

Saving Jealousy

Romans 11:11-24

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OPENING PRAYER:

Our heavenly Father, we praise you for the glorious prospect that you have given to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior, that he who wants was emulated on the cross, and now reigns on the throne of the universe will fill this world with His glory. We thank you for the sure hope that you have given to us in His resurrection, that since he is the first fruits from among the dead, born again from the tomb, that in him you have guaranteed to us the regeneration of all things; the renewal of the heavens and the earth; and the prospect of final glory. We pray our heavenly Father, that as you have taught us, in your word, that already by your Holy Spirit, you are changing us from one degree of glory to another. That even this night by your word, you will polish your grace within us and upon us. That more and more we may reflect and be prepared for that final glory that you have promised to all those who trust in your Son. We thank you, that you have assured us in your word, that when Christ appears in glory, those who are His will also appear with him. And we pray that the delight of that prospect may fill our hearts with joy in times of sorrow. Hope, in times of despair. Light in times of darkness and steadiness when all around our souls gives way. And to that end, we pray Our Father, that as we come to the end of this Lord's day, as the sun sets, and as the shadows lengthen, that our Lord Jesus Christ will be to us all he was as risen Savior, to His disciples. And that as he opens his word to us, as we're on the way, that our hearts will burn within us as we see the wonders of his work. Hear us. Help us. Bless us, we pray, as we look to your word now, in Jesus our Savior's name, Amen. Please be seated.

SCRIPTURE READING:

We come this evening, in our studies in Romans to Romans chapter 11, and we're reading this evening verses 11 through 24. You'll find it helpful to follow along. If you don't have an English Standard Version, there will be one in the pew rack in front of you. And that will help you follow along as we study this passage together this evening. Romans chapter 11, and verses 11 through 24.

Paul is raising a whole series of questions here, that all begin in the same way. Chapter 10 verse 18. Chapter 10 verse 19. Chapter 11 verse one. And now the fourth of them in verse 11 of chapter 11.

"So I ask, did they", that is Israel, "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. Inasmuch 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 if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as 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 olive 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, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that 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 if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God; severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his 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 were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

SERMON:

I have mentioned once or twice in our studies in Romans, that I have a disproportionate number of biblical commentaries on the book of Romans. I haven't counted them recently. But I suspect that my collection now reaches about 120 volumes on Paul's letter to the Romans. You can tell I don't find it an easy letter to understand if I need 120 volumes to help me to understand it. But I was in the office of one of my colleagues during the week. And I espied a collection of biblical expositions done in the 19th century, by one of the most famous 19th century preachers, not Charles Haddon Spurgeon on this occasion. But another famous preacher, who will for a reason that will be obvious in a moment remain anonymous to you. I used to own this large set of expositions, but I gave them away. I'd forgotten why I gave them away. But as I reached out for the volume on Romans, and open it up thinking if I had kept these volumes, I would have 121 expositions of Romans to help me. I wonder if he can help me. And I opened it precisely to Romans chapters nine and 10 and 11, to benefit from his exposition, to discover that his exposition ended at Romans eight, verse 39, and picked up again at Romans chapter 12, verse one. And he had nothing whatsoever to say about Romans 9,10, and 11. Which may well, since he was truly a famous preacher, and his works have lasted now well over 100 years, and mine will be forgotten long before 100 years are up, you might think to yourself, well, we could have done that, too. And we could have been moving on. We have paused on Romans 9,10 and 11 for almost three months now. And that great preacher could simply leap from the end of chapter eight, into the beginning of chapter 12. And we could have done that too. And if we are honest about it, life would have been a great deal easier, because these are certainly not easy going chapters. And we probably haven't found them that way. But I hope what we have found is that no self respecting preacher should ever do that. Because Romans nine and 10 and 11 are integrated with Paul's great passion announced at the beginning of the latter, that the gospel is for the Jew first, and also for the Gentile. And as Paul exposition has been grounded in this. And as we've seen recently this has reemerged in a very remarkable way. As he's told us in chapter nine and then at the beginning of chapter 10, that he would

die to see his kinsmen according to the flesh, brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have had all the privileges of God's covenant mercy. And yet Paul's heart is broken, because they are not saved.

