

“Questions about God’s Sovereignty”

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Series: *Romans*

Bible Text: Romans 9:14-29

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If you have a Bible, you can be making your way to the New Testament letter of Romans. We are in chapter 9, verses 14 through 29. If you don't have a Bible, the passage is printed in your worship guide, you can take a look there. Let me just say, it's just really good to hear you all sing loudly. It's just so nice. It's a full house of singing. Love that. We are back in the letter to the Romans this semester, and we find ourselves in chapter 9. And if you were here last week when we started this chapter, you'll know that we're in some of the more complex, hard to understand, perhaps exceptionally hard for 21st century Americans to understand. It's just that kind of part of the Bible. Actually, I put a quote on your worship guide last week that I want to read this week before we even get started. It's written by a Scottish theologian of the previous century, Horatius Bonar, who says this.

“Man's dislike at God's sovereignty arises from his suspicion of God's heart. We are not always comfortable with the idea of being wholly at the disposal of God.”

That's pretty apt. That's true for every human being, 21st century or not. Paul asked the question last week, why is it when he preaches the gospel that he as an ethnic, national, Jewish person, why is it that so many of his brothers and sisters don't believe the gospel when he preaches it? And his answer, if you were here, is that it's not about biology or even nation. It's about the grace of God. In other words, this is God's doing. The promises haven't failed. I said last week that this theology brings up some questions. And Paul knows that and he brings them up for us in the text today. So, let's read it and remember that this is God's word for us.

Romans 9:14-29

14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!

15 For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"
20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"
21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?
22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,
23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—
24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?
25 As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"
26 "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"
27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,
28 for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay."
29 And as Isaiah predicted, "If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah."

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Would you pray with me?

Help us, we ask now, our Father, give us the illumination of God the Spirit. Help us to understand what we read here in your word. Lord, would you give us humility of heart that we might bow before you, our God, that we might recognize you and your great sovereignty and that we might humble ourselves. Even as we ask questions of you, let us come to you with humility. Would you speak to us now, we ask in Christ's name. Amen.

This season of sermon introduction seems to be brought to you by television. I think I referenced a show last week. I'll reference one this week. So, apologies. We'll get back to the steady diet of country music lyrics soon enough. There's a scene in the popular show *The Office* where the boss, Michael Scott, finally gets his chance to tell the corporate HR representative named Toby exactly what he thinks of him. Toby's always thwarting his plans, frustrating his designs and schemes. And it's Toby's last day and this is his exit interview. And he's so excited. He's going to rip into him at last. But of course, unbeknownst to him, the new corporate HR representative has to be in the room for the exit interview, which of course is a female that Michael would like to make a good impression on. So he clearly can't go into it and lay into Toby like he wants to. And so it's this great scene where he's got his exit interview questions on cards and he puts on a nice face and reads them. Who do you think you are? Flips a card. What? What gives you the right? Solid gold.

Those questions came to mind because I think they're the questions that Paul brings up here. Paul is bringing up the questions that we might ask about God's sovereignty. And at a minimum, we're asking these questions with some disdain. At a maximum, we're asking these questions

with outright contempt. And this passage that we're looking at is talking about the nature of God and the ways of God. And I said last week, it's getting us into the deep end of the theological pool here. And we can ask questions of God. We've talked about that here before quite a bit. When we preach through the Psalms, the psalmist asks some questions of God that are hard. They don't shrink back. And yet, while we're free to ask questions of God, it is demanded that we ask them with humility and not with contempt. So, what are some of those questions that we might ask of God concerning his sovereignty especially? Here's two. We'll say them this way. Who do we think he is? And what actually does give him the right? Let's answer those questions as Paul brings them up. And Lord willing, let's ask them with humility.

So first, who do we think he is?

