

SERMON: Justification: The Wild and Natural Olive Trees

GOOD Morning OIC,

JUSTIFICATION is the declaration by God that we are no longer guilty but we are made righteous on the basis of Jesus' death on The Cross to buy OUR eternal forgiveness. **OUR JUSTIFICATION** is according to God's Plan: Before Time Began - In Time - After Time is No More, as revealed in the Bible. In recent months the messages of the Book of Romans tells us we can be confident that before time began, we Christians are "The Chosen." The Book of Romans also declares that God, the Sovereign King of the Universe, has placed salvation of all men in the Word and in also in the hands of His Chosen, the Church. Today, we will see more details of how Paul describes God's actions in the past and His plans for the future Jewish Nation, or the Natural Olive Tree, and the Gentile Christians, or the Wild Olive Branch. Take careful note that Paul is disclosing here how the Lord deals with "nations or groups" but also some verses can be applied to each of us as individuals, in particular the current Gentile Christians.

As usual, I will cross reference verses in Romans Chapters 11 with other verses in the Bible to illustrate many of Paul's statements. The greatest heresies in the Church have been theologies or doctrines that never proved the Bible with the Bible. So please bear with me to make connections to assure God's Truth. If it seems I am wandering from one part of the Bible to another; please wander with me. Please think through the connections between one Scripture to another with me. Please try to look at my Message as a *Great Adventure with God's Word*.

My message for April 4th closed with the Apostle Paul's statement that I quoted from the **Amplified Bible** for I agree with the exegesis or drawing out more meaning in this verse. (**Romans 11.16 / AMP**) reads *16 If the first portion [of dough offered as the first fruits] is holy, so is the whole batch; and if the root (Abraham, the patriarchs) is holy, so are the branches (the Israelites)*. Paul went on to reveal that God will keep a **Remnant** of faithful Jews in that society or Jewish Nation. Now Paul leads us back to the Father of Faith, Abraham. Abraham is not only the 1st Patriarch for God's Older Covenant of Faith with Israel, created from Abraham's aged body; but also, the Father of Faith in Christ. All Christians, Jew and Gentile, receive the *Gift of faith*,

not for any good work done. Their trust in Jesus' Sacrifice becomes imputed or gifted righteousness. We learned this back in **(Romans 4.3/AMP)** *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed in (trusted, relied on) God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness (right living, right standing with God)." The first portion of the dough in (Romans 11.16)* is the original Nation of Israel, and the root is Abraham. So, the Israelites, as a group of people, are holy. This does not cancel "individual" faith for a Jew or a Gentile for Justification by Faith. But it reveals God's Heart for the Jewish People and His keeping a **Remnant** of faith in the nation or in the group of Jews.

Now Paul addresses the Gentile Christians as a group in **(Romans 11.17-18)** *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.* The Gentiles were a *wild olive {tree}*. Those who believe in Jesus *were grafted in among them {the Jewish branches faithful to the faith of Father Abraham}*. Remember that the Christians Believers are only one part of God's Promise to the *Patriarch root*, Abraham. Let us stretch our mind to consider that God is above time as He views the Jewish Olive Tree and the Wild Olive Tree standing side by side. Since God created Family, Adam and Eve, He has never ignored families in His dealing with Mankind. Salvation is a gift to individuals, but, He sees the Family of Faith as connected to the original Olive Tree, Father Abraham, the Father of Faith.

As Paul taught us in **(Romans 4.3)** *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.* Therefore, the Root of our Faith in Christ is God's Promise to Abraham in **(Genesis 15.4-6)** *4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He credited it to him as righteousness.* The massive growth of the number of Gentile Christians in the first Century continuing until Modern Times is a large part of the *if you are able to count them* stars. But, as we saw last week in the **Remnant**, God is not done with the Jews!

The gift of the Faith as Abraham had, now given to both Gentile and Jewish Christians, should prevent Gentile arrogance in any way, and especially against the Jews. Those Jews without Christ stand condemned; but, our faith as Christians is totally a *Gift to fulfill God's Promises and response to the Faith of Abraham.* **We Gentile Christians are a lot of those stars!** But we as a Wild Branch were grafted into the original olive tree. Thus Paul says in **(Romans 11.18)**

remember that it is not you who supports the root, { **the Faith of Abraham** }, but the root supports you. In other words, the rich root of the olive tree, the **Gift of Faith** as that of Abraham, supports us Christians.

