

Sept 7, 2014 - Kieth Bernard Kuschel

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church
377 E Lincoln Trail Blvd– Radcliff, KY 40160

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

(13) I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry {14} in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy 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? (29) for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. {30} Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, {31} so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. {32} For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

What does God want us to do as a congregation?

What is our purpose?

What does God want you to do?

What is your purpose in life?

Purpose?

WHAT IS OUR MINISTRY?

I. Attracting those close to us to Jesus

A. Larger Context

1. Grace to remnant
2. Rejection = fulfillment of prophecy
3. Rejection = Gospel for Gentiles

B. Paul's Ministry

1. Gentiles first, but also Jews
2. Rejection = good for Gentiles
3. Acceptance = major change

C. Larger context

1. Money for world
2. Money for congregation

D. Our ministries

1. Make FRAN's envious
2. Ask why so committed, tell them

II. Reflecting God's call to us to them

A. Basis of Paul's confidence

1. God's call irrevocable
2. God's gifts irrevocable

B. Basis of Paul's confidence

1. Gentiles received mercy
2. Jews received/receive mercy

C. God's actions toward all

1. Law - convict of sin
2. Gospel- Give mercy

D. Our confidence

1. Call & gifts irrevocable
2. Called us/ calls them
3. First person witness

IA1 At the beginning of chapter 11 of this letter Paul pointed out that the Lord will always maintain a small group of Jews as believers in the Savior, chosen by grace, to prove that salvation is by grace and not by works.

2 Then he noted that the rejection of the Savior by the majority of Jews is a fulfillment of prophecy. The hardening they experienced was foretold by Moses and Isaiah. The Lord proved Himself faithful to His prophecies, even the negative ones.

3 In the concluding parts of this chapter he notes that the rejection of the Savior by the majority of the Jews resulted in the Gospel moving on to others, to the non-Jews. Yet, the Gospel's success among the Gentiles does not mean that the Lord has abandoned the Jews. That success among the Gentiles is to serve to make the Jews envious.

B1 Paul addressed the Gentiles readers directly in the first verses before us today. (13) I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry {14} in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. Paul is saying that his ministry which was primarily supposed to reach Gentiles with the message about Jesus did have a definite purpose in regard to the Jews, his own people. He made much of his ministry, that is, he worked very hard at it. He did that not only to bring the Gospel to as many Gentiles as possible. But he also did that to arouse a sense of envy among the Jews. This envy might lead some of the Jews to rethink their rejection of the Gospel, since it had proved its power in the conversion of so many Gentiles.

2 There are no losers here. The rejection of the Gospel by the majority of Jews has brought the Gospel of reconciliation to the rest of the world. The successful activity of the Gospel among the Gentiles in turn leads some of the Jews to accept that same Gospel. Paul puts it like this: {15} For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

3 Paul pictures the acceptance of the Gospel by the Jews in terms we are used to. Life from the dead. All human beings on our own are dead in transgressions and sins, not a part of God's family. When God brings people, Jews or Gentiles to faith, it is so glorious, because now those dead people are alive again.

C1 What is our ministry? We, as Paul did, have a global aspect to our ministry. We are to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. For the most part that is a pretty impersonal part of our ministry. We don't get to places all over the world. We do get to personalize the bringing of the Gospel to other parts of the world once in a while. We get to hear missionaries talk to us on the monthly WELS Connection. Sometimes we get to hear missionaries report back to us directly when they are spending their time in the States. We are preaching the Gospel all over the world through the mission division of our synod. As a congregation we participate in it by sending money each year to our Synod. That figure could go higher if we all gave 10% of our income to the Lord, the standard which God asked His people in the Old Testament to measure up to.

2 What is our ministry? Another part of our larger ministry is the ministry of Faith congregation. As you function in any aspect of the ministry of Faith, and as you give that 10% of your income to Jesus, you are in a public way proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ into this community and to each other through the worship, education and outreach programs of this congregation.

D1 What is our ministry? There is a much more personal side to your ministry than either your Synodical involvement or your congregational involvement. That is your ministry to your own people, the people with whom you rub shoulders everyday in your workplace, at school, or in your homes. If some of those people don't believe in Jesus as their Savior. Or, if they don't regularly worship Jesus, your goal, my goal, is to do with them what Paul was trying to do with his fellow Israelites. We work real hard at our ministry through our Synod and through our congregation so that we somehow may arouse our friends, relatives, neighbors, and family members to envy, and thus to save some of them

2 It works like this. They see you working hard at your ministry of sharing Jesus with others. They wonder why you are working so hard. They ask you. He tell them about the forgiveness, holiness and eternal life which Jesus has given you and is also for them. You invite them to see that is what Faith congregation is all about. They ask you what message can be so important? Then you can tell them about Jesus' blessings and the purpose of Faith. There are no losers here. The world gets the benefit of your mission dollars. The community gets the benefit of your service through the congregation. Your friends and relatives, acquaintances and neighbors are attracted to what you are doing. They want the same meaning and purpose in life which they see you have.

