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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Grafted in by Faith”

Romans 11:11-24

VERSE DISCOVERY: Romans 11:11-24 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- Bring in a branch or some branches to show the class as an object lesson. Ask, *If I wanted to, is there a way for a live branch like this one to become part of a new tree?* The answer is yes. Explain briefly the “grafting” process and follow up with recommended resources below. (You may even want to cut a piece of the branch on the end and tie it into or wrap with another branch, demonstrating the grafting process).
- Search online for a video or photos that explain the grafting process with trees. Use this illustration to tie into this lesson. Explain why Paul thought this was a good analogy to show others how Gentiles were “grated in” and made a part of God’s family. Also use it to describe verses 23-24 of this lesson where it shows that even the Jews, who no longer continue in unbelief, but by faith also believe in Christ, they too can be grafted back in (using the grafting process again, explain how broken branches can be restored to a tree).

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

There is no heart that God does not want to touch with His salvation and love. There is no life He would turn away that would turn to Him completely and wholly in faith. There is no soul that He wouldn’t want to welcome into His family with open arms who stakes their eternity on the saving blood of Jesus Christ. God’s arms are opened to receive into His eternal home as many as will be saved, whether they hail from a Jewish background, or are Gentiles.

Differences have a way of bringing division in almost every facet of life. But, one place where there should not be division is amongst the body of Christ, for we all arrive in that place together: by faith. We are all “grafted in” to this family of faith, not by our own works or national heritage, but because we believe and accepted the gift God offered through Jesus Christ our Lord, and I, for one, am glad.

This puts us all on even footing. There is no advantage to belonging to one group or another, for all come to be blood-born members of this heavenly heritage through the one and only way, entering through Christ alone. For He said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man*

cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). And, with that statement standing as the forever, ultimate and unmovable truth regarding the who and how’s to get to heaven, no one has a reason to boast as if they attained this themselves or to look down on others. We all come by it the same way – through Jesus.

Paul, in this lesson, lays this division to rest, explaining the position of all parties