



God's Plan and the Script for our Life: Romans Chapter 9, 10,11

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## Group Leader Notes

Over the last several weeks, we've been studying Paul's letter to the Romans. It's a gritty letter reminding us that we're human and we often miss the mark. But it's also a grace-filled letter as Paul points to the love of Jesus, who changes us, transforms us, and asks us to practice our faith. Today, we are going to tackle the most difficult chapters 9, 10, and 11. The big question for Paul, for the church, was this—what was God's plan for Israel, particularly since they rejected Christ the Messiah, the savior of the world?

**Questions:** Is the script of our life already written, given to us predetermined, or do we get to write it with God as we go along?

**Bottom Line:** From the very beginning, God gave us freedom to make our own choices. We can write our own story by ourselves and turn away from God. We can also write the story with God; amazingly beautiful things happen.

**Memory Verse:** Romans 10:9

*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

### Take Home Message:

The confession, "Jesus is Lord" is the earliest confession we have. Lord means sovereign, master, ruler, it's the highest authority. When we call him Lord, it's not just a title, but a confession we give with our hearts. It's something we seek to live into. It means we say, "Here I am Lord, send me, use me." When we pray, we ask Jesus to lead us and to guide us and send us. And when we say this, we point to the resurrection. Here is what God was trying to say through Jesus' death and resurrection: no matter what happens in your life, no matter how much evil seems to win out in our world, it never has the final word. The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that we are people of hope.

### Other Scripture References

John 1:11

Romans 9:2, 9:21-24, 11:25-26, 11:29

### Teaching Points:

God has an invitation for our lives that He wants us to co-author together.

## Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. Pastor Joshua began with a photo of a little book he wrote in the first grade entitled, *Get Baptized*. Looking back, he could see traces of God's plan take shape in his own life.

Sometimes when we look back, we see moments of clarity and God's plan at work in our lives. Have you had any clarifying moments that help you to understand God's unfolding plan for your life? Please share with your group.

2. Read Romans 11:25-26

*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved.*

Here in these verses of Romans, Paul is reminding his readers of Israel's failure and the hardening of the hearts of its people. Later, God would use Israel redemptively and invite the Gentile world to the good news, saving message of Jesus.

What could be seen as a failure can actually be used redemptively, either in the near or distant future - and this may result in something greater than we can imagine. Can you think of a setback or failure in your life that resulted in a surprising and/or redemptive outcome?

3. The Alpha course here at Grace has played a significant role in our Connections Pathway, a point of entry for seekers to ask questions about faith and Christ in a safe environment. It's a great place for skeptics, curious seekers, and life-long Christians who believe and follow Jesus but have carried some unresolved doubts. Are there any lingering questions you carry that you would like to air out for a few moments tonight?

Alpha starts this week, both on Zoom and in person on Thursday evenings. Think of at least one person you could invite and/ or sponsor for the Alpha course.

4. We watched a short video featuring a GC member named Barbara, who came to faith through taking the Alpha course (3 times!). In the interview she shared that when she arrived for the first meeting, she sat in the car for 10 minutes debating whether or not to walk in.

Have any of you experienced this hesitation to accept God's invitation, and if so, what did you do? Can you identify anything hindering you from following Jesus? Is there anything new that you are hearing from God today?

### **Let's Pray**

*Jesus, be Lord of my life. Help me to follow you, and help me to write the story of my life.*