(Romans 11.19-22) *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;

TAKEAWAY #1

The most serious sin in any Christian's heart is unbelief. In our battle against the worldly desires of the flesh that we struggle against to live Holy Lives for Jesus, we best remember that it was unbelief that cut off the branches of the Natural Olive Tree, the Family of Father Abraham according to the flesh. This removed the Jewish Nation as a group on Earth from the Abundant Life Jesus came to give all who accepted Him. That was unbelief in their Messiah Jesus. We Gentiles are subject to that same cancer of the soul, unbelief. Jesus, the Great Physician of our soul, will answer Humble Prayer to heal that cancer; but, we must persevere against it.

Notice that Paul exhorts or warns the Gentile Christians in the above verse **(Romans 11.20)** *Do not be conceited, but fear;* Now, I ask you, to help you all get the Word of God correctly: *OIC, How Does that make you feel?* I think that it is important to look at the original New Testament as written in Greek to understand the word, “fear.” We read in **(Romans 11.20/MOUNCE)** *That is true. They were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be proud, but stand in awe.* God did not inspire Paul by the Holy Spirit to make us confident that we are the Chosen for salvation and then tell us to live in a constant state of “fear!” This would be like someone pulling a rug you are standing on in the “genkan” out from under our feet while you were putting on your house slippers!

The importance of this verse and the word *to fear*, **requires an adventure in exegesis.**

Let us look at a few places where the word fear (*phobeo*, Greek) is used in the Bible.

In **(Ephesians 5.33)** *phobeo* is translated as **to respect**: *33 Nevertheless, as for you individually, each husband is to love his own wife the same as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.* Surely in a Christian Marriage, as Paul is referring to here in Ephesians, it is a loving relationship with the *spirit of Christ inside and between both partners.* Thus the translation of *respect for phobeo, fear* is correct in this context.

A powerfully packed word like *to fear, phobeo*, depends heavily on the context used for the correct exegesis or interpretation. You may ask why *phobeo* in **(Romans 11.20/NASB)** is *fear*; but, is *awe* in **(Romans 11.20/MOUNCE)**, AND neither say *respect*. Here in Romans Chapter 11, the weight of *phobeo* even to a Christian Chosen by God before the foundation of the Earth must be heavier toward the English word *fear*. The context is to exhort or correct Gentile Believers to warn them: *Do not be conceited*,(NASB) or, *Do not be proud* (MOUNCE). There is still enough sinfulness in sincere Christians to look down on those who are less favored by God than they are. When a Christian allows this thinking, he is forgetting that Faith is an undeserved Gift from God. Thus, there may need to be a sense of basic *fear* when this sinful comparison to Jews is in a Christian's heart. This does not mean to live in constant fear, but any Christian who allows this thinking as not sinful, is grieving Holy Spirit and putting a separation between themselves and Jesus. This thinking would require a stronger meaning of *phobeo*, fear, than the *phobeo*, respect of a wife to her husband.

TAKEAWAY #2

A powerfully packed word like *to fear, phobeo*, depends heavily on the context used for the correct exegesis or interpretation. I have illustrated uses of *phobeo* in the Bible from “respect,” to fear of making God angry. In the middle of the “spectrum” or “range” is the meaning “awe.” This level of fear would be for Gentile Christians who are not conceited about their having been grafted into the Natural Olive tree, but THANKFUL. Awe is a reverent fear that allows us to still feel and trust God's Love without being conceited over it. As the Bible says in

(1 Corinthians 1.31) so that, just as it is written: “LET THE ONE WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

The next words by Paul confirm this in **(Romans 11.21)** *for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either*. Remember the natural olive branches (Jews) *were broken off for their unbelief*. Conceited Christianity is an oxymoron, a non-nonsensical idea or concept. Not taking our **unbelief** seriously before our Lord and Saviour Jesus puts any Believer in a risky position with the God of Grace and Mercy.