And you know, one of the most striking things about that is this. Paul actually mentions this here, but he glosses over it, as though he simply wants to mention it. He's very conscious that his ministry is not Jewish evangelism. His ministry is not Jewish evangelism. His ministry is Gentile evangelism, isn't it? Right from the very beginning of his life, he has been called to go to the Gentiles. And yet, do you notice a very striking and wonderfully Christian reality about this man's life? That he is passionate about evangelism among the people to whom he has not been particularly sent? I think that's a great mark of real godliness. And it contrasts with so much of our style of living the Christian life, where we become passionate, and indeed, we begin to pray almost exclusively, about the things that we are involved in. About the things that burden us. And the hallmark of this kind of godliness is that you have a passion to see men and women, won for Jesus Christ. And you make it a burden in prayer, whether or not your particular gift is to be in that area of ministry.

Don't you think that's a very challenging thing? I notice that the thing that people tend to pray for, even if I may say, so the things we tend to get into groups to pray for, you know, something is going to happen. We're involved in it, we need to pray about it. But a mark of real maturity is you pray for those things you're not involved in, because your passion is not self-focused, but Kingdom centered. And your desire is to see the power of God released through the Gospel. And so it's a very interesting thing to me, that Paul, who so much felt the burden of evangelism of the Gentiles didn't give up the burden of the evangelism of his kinsmen according to the flesh, the nation of Israel. And we've seen in these chapters, haven't we how deeply this affected him, personally. "My kinsmen according to the flesh." We can relate to that some of us. Because the cloud that hovers over our lives, perhaps day and daily, is that our kinsmen according to the flesh, are not yet saved. And so we can understand why Paul needs to work this through.

But the thing that really calls him to work through what is happening in history with Jew and Gentile, is the whole question of the integrity of the gospel. He has gone out of his way to demonstrate that the gospel he preaches is the gospel that's rooted in the Old Testament scriptures. The illustrations he's used, for example, in Romans chapter four, have not been drawn from his colleagues in the Gentile ministry. They've been drawn from the Old Testament scriptures. Those little notes at the foot of the pages of our Bible -- our modern versions -- under score for us how much Scripture the Apostle Paul has been using. The Jewish Scriptures. Israel's scriptures. His kinsmen's scriptures. They have got all this. The Messiah according to the flesh was theirs. And God had made an everlasting covenant. So how could it possibly be that his kinsmen according to the flesh were rejecting the very fulfillment of the promises of their own scriptures? Paul has been showing us how God works in His sovereignty. He does not make mistakes. He has been working in every generation of Paul's kinsmen, in terms of this principle. Not all who belong to Israel, as a nation belong to Israel as the covenanted men and women, sons and daughters of God.

And he's shown us that God has not either denuded Himself of His righteousness, not abandoned His sovereignty. God, in His sovereign election marched down through the pages recorded in the Old Testament scriptures, where His own covenant people turned away from Him, but He had His hand upon His own and brought them to Himself. So God, says Paul, "is sovereign in all this, Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated."

