

Sermon Growth Guide

Author: Jeff McCrory

Other Sheep | Romans 9:14-29

June 7, 2026

Key Verse: Romans 9:16 “It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”

Big Idea: Our salvation does not depend upon our desire or effort but upon the mercy of God.



Foundations

In Romans 8:29-30 Paul puts forth what we now call the doctrine of election, that God’s choice always trumps our choice. This doctrine has frustrated many. John Calvin in his Institutes of the Christian Religion follows the logical end to the doctrine of election that God elects some to salvation and others to perdition.

While this may be logical to a lawyer like Calvin, it does not follow the theological thinking of the Bible. In fact Calvin puts the emphasis in the wrong place, God’s perdition instead of God’s mercy. God’s choice does trump human choice, but our choice does make a difference. The motivation for Paul writing Romans 9-11 is in fact the conundrum between God’s choice of Israel and Israel’s rejection of God’s choice in Jesus. This is the central focus of these chapters.

Understanding God’s Word

Romans 9:14-29 locates the issue between God’s choice and Israel’s/our choice in the pages of Scripture. Paul quotes from Exodus, where God hardens Pharaoh’s heart, from Hosea, where God declares a non-people to be his people, from Isaiah, where God saves only a remnant, and from Jeremiah and Genesis, where God the potter chooses to shape one article for destruction and one for saving.

Why all these quotes? Paul builds an argument that God’s choice always trumps human choice. Six times in this passage Paul proclaims God’s mercy to emphasize that it is God’s merciful choice that saves, not our desire or effort. There is nothing we can do to earn God’s mercy. All we can do is give thanks for the gracious gift of God.

Applying God’s Word

The true Christian life is characterized by gratitude for God’s merciful choices. “We are God’s workmanship (poema) created in Christ Jesus for good works,” Eph 2:10. God’s choice means that we cannot will (Greek word used in 9:16) or run (Greek word used in 9:16) to earn our standing with God. This frees us up from striving to give thanks and proclaim God’s grace upon others.

Witnessing God’s Word

The simple truth of Romans 9:14-29 is that God’s mercy trumps all else. We are accepted by his mercy and can proclaim that to others. Our life and our new life are God’s merciful gifts.