(Romans 11.22) *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.*

Note how Paul emphasizes that we *continue in His kindness*; This is, as I have preached before, living your Christian Life as a Chosen Child of God and depending on His Kindness to us through

Jesus. We try to walk close to Jesus resting on His Finished Work on the Cross; and in His righteousness and power and not our own. We must crucify any arrogant attitudes arising from the abilities and gifts that God has heaped upon us through Christ. We also must confess any *unbelief* that the Spirit of Christ points out in us. Needing more *faith*, as faith grows as a Christian matures, is not the same as *unbelief*. *Unbelief* is typically from doubting what you already have learned from your personal Saviour Jesus, from the Bible or from the still quite voice of the Spirit.

Paul's confidence in the Older Testament Scriptures in **(Isaiah 59.20-21)** and in his prophetic gifting now he puts together as he speaks of the future hope for the Jews in **(Romans 11.23-32)**. *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 {Jewish Family of Abraham's Faith}, 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, {in **Isaiah 59.20-21**}*

*“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 {The Jew} 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.

The mercy the Gentles received as a result of the Jews' disobedience has not closed the door on His future mercy to them. His **gifts and callings** to the Jewish Nation cannot be eliminated. God will

fulfill the Faith of Abraham in the Jews after *the fullness of the Gentiles has come in*. That time is not yet, but, it might be sooner than we think when ***all Israel will be saved***. (Romans 11.26)

Taking Bible verses out of context can be erroneous. But, I will mention some of the principles here that rest upon God's Character and other parts of the Bible. Chapter 11 in the Book of Romans is God's dealing with large culture groups, namely Jews and Gentiles. Paul is warning the whole group of Gentile Christians in (Romans 11.20) regarding *fear* if they are arrogant as grafted into the *natural olive tree*. Paul is depending on the Holy Spirit to search the heart of each one who reads his letter, and to speak to those who need to be convinced of where they stand regarding “*conceit or arrogance*” toward Jews. Similarly in (Romans 11.29) *for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*. God's faithfulness to individual believers can be seen in this verse also as being consistent with (Romans 8.30) *and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified*. But unlike a nation standing before God, each individual will stand alone before God for judgment after they pass away: Christians for rewards; non-Christians, for condemnation. Thus I must emphasize that the individual has responsibilities to (Acts 22.14) *continue in the faith*. God's determination to keep Jesus' Sheep who desire to be kept, through joys and sorrows, is seen in (Phillipians 1.6) *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work among you will complete it by the day of Christ Jesus*. So, I believe that the Bible teaches that we Christians can gather strength knowing God's stubborn plan to fulfill His call in our lives. The question is, as always, are you willing to heed the Call?

Another verse here, (Romans 11.32) *For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all*. Applies in a universal way to Mankind. For example, if the worst sin in our human or societal sense for a sinner was intentionally cheating a business partner in a transaction he is *shut up in {TOTAL} disobedience* to God. He will be condemned to hell with mass murderers, people who rape children, the most degraded of this sinful world. You may ask, Pastor Bruce, that doesn't make sense to me. Since we Christians know that every sin cost Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross, we

might see this truth more in God's view. God has set no boundary on the sins committed by a sinner to receive forgiveness, as we see in **(Romans 10.12)** *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*

In recent years God has reminded the world of His awesome Grace to Forgive even the most detestable sinner who calls on Jesus. All around the world through the international media we learn of former terrorists with *ISIS* (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) are now active Christians serving Jesus in the mid-east; and, *yakuza* (Sakaume-gumi) such as Rev. Hiroyuki Suzuki, a pinky-missing former Sakaume-gumi gangster, has become an Evangelical Christian Preacher.

JUSTIFICATION is given these most sinful wild olive tree branches now grafted into the *Natural Olive Tree Family of Faith, the Gift of Faith as Father Abraham.* As in that old Christian Hymn, *To God Be The Glory*: "the vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives."

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.*

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Let us all now *Stand In Awe* of our awesome God as we sing

(Worship Team)

Let Us pray,

REFERENCES

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