And yet at the same time, and this is the wonderful thing about reading these chapters. Those who have turned away from the Messiah, are totally responsible in themselves for their present spiritual condition. And so he's been bringing together two things, which he brought together again, at the end of our section last week, when he had been asking the question, "Has God rejected His people?" And he's saying, no, look at me. Remember Elijah and the 7000. God hasn't rejected his people in their entirety. But he says, Don't you see that the same principles are working here. But God has he cites in verse 18, "God has given them over." I beg your pardon, here in verse eight. "God has given them over to a spirit of stupor. Eyes that would not see. Ears that would not hear. Down to this very day." God is still sovereignly working. And there's a hardening going on. And yet, at the same time, in the citation from David in Psalm 69, "Let their table become a snare." And, of course, in the Scriptures, the table as a whole was the table that's laden with provision. It's, it's almost unimaginable that what has actually happened is that the very thing that has evoked this hardness of heart is the table that the Lord had spread for them -- the bounty he'd given them as his people, that's become the very thing that has effected in them a hardness of heart. And Paul knew this in his own experience. Everywhere he'd gone, among his kinsmen, he'd spread the table before them. The Messiah and all the blessings of the age of the Messiah. It's all fulfilled, he said, and it's now all yours, if you will come and trust and Jesus as the Messiah. And it was that very gospel message that effected the hardness in them. And the anger in them. That meant even as Paul dictated this letter, his body was still sore with some of the side effects of those thrashings. And that stoning that he had experienced. And his times in the sea and his wanderings on the highway. And danger day and night. And that's how it always is. We must never forget it. We must never lose sight of this. That when we say God is absolutely sovereign, we also say that man is absolutely responsible for his spiritual condition. It's not an either or. And it's not a half and half. It's an all and an all. Which as our confession of faith says. Wonderful chapter on God's providence, chapter five, as it underlines that when God exercises his sovereignty, he doesn't exercise His sovereignty on us as though we were robots. But he uses secondary means, just as Pharaoh was hardened through the means of Moses speaking God's word to him. And every gospel minister knows this. But the thing that hardens is not that we tell people to be better. Not that we tell people to keep God's commandments. That's an eminently reasonable thing to do. What hardens people's hearts is that we tell them that there is the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ died as the promise savior, to bring us to God, and that Jesus Christ will save us and transform us. That's what hardens people's heart. Yes, you may get a chuckle and some social occasion if you mention God's law. Less so in South Carolina than many other places. You'll not get a chuckle if you say that Jesus is the Savior. You'll get everything from embarrassment, to irritation, to outright anger. And the table, that the Lord Jesus has spread becomes a snare and a trap. A stumbling block and a retribution. And Paul had seen it.

And that brings him to his second question in this chapter. The first question was a question to which he gave an entirely unexpected answer. Israel has rejected the Lord. Has the Lord rejected Israel? God forbid, he says, in verse one "By no means." And then he raises a different question, you see in verse 11, "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?" That is, in order that there might be a totality of falling? And he gives exactly the same answer. "By no means. God forbid." It's his strongest negative response in the letter to the Romans. And he uses it frequently, you'll remember. It's a gut reaction. The idea that the purpose of them stumbling is that they might fall away all together and be lost in the mists of history. That, says the Apostle Paul, is impossible. And that raises for him and for us the question, well, how is it impossible? How is it impossible that in the light of all that Israel has done

and responding to the gospel, and the way in which Israel has stumbled, and my dear friends continues to stumble until this day. Why does that not mean that God is wiped his hands of them altogether?

And Paul now brings us to a very tightly reasoned argument. And I want us to spend a little time trying to work our way through this argument. Because it was obviously important to him. And it is eminently important to us. And I want to break it down into a series of little sections. There are five of them altogether. First of all, in verse 11, he makes an observation. "I asked did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means?" Here is his observation. He's describing something he has seen with his own eyes. It's an observation. He says, rather, here is the effect of their stumbling. Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles so as to make Israel jealous. Of course, that's what happened. It's an amazing thing that happened. Because of their trespass. Salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now, it's just possible actually, that away in the back of his thinking here the apostle Paul is remembering what happened to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the trespass of Israel against their promised Messiah. They crucified their promised Messiah. That was in a very profound sense, a trespass against the Messiah. And yet the wonder is right at the very heart of the Christian gospel, that it's out of that trespass, that salvation broke out of the borders of Israel, and moved to the ends of the earth. And most of us who are sitting in this room who probably are not of Jewish descent, are now saved by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And he's saying, think about it. Try and think about this as part of God's amazing plan. In the midst of Israel's rejection of the Messiah, the wonderful thing is this, that through their trespass, salvation has come to the Gentiles -- in order to make Israel jealous.