Last week, we looked at 9:13. Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. And we began to wade in to Paul's teaching on election, the sovereignty of God as it pertains to our salvation. And that discussion about God choosing brings up this obvious question. I brought it up last week. It's in verse 14. *What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part?* Meaning, if God chooses to love Jacob and chooses to hate Esau, doesn't that at least make God arbitrary? Isn't he unjust to just choose to love one person and hate another person? That's not fair. And to be fair, on a first reading, especially if we've forgotten the rest of the letter, we might be tempted to think that God could be arbitrary or could be unjust or could be unrighteous to just kind of seem to choose out of thin air. And Paul's answer here, may it never be, that's a strong language, and then he quotes Exodus 33 specifically. You can see this here in verse 15. So, this was, we read it earlier, this is the answer that the Lord gives when Moses said, please show me your glory. We preached this passage a few weeks back. And it's true that God, this is the point where he hides Moses in the cleft of the rock and Moses gets to see the backside of God's glory. But what's interesting is that before any of that happens, God proclaims something about his nature to Moses. And it's this line. *I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.* It's a statement about God's sovereign will that when it comes to showing mercy, he's the one that gets to show mercy or not. It's totally up to him.

But as with last week, we have to remember the rest of the of the letter. It's not that God chooses to be merciful to mostly good people or maybe neutral people. The first two chapters of Romans go at length to tell us that every human being has fallen, has sinned against God. There's this leveling effect in chapter two. He says of all of us and me included that there's not one righteous. No one seeks for God. No one does good. There's no fear of God before their eyes. Everyone's born a rebel. We fell in Adam. We inherit his sinful nature, and therefore we spend the rest of our lives rebelling against him and sinning unless he does something about it.

That's also true for nice and good people. Just so we're clear, nice and good people are rebelling against God, too. Perhaps they're just better at hiding it.

What that means is that Jacob, Esau, Moses, me, you, should receive God's justice and his wrath.

You don't want him to be fair. For God to be fair would require him to condemn every human being.

So what's amazing, is this line that says *he has mercy on whom he has mercy. He has compassion on whom he has compassion*. And in fact, if we run that through the grid of Exodus 33, what is happening there is that is his glory, to show mercy to sinners. It is his glory to show compassion to people who've rebelled against him.

And receiving this is all of grace. Look at verse 16. It doesn't depend on human will or exertion, as if we can do something to make God give us his mercy. It depends on his will. It's his to give. There's nothing we can do to incline him toward us. We said last week it's not based on who you know or what you do because that's what we assume.

And you may come from a theological tradition that would try to nuance that and say it this way. That actually the way it works is God, you know, looks down the halls of human history and he sees at some point that you would believe. And therefore, he chooses you based on the fact that he knows you would believe. Or he sees your faith, and therefore he chooses you based on the faith that he sees.

And so I ask you, who is in the driver's seat of receiving God's mercy in that scenario?

You are, still.

And that's Paul's point here. No, no will, no exertion, nothing in man makes God turn toward us in mercy. He just does it out of his own goodness.

And when it comes to his wrath, look at verse 17, he turns to another scriptural example. It's Pharaoh again from the Exodus account. You remember Pharaoh, not a great guy. Looks a lot like Yul Brenner, apparently, according to the Ten Commandments movie. Pharaoh inflicted a brutal slavery on the people of God and it took 10 incredibly painful, supernatural, miraculous plagues from God to get Pharaoh finally to let Israel go out of slavery. And in Exodus nine, in the middle of those plagues, God through Moses tells Pharaoh the quote in verse 17.

For this purpose, I've raised you up that I might show my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

And if you think about Pharaoh's life and story from the Exodus, that checks out. God showed his power and his name was proclaimed because of the plagues. You can bet the other nations heard about what happened over there in Egypt and especially at the Red Sea, where it finally seemed like Pharaoh had caught up and was going to win and the tide was going to turn. And then God caused those supernaturally parted waters to fall in on Pharaoh and his army and all of the nation's heard about it. And when Israel was marching through the wilderness, they would say we have heard of your God. We know what he's done.

