything that we think we bring to the table has to stop. Paul says to the Jewish believers thought about boasting that you're related somehow to Abraham, he says to the Gentile believers, not my boasting, that somehow you have been now welcomed into things. He tells all of them, stop carrying around your receipts for your manufactured righteousness. Stop thinking that you've done something to earn God's favor, stop thinking that you can do something that will forfeit God's favor. Instead, rest in the grace and mercy of the God who freely calls you to himself in Christ and trust that what Jesus has done is all you will ever need. final takeaway, I think, is this that we need to recognize the particular and the universal aspects of the Gospel, the particular and the universal aspects of God's kingdom. Here's what I mean by this. There's a particular aspect to this. God calls us people by name. God doesn't just send out an invitation and just wait and see who responds to this. Jesus says, My sheep know my voice, I call them by name. And I lead them out. The relationship that God has with his people with you through Jesus Christ is intimately personal. So if you are in Jesus Christ, and the good news is not just a God loves people, but that God loves you. In Christ. If you are in Jesus Christ, the good news is not just a god forgive sin in a generic sense that but that he has forgiven your sins, as a particular aspect to this that is stunning, and its implications. The same time the gospel shares with us is universal aspect of God calling people to himself personally and particularly, but from every language and people and nation. composition of the people of God is not based on geography, or ethnicity, or culture or gender or nationality. So we cannot draw any boundary lines delineating the people of God, based on those things. In fact, any understanding of the Christian faith that ties it inextricably to any of those things is a false understanding of the Christian faith has a particular aspect to this, God knows you intimately personally in Jesus. And there's a universal aspect to this that God calls people to Himself from every nation and people and language. And these are really unique contours of the gospel. He's actually really unique things about the Christian faith, the balance, the balance of this particular and universal is pretty unique among world religions. Even there are a lot of religions that deny the possibility of a personal relationship with a personal God claiming that the goal is to lose your individual identity into some ocean of cosmic consciousness. Instead of that again, Jesus says, My sheep know my voice, I call them by name. And they follow Me. There are some religious systems and it'll restrict the boundaries of faith to some particular culture or nation or ethnicity. Instead, as I've already said, Revelation nine gives a vision before the throne of people from every tribe and language, and people or nation, there are some religions that will try to confine a transcendent to some specific location. But Jesus said, it's not about whether you worship here or there. It's about whether you worship in spirit, and in truth. So the gospel princes presents us with these really unique contours of the particular and the universal God knowing us individually, personally, by name, and yet of God calling to himself, people from every time and every place in the same Jesus. We're gonna be bearing witness, really, to almost all these things. And just here in a few moments and baptism, I'll say some more about that. But it's a plain time we can testify about the faithfulness of God about what it is that he has done for us in Jesus Christ, and about the fact that God continues to call people to Himself in faith. But these are the takeaways I think, from these big questions. There's a lot of detail. There's a lot of nuance here. The takeaways, though, are the fact that God is always faithful to His people that all of us need to remember that it is only because of God's grace, that we have this relationship with him and a God calls to himself people from every nation. So I'll just close by offering you this observation from a guy named Douglas mui, theologian, and commentator in his commentary on this particular passage. This is maybe as the takeaway that image the olive tree, this kind of metaphor, this illustration uses. This is his this is what he says the main takeaway of that is, and I'll just offer it to you as well. He writes

this, it's notoriously easy to squeeze more theology out of such a metaphor than it's intended to convey. But basic to the whole metaphor is the unity of God's people, a unit it crosses both historic and ethnic boundaries. In this whole section, he is saying, has God rejected His people? Absolutely not. No, God is always faithful to His people. No matter how bleak things may see, sometimes God establishes this relationship with his people through his freely given grace, not through anything that we have done otherwise, Grace would not be grace. And God is always faithful to the people that he calls to himself from every language and nation and tribe. This is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And in the beginning, a letter says it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your faithfulness to your promises given to us in Jesus Christ for what it is that you have done for us in Jesus. And as we go from here, Lord, we ask that you would refresh us with that good news. You would remind us of your steadfast faithfulness and that we would be those who go and bear witness to that through what we say and what we do find it. We love you pray this all in Christ's name. Amen.