Now hold that thought, because we'll return to it in a moment. That's his observation. Second, he draws from that observation an implication. And this runs through verse 12, and 13, and 14, and 15. And he uses a very common style of argument. Actually, sometimes children use this kind of argument. Look at what he says. Now, he says, if their trespass, if their trespass means riches for the Gentiles. How much more will their fullness, or as the English Standard Version puts it, their full inclusion mean? If they are trespassed means riches for the world. If their failure means riches, for the Gentiles, you see how he's arguing. He's saying, if the disaster of their rejection of the Messiah has led amazingly to such blessing, just as the actual rejection of the Messiah has led to such blessing, if their ongoing rejection of the Messiah has led to this amazing blessing that wherever Paul went, and the gospel was rejected in the synagogue, he began preaching in the streets, and in other places, and in lecture halls, hired from sleepy philosophers in the middle of the day, as in Ephesus. And the gospel began to spread. And Paul had the sense that the gospel was spreading all over the world. Now, what was the catalyst of that? It was the rejection of the Messiah, by his own people. And Paul is saying, if that's the result of their rejection, can you try and imagine what the result of their inclusion might be? You see his line of reasoning? It's as though he's saying, "If really bad things produce amazing results. Then what happens when those bad things are turned out to be glorious things? The results, he's saying, the results could be beyond our imagination." Indeed, you notice how he puts it, a little enigmatically in my own view, but wonderfully. Now, he says, their inclusion would mean nothing less, verse 15, "than life from the dead." Now, the scholars are thoroughly divided about what this might mean. And I do not plan to settle that division tonight because I will simply create more division in the process of settling it. But Paul means obviously something remarkable. Something notable and surprising and amazing. Whether all he means is that the return of Israel to faith in Jesus Christ will seem to the world to be like Ezekiel's dry bones coming to life, and standing up there in the valley. It will be one of the most glorious and amazing things that could happen in history. Or whether as other people think Paul is indicating that this is something that actually will take place around the time of the final resurrection, we will not be able to settle that too easily sitting in this room. One day we shall all know the exegesis of this verse.

But whatever the exegesis of this verse in narrow terms is, clearly Paul is thinking about something that has not yet happened, isn't he? You haven't seen something happening in Israel, that you could describe as life from the dead. But Paul seems to be suggesting to us that something like that will happen. As Israel, as it were, is brought back to faith in Jesus Christ.

So he has an observation. An implication. And notice in verse 16, a confirmation. "If the dough offered as first fruits, is holy, so is the whole lump." He's drawing an illustration from the Old Testament laws and principles of worship from the book of Numbers. That if the first fruits is offered to the Lord, then that's a symbol that the whole belongs to the Lord, even although the individual may employ the whole for himself. And Paul is saying something of this order is surely true among God's people. Similarly, if the root is holy, so are the branches. It's almost as though he's saying there is an investment here -- a deep down investment -- that will bear its fruit and its profit in some future occasion.

And in a sense, as soon as he said that, in verse 16, he could have gone immediately on to verse 25. "I want you to understand this mystery." Well are you relieved that he uses the word mystery here? There's something, there's something probably most of us in this room would never even have thought about were it not for what we find in these verses. That there's something God still has to do. And Paul is speaking about it. And the question is, what is it that God still has to do? But instead of immediately going on to verse 25, he pauses, do you notice that? He pauses and he says, "Now there are some things here that we need to speak about together, you and I."

And so in the fourth place, he comes to some application. Actually, he'd made an application himself, hadn't he? Earlier on in verses 13 and 14. He had said, speaking about Himself, "I'm speaking to you Gentiles." Now he's speaking to the Gentiles in the church at Rome, who may have been in the majority. Because you may know that the Emperor Claudius had banished Jews from Rome, just perhaps about five years before the apostle Paul wrote this letter. And so probably, even if there had been many Jewish believers in Rome, there may not have been so many of them now. And so as it were, Paul says, "Now, those of you who are of Israel, you can just sit in the corner for a minute. Those of you who are Gentiles, come on now, down here, I have something in particular to say to you." Actually, this would be a good proof text for preachers singling out groups of people in a congregation, wouldn't it? And saying, I have something to say particularly to you. And we are Gentiles. I'm a Gentile. I don't know what I may have been 1000 years ago, but I sure am a Gentile now. Most of you are Gentiles. This is for you. What's the lesson that we are to learn?