What was going on with Pharaoh? From our perspective, he did what you do and what I do. He did whatever he wanted. It's not as though Pharaoh was trying to be this good guy, but God kept making him do evil. Now, Pharaoh did exactly what he wanted. He hated God. He hated his people. He was trying to protect his own power, his own brand, his own whatever. And so he terrorized the people of God. But Paul says in verse 18 that *God has mercy on whomever he wills and he hardens whomever he wills*.

So realize this too, Pharaoh did whatever he wanted. And it's true that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. If you read the story of the Exodus in the Exodus account multiple times, it will tell you that Pharaoh hardened his heart against God. And multiple times it will tell you that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. It's a both-and here.

How does God harden someone's heart? Back to chapter one.

Someone who wants to do impure things. He gives them over to their impurity.

Someone who wants to have dishonorable passions. It says he gives them over to their dishonorable passions.

Someone has a debased mind and wants to continue to have a debased mind. He gives them over to their debased mind.

That's what he said three different times. He gives them over in chapter one, meaning God hardening you is him letting you do exactly what you want with no intervention. He will just let you keep on rebelling. It's judicial. The punitive justice of God can begin even in this life when God simply lets a person continue on down the road they're going. He hardens whomever he wills. He shows mercy to whomever he wills.

Who, who do we think he is?

Who do you think he is?

If you had to gut level theology, not professed theology, not the thing you would write on a paper, you know, in a Bible class. But like your actual lived theology, do you tend to think that God is unjust? Do you tend to think that maybe he is a little bit arbitrary, a little random? You will think that if you forget about our condition, our fallen state, our sin, you can't help but get there. If we remember, though, that we came into the world with a heart of stone, we will marvel that we have a heart of flesh given to us freely by God in the gospel. And our questions about him, which are legitimate, turn into humble questions. Children trying to learn about their father rather than judges trying to see if this judge meets my standards of what he ought to be.

What do you think people are like in their nature, at their core?

Maybe it is time for a good country music lyric. Let's just go ahead and do that right now. Possibly the worst theology that's ever been sung on the airwaves in the United States comes to us shamefully from Georgia's own Luke Bryan. When he sings, I believe most people are good. He immediately misses it in the song title, not to mention going on to talk about the streets of gold. Getting the streets of gold requires you working really hard. He goes on to talk about loving whoever you love and not being ashamed about it. That's definitely a nod to a very different kind of biblical sexual ethic. And I could keep going. I believe most people are good. This world ain't half bad as it looks. False biblically, just cannot possibly stand up to biblical scrutiny. Not only that, but I would like to sit down with Mr. Bryan and ask him what universe do you live in and how can I get there? Where is it that you live where most people are so good and the world is just really great? That's a dream world. It doesn't match our experience. The world is brutal and hell bent and people are selfish and self-willed and haters of God. And we ought to know we've been, we are those people. We've been there.

If the, if people are as bad as the scriptures say and Pharaoh was as evil as we know him to be biblically here, the justice of God begins to make a lot of sense and the mercy of God becomes his glory and amazes us.

I saw, this was a freebie, I saw a bumper sticker on the car in front of me in the school pickup line the other day and it said have the day you deserve. And I think I know what the maker of the bumper sticker intended to convey. You deserve a great day. Go have one. If you have this bumper sticker on the back of your car, let's talk about that afterward, I think, probably. Have the day you deserve. You deserve a great day. Go get one. Then I noticed something above those words. There was a thumbs up. The thumbs up hand was a skeleton. And I thought maybe, maybe that bumper sticker guy knows more than I think he does. Maybe he's on to something here. That actually kind of fits.

Have the day you deserve. You don't want that day. I don't want that day. It's not a good day. It's a day of justice and a writing of all of our wrongs. And God is just in punishing the wicked. But he's glorious when he shows mercy and compassion.

Is there injustice on God's part? No. No.