IIA1 Why could Paul be so confident that the Lord wanted to make his friends and relatives envious of the

salvation that the Gentiles were receiving? Answer #1. “God’s call and His gifts are irrevocable.” God hasn’t ever revoked His Gospel call. He hasn’t ever gone back on His invitation to all people, “Come to me and I will forgive your sins, cover you with Jesus’ righteousness, and give you eternal life.” The sins of humans don’t cause Him to change that Gospel call. Rejection by humans doesn’t cause Him to change His Gospel call. So, Paul could confidently continue doing what he was doing in order to have that call keep going out.

2 Why could Paul be so confident that the Lord wanted to make his friends and relatives envious of the salvation that the Gentiles were receiving? Answer #2. “God’s call and His gifts are irrevocable.” The Messiah died for the sins of the world. Nothing can change that. Forgiveness is available to all. The Messiah suffered hell in everybody’s place. Nothing can change that. Rescue from hell is available to all. The Messiah lived and never sinned. Nothing can change that. His holiness is available to all. The Messiah rose from the dead. Nothing can change that. Eternal life is available to all. The Lord’s gifts are irrevocable.

B1 Why could Paul be so confident that the Lord wanted to make his friends and relatives envious of the salvation that the Gentiles were receiving? Answer #3. “Look at history. Look at your own history, Gentiles. You were at one time disobedient.” That’s an understatement. Not only were these people sinners who didn’t obey God’s laws, but they had totally abandoned the true God, had worshiped the whole pantheon of Greek and Roman gods. “But now they had received mercy as a result of their disobedience.” They had the Gospel preached to them. They had come to know Jesus their Savior. Their disobedience was the reason God went after them with His mercy.

2 Why could Paul be so confident that the Lord wanted to make his friends and relatives envious of the salvation that the Gentiles were receiving? Answer #4. Paul saw history repeating itself. “{31} so the Jews too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you Gentiles.” God’s Old Testament people had been sinful throughout their history. That didn’t stop God from giving them forgiveness and eternal life through the promised Messiah. Periodically they had become like the Gentiles. They had wandered away from the true God, were worshiping the Baals, Ashtoreth and a multiplicity of Egyptian and Babylonian gods. But that didn’t stop God from going after them to try to bring them back to Himself, so He could shower mercy on them. Why should things be any different at Paul’s time? The Jews in Paul’s day who had abandoned the Lord were merely providing more people for the Lord to try to reach with His mercy.

C1 Why could Paul be so confident that the Lord wanted to make his friends and relatives envious of the salvation that the Gentiles were receiving? Answer #5. {32} For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.” Since the fall into sin every human being is bound, locked up by nature in disobedience. We compare ourselves with the Law of God. We have to conclude that we disobey God and deserve His punishment. That’s true of everybody. Jew and Gentile alike.

2 However, sinful human beings are equally condemned by the Law, so that the Lord might have mercy on them all. When people are led to realize that we can’t boast about ourselves - earn eternal life on our own - all we can do is fall on our knees and ask the Lord for mercy. He wants us to have mercy. In fact as Paul put it, that’s the whole point. He wants to give us forgiveness, righteousness and eternal life. He wants all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

D1 Why can we be so confident that the Lord wants our friends and relatives envious of the salvation that we have? Same reasons. God hasn’t ever revoked His invitation to all sinners to come to him. He hasn’t ever taken back the blessings of forgiveness and righteousness and eternal life that Jesus won and are offered to all.

2 Why can we be so confident that the Lord wants our friends and relatives envious of the salvation that we have? Because of history. Our history. By nature we were just as disobedient and just as rebellious as any other human being. And yet, God showed mercy on us. He wants to do the same for those around us. Those who are at present disobedient and rebellious.

3 What is our ministry? Talking to our friends and relatives in the first person, about our personal history. Our ministry is saying to people: Jesus took my guilt, suffered my punishment, lived for me & rose for me. He has removed my guilt, rescued me from punishment, gives me His holiness, & makes death an entrance into eternity for me. He has told me He wants me to have all these blessings. He also wants you to have them. Come with me to hear more about those blessings.

Conc: What is our ministry? It is not difficult. Attracting those close to us to Jesus. Reflecting His call to us to them. Lord Jesus, use me to attract people to you and call them to You