Well, the lesson we are to learn is a lesson of humility, isn't it? He says, "Now I'm speaking to you Gentiles. In as much then as I'm an apostle to the Gentiles." The lesson for Paul is so to magnify his ministry that his fellow Jews will become jealous of what they see in Gospel fruit. The lesson for us Gentiles is that we will learn humility.

Incidentally, isn't that an interesting motivation for ministry? To make other people jealous? This isn't the only place where Paul uses that motivation. There's at least one place where I think he tries to create a certain godly jealousy in one congregation because another congregation is doing so much better than they are. That's an interesting thing. That's a sign of his courage that he would do that kind of thing, I think.

But you see what he's saying? Actually, I think if you stand back and think of yourself as a 21st century Christian, there's an altogether strange and alien thing Paul is saying, He is saying, I want to see

something happen among the people of God, so that Jewish people will become jealous of what we've got. Do you know any Jewish people who are jealous of what we've got in First Presbyterian Church? Or any church? Do you know anybody, Jew or Gentile, who's jealous of what we've got? I'm saying this completely on the spur of the moment. And I may therefore regret later on, but I'm going to see it even if I'm awake half the night, that's been a great motivation and my desire for the churches I've served. That what we've got, would provoke those who aren't Christians to jealousy. Because they see they don't understand it. They don't have the velcro spiritual strips to be able to take it in. But they see something. And they say, I want that. That's how I believe that's one of the reasons Paul himself became a Christian. I believe he was jealous of Stephen. Some of us have become Christians in exactly the same way we've seen something. We've not been angry, jealous, maybe we have. Don't be too upset, incidentally, if you're witnessing to somebody and they're angry, jealous. Saul of Tarsus was angry, jealous. But that's how it should be among us. If we are not a fellowship that has that kind of -- atmosphere about it. Style of life. Nature of fellowship. Mutual affection. Love. Kneeling before one another. Joy. Confidence. Families that are built to last where grace reigns. That's what we are called to be so that the world may become jealous.

Many of you know that's why, in some ways I regard the conduct of funerals as almost the most important thing in all the world I do. Because there are almost always people there, who are nominal Christians, or who don't know anything about the gospel. And if there is one place in all the world where the great difference shines, it's when God's people mourn with the hope of the gospel. And my constant longing is that those who come might be stimulated to jealousy to say, what is it that these -- what is it that he had, that I've never tasted? What a motivation to live for Jesus Christ. And to take all the barbs. Don't you realize that so many of the barbs that are thrown at you are barbs of jealousy from people who know that you are what they ought to be, but never can be because they don't know your Savior. Paul lives to make his kinsmen jealous.

And he lives so that we may live in humility. Verses 17 and 18. He says, "Now" he says, I say Paul, "some of the branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. So, they were broken off, I'm the one who was grafted in." Verse 18. I hope you don't feel that towards Jewish people. Do you? You've had your chance. What's so wrong about that? One of the things that's wrong about it is, it lacks this kind of compassion, and it lacks the kind of humility that bespeaks those who have cast themselves on the mercy of Jesus Christ. And so, Paul says it's true that branches were broken off. It's true that you have been grafted in according to God's purpose but contrary to nature, but don't be arrogant toward the branches. Because remember, you are supported by one and the same root in God's saving covenantal mercy.