We're not the first people to ask the question. They weren't the first people to ask the question. Abraham might have been. You might remember the time in Abraham's life when God is promising to judge the city of Sodom, which is mentioned in our passage. And Abraham was worried that God was going to wipe away the righteous with the wicked. And he asks God; will you wipe away the righteous with the wicked in that city? And then he gets really worked up about it. You can hear the frantic pitch in his voice. Far be it from you to do such a thing. To put the righteous to death with the wicked. So that the righteous fare as the wicked. Far be that from you. Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just? And God tells him, if you find ten righteous people in that city, I'll spare the whole city for those ten righteous. Of course, if you know the rest of the story, there were not ten righteous in the city of Sodom. There was not even one. The judge of all the earth is just, but he has mercy on whom he has mercy.

And that has to humble a proud heart. That has to make us become people who see the mercy of God as the display of his glory and to turn our hearts to give him praise because we've experienced mercy.

That's one question. Who do we think he is? Here's the other one. And this question comes naturally after that discussion about God hardening whom he will. So, we could say it this way.

What actually gives him the right?

It's different from the last one. Look at verse 19. Paul says, *you will say to me then, why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?* On one level, this question makes sense, right? Think of it this way. If God is giving mercy at will and hardening others at will, how can he actually hold a person responsible for their actions? That'd be like making a drink and then throwing it away because it's not a sandwich, right? You're getting mad at it because you made a drink, but you wanted a sandwich, but you throw the drink away because it's not, but you did it. How can God hold people to account when he's the one making them do whatever they're doing in the first place? That's a logical question, but can you hear the implication underneath that question?

Why does he still find fault? Who resists him? If God sends someone to hell because of their sin, didn't he make them sin in the first place? That's not a question for God. That's a charge against God. That's an accusation against God. You made them and you made them do evil. How can you call them to account for doing it? This is a charge that says God must be the author of evil. He makes people do evil and he is unjust to judge them for it. God must be bad. It's a very different question.

Now, Paul could have answered this in a number of different ways. He could have doubled down on something like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. People are evil and that's why God judges them, but he doesn't say that. That would be a true answer. Instead, he gives a rebuke. This is a strange thing to say until we realize that that question has charged God with evil. Then it begins to make sense that he says, *who are you? Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?*

This question is coming from a human who's putting himself in the position of God as judge. This is a person repeating Adam and Eve's folly, wanting to be God himself. It's not coming from humility and even good faith and a legitimate place of question. It's an arrogant question coming from a heart that's trying to be God and trying to accuse him of evil. It's coming from a person who's forgotten the creator-creature distinction.

And that's what Paul brings up in 20 and 21. *The thing molded can't ask the molder, why have you made me this way? Verse 21, the potter has a right over the clay to make from the same lump of clay vessels for honorable use, vessels for dishonorable use.* You hear what he's saying, that the potter has the right over the clay. He has the authority over it. He can do with it what he wants.

That language, by the way, is all over the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. It's kind of everywhere. Creatures must remember they're not the creator. We said it earlier, God is God. We are not. It's a call to humility and it's a challenge. Don't come to God with your accusations of his character.

Know that you're a creature and your first move is to submit before your creator.

And honestly, that's the thing that if we miss that all this other discussion of trying to understand God and his sovereignty, we're spinning our wheels. Until we first bow the knee and acknowledge God to be God and we are not, we are the creature. We're not going to make any progress. We have to know our humanity and his divinity. Check our arrogance and pride before we come to the one who is a consuming fire.

This is Paul almost calling us back to the words from Job that we read earlier. After chapter after chapter of complaint and accusation against God almost, God comes to Job and the whirlwind and asks him some questions. Questions like, *where were you when I made everything? Where were you when I created everything and set the lightning in the sky and made the ocean? Where were you?* And Job, Job has this moment, which we read, where he says, *I uttered what I did not understand. No purpose of yours can be thwarted. I repent in dust and ashes.* Every human being has to get to that place. Paul doubles down in his answer on the sovereign will of God. If God wants to make vessels for different uses, it's his clay. He can do what he wants. Look at verse 22. He asked the question that has an implied answer.

