

Romans 9:1-18

**Pray** that God would give you a longing to see those who do not know Him experience the truth and life of His good news.

**Read** Romans 9:1-18

**Look Closer...** Paul is asking the question: "why hasn't Israel believed?" It's a legitimate question to ask. After the first few big moments of the Book of Acts, the Jewish people largely rejected the gospel of Jesus as a story about a false prophet.

This brings Paul grief and pain because the Jewish people are his brothers and sisters, in fact, he may have his own immediate family in mind as he writes this! Look at v. 4, this is the reason for disbelief, Israel was God's adopted family. He gave them the law, He promised them His presence, He showed them His glory in the Temple, redeemed them in Egypt! So how come they are not a part of this new stage of God's plan to renew the world?

This causes Paul to consider the stories of the Old Testament and notice that even in the past there were people from the line of Abraham who did not follow God. The relationship between how God reveals himself and who responds in faith is an utter mystery. So Paul concludes, "So then he has mercy on whomever he wills and hardens whomever he wills." Paul is not saying that he has discovered exactly how God works, but he is searching the Old Testament, he has found it to be true that God works in mysterious ways.

**Think about it...** What is Paul really communicating here? He certainly isn't saying that we should try and figure out the mystery of God's salvation - that is impossible! Paul is communicating the anguish of knowing that his family, his relatives in the flesh, will not know the life giving power of being united to Jesus. What should this cause us to do? It should drive us to our knees in prayer for those around us.

**Pray about it...** Think about the people whom God has placed you around. Do any of them not know the unending worth of knowing Jesus? Jesus is calling us to grieve for these people, and to faithfully regularly pray for their salvation. Think of 2 or 3 people you know who do not know Jesus, and decide to pray, once a day, that God would reveal himself to them.