So he says, "Remember the amazing character of God's severity to those who have rejected him. And his kindness and His mercy towards us, provided you and I continue in his kindness." And he told us way back in chapter two, verse four, that the kindness of God doesn't lead us to our arrogance and self sufficiency and the demeaning of others. But the "kindness of God leads us to repentance." To say, "Lord, I've sinned so grievously. Have mercy upon me. And the hope of Your grace enables me to come and say to you, 'Lord, I humble myself and I will live for your glory.'" So says Paul in verse 20, "If they were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith, do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches -- hmmm - neither will he spare you. Ahh you say, but I made a decision. I keep the card in my wallet. I can tell you the date. Once saved, always saved. Yes, my dear friend, if you were saved, but the evidence that you were saved is not that the card is in the wallet. The evidence that you were saved is that you keep on responding to the kindness of

God and have a humble spirit to those who are as yet unbelievers. Otherwise, you too, will be cut off. My dear friend, Judas Iscariot had a card in his hip pocket. And his card said, apostolic treasurer. But he didn't continue in the kindness. Because he'd never trusted the kindness. And he too, as Paul says here, was cut off. But then -- try and take it in, verse 23. And here we come to his conclusion. "Even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in. For God has the power to graft them in again. Do you notice that combination of divine sovereignty and human responsibility all over again? How are they going to be saved? They're going to be saved the same way you and I are saved -- by being grafted in. By believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Even they if they do not continue in their unbelief." There isn't some special side door plan that Paul is working out for Israel and saying, there's another root for them. No, he's saying it's one on the same root. One and the same olive tree. One and the same way of salvation. One and the same Savior. One and the same faith. And if they believe and turn away from their unbelief, they will be saved because God has the power to graft them in again. You see what he's doing? He's beginning to find that that agony at the beginning of these chapters, that agony is beginning to see hope and light and the prospect of something fresh and new. Verse 24. "For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these the natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree?"

Now before we close just step back a minute, and look at four verses. Verse 12. "If their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness or full inclusion mean?" Verse 15, "If their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean? But life from the dead?" Verse 23, "Even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in for God has the power to graft them in again." And verse 24, where he says, "The natural branches may be grafted back into their own olive tree."

Remember the famous words -- I've, I've heard these words referred to about four different people. From Pascal to Benjamin Disraeli. In answer to the question, "Is there a great argument for the existence of God?" And everyone from Pascal to Dr. Zimmerman, who replied in these terms, to Frederick the Great, and Benjamin Disraeli, who was supposed to have us the same answer to Queen Victoria, responded, "Please, Your Majesty, the Jews." It's a phenomenon. It's an amazing phenomenon. That a landless people should have survived so long, in such a dramatic and unusual and totally extraordinary way. Because Paul, seems to be saying here, doesn't he, God hasn't finished his work -- yet. It's a great mystery. Actually, Paul says, it's a great mystery. And he also wants to say to us, doesn't he? In verse 25. I want you to understand the mystery? Oh what is the mystery? Oh to know the answer to the mystery of what God is doing in his marvelous, sovereign kindness? What does Paul mean? Tell us more? Explain, Paul, what you mean? And Paul says to us in verse 25, I will explain. You can read this for yourself. You don't really need me. But if you want me. Same time, same place, next Sunday. But just for a moment, just for a moment, breathe this in. This is a wonder. The wonder of God's kind Providence, that his Son was rejected by the trespass of his own people, and that has brought salvation to the Gentiles. And salvation coming to the Gentiles, is to make God's ancient people jealous. And to look at us and say, what do these Christians have, that we don't have? And the answer is, dear Jewish friend, your Messiah. Won't you trust him? What an amazing gospel. Makes you dance in the streets. That God is so amazing, so kind, so sovereign. So worthy of our service.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father. You give us so much to pray for through Your Word. To pray for Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh, that Israel might be saved. To pray for ourselves and our own fellowship that we might be the kind of believers and kind of fellowship that creates jealousy in others and a longing for those eternal things that you have privileged us to taste in Jesus Christ. And we pray this may be true of us individually. Whether the jealousy we encounter this week be the jealousy of seeking or the jealousy of rejecting, Lord so delight us with your grace, that there may be something in us spiritually that is really worth being jealous about. We commend one another to you. We pray you would help us so to live in Jesus' name. Amen