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory?

He's saying that God gets glory even if the clay ends up being a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction. God gets glory when he executes justice after much patient endurance. And it will highlight the riches of his glory toward vessels of mercy who remember, also deserve his justice. And that at the end of all things, sinners receive mercy and the wicked are judged. And God has been patient and merciful, but it's still just.

God prepared vessels of mercy beforehand for glory. The way this is phrased, it says he did it. God did it. God is the subject of that sentence. He sovereign over all things. And we are to see that if you have received mercy from God, he did that beforehand. He prepared you for that. He has been gracious to you. It is implied here that he prepares vessels of wrath for destruction. It's the case that Paul does not use God's name as the subject of that sentence. There's a logical implication of the sovereignty of God that he is somehow sovereignly over that. But the language change seems to be deliberate. He wants a believer to see God prepared you as a vessel for mercy. And yes, there are vessels of destruction that have been prepared also. It's a difference in emphasis. And even if one interprets it differently, we are to land with God's justice against the wicked is his glory. His mercy towards sinners is his glory. And his sovereign will sets up everything.

And we are now at the end of our boundaries. We are now at the cliff. And we can't jump. Calvin himself says of this passage that Paul assigns the highest place to the will of God. That's where he ends the whole discussion. And the creature hits this place where we have to say thus far we can go. And no further. I cannot solve this puzzle completely. We are responsible for our actions. No doubt. Chapter 10 will make that even more abundantly clear. And God is sovereign over absolutely everything, including the eternal destinies of every single creature. He is not the author of evil. We're going to have to trust him.

It's a good moment to remind us that there's a lot of things that God doesn't tell us. We wouldn't know about his election of sinners. We wouldn't know any of this stuff about his sovereign purposes, his providence, his decrees. Unless he told us. And he tells us these things, He tells us what we do know so that those who belong to him can have great assurance that this whole thing was him. He started it. He'll complete it. He's the one making sure it happens in the interim. And we can trust him to be just. He doesn't tell us these things so we can get torn up about making sure that God corresponds to what we think he ought to be.

After getting us to the end of our knowledge and a strong declaration of the sovereignty of God, he finally turns to what we do observe. You can see this in verses 24 through 29. So kind of moving out of the clouds, the sovereignty of God. What we observe in this life is Jewish people and Gentile people called by God in mercy. We observe from Hosea those who were not his people becoming my people. We see not every ethnic Jewish person believing and calling on Christ, but he promises there will be a remnant in Isaiah. There will be a remnant. There will be Jewish background people who call on the Messiah and there will be Gentiles who are calling on the Messiah. It's the mercy of God. He would not leave those people in the Old Testament such that they become like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He would show mercy. In this life, we see Jew and Gentile rebels against God responding to his call to receive mercy and find grace.

What gives God the right? He's God. And our God is in the heavens and he does whatever he pleases, the psalmist said.

Here's a question for us. What gives us the right to assume the worst about him? Us whose reason has been damaged by the fall, us whose hearts have been twisted and complicated, who love things that we shouldn't love. What gives us the right to hold him up to our standards and assumptions about how the world should work and then measure him by them? That is the oldest thing that humans have been doing. It started with our first parents.

I was thinking about AI the other day, as one does, and how it's certainly going to take over the world and, you know, make us into slaves or something. I don't know. I was in a dark place. You see a lot of people writing about that right now. And the fear that's underneath that is actually a reflection of our very selves and our own story. We made this technology and now we fear it's going to rise up and destroy us. Well, where did we get that narrative?

There's a God who made us and we rose up and tried to destroy him. It's our story. We fear that, we fear that we'll be overrun because we tried to do the overrunning made by God. And since our first parents fell, we've been rising up against him, accusing him of being a malevolent, ogre, God not worthy of our worship. And we've done that as the creature. Fallen to our core. He's the creator, the potter, the Lord over all. He has all the authority, life, death, judgment, mercy. It's all in his hands. And he doesn't tell us everything.

I want to urge us to understand that as good news. Some of you who like answers will be annoyed by that. Why doesn't he tell us? Consider;

he tells you just enough about his sovereignty so that if you are one of his people, it is a true, genuine comfort to you. He is so merciful to us. He came and got you. You can rejoice and rest in that mercy.

He tells us just enough about his sovereignty to remind us that we aren't him and we can't figure him out.

Rejoice that you belong to a God that you can't master. If he could be mastered, if he could be figured out by our minds, he's not worthy of your worship. He's not worthy of your whole life devotion. If you can kind of figure him out and put him in his box and kind of own a full understanding of who he is.

Rejoice that he can't be mastered. Rejoice that we can only go so far. But the other thing is to rejoice in what we observe in this life, which is exactly what Paul observed.

If you stick around inside the church, what you're going to see is the mercy of God on display. And people from every tongue, tribe, and nation responding to his call to come and receive mercy. You're going to see it. Historically, from the ethnic remnant of national Israel to the Gentiles of northeast Georgia, people who were formerly not my people will become part of my people. Those who were rebels against God become sons of the living God. Stick around the church and you'll see it. You'll see it on display.

And if you're here and you're not yet a Christian, the call for you is not to figure out the nature of God and then decide whether you like him. Bow the knee to your creator. And look at his mercy and justice displayed in the most clear way possible in the Lord Jesus Christ, who experienced the justice of God in place of people like us. God is still just and mercy extended to sinners like us. Look at the cross and see how he came to express to us mercy and justice. And could you actually believe that he did that for you? Could you believe that he died for your sins? Could you believe that? Could you believe that he can make you a son of the living God? We would love to talk to you more about that.

If you belong to the Lord Jesus, brothers and sisters, you should walk out of this room today knowing that you are a vessel of mercy that God prepared beforehand for glory. You should take heart and rejoice that you are one of my people, he says. Beloved, sons of the living God, and

you belong to the God who is utterly sovereign. He'll judge the wicked and make all things right. Nothing falls outside of his control.

And as I mentioned last week, you can trust him with the people that you love who don't know him yet. You can trust him. Our fear is that our kids, friends, family members could be vessels of wrath. I'm just going to say it. That's what we fear most. And you know what? God doesn't tell you who's in and who's out and what's what. And he never will. What he does tell you is to make use of all the means.

Tell them the gospel.

Pray that God would be merciful.

Love them with a sacrificial love and never give up until the day they lay you in the grave and trust that God is more merciful than you are.

That's how we deal with our loved ones that we don't know if they know Christ. We never give up until the day when we don't have to worry about it anymore because we're with him. He tells us to carry on trusting that the judge of all the earth will be just.

At the end of this passage, we have seen the greatness of God, something about how big he is. This forces us to deal with our own frailty, creatureliness, sin, smallness, all of it. But it shows us a God who in the gospel makes us into his very children, a God who delights to show compassion, a God who delights to show mercy. And a God who in his sovereignty is good and trustworthy.

You have questions. Yep. So do I. You can keep asking them and we should. Don't come making demands. Come in humility and ask and wait and trust.

And until the day you're dead, keep telling people the truth. Keep loving them like Jesus and keep trusting that your God is merciful and his mercy is his glory. Let's pray together.

Our father, we bow the knee before you right now at the end of our knowledge. We confess to you, O God, you are sovereign and in control. We confess to you, God, that we are responsible for our decisions, for our life. We confess our creatureliness, our weakness. And we entrust ourselves, O Lord, to your mercy. We thank you that you've displayed your mercy and justice in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. For this, for us who believe, increase our faith, increase our confidence in your glory and goodness to us in Jesus. For anyone in this room who does not yet believe, Lord, turn the lights on. Take out a heart of stone and give a heart of flesh. Show your mercy, we pray, and help us to tell the truth and to love and serve our friends and family members and neighbors. Help us, our father, to trust you, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Portion of scripture read before sermon--Job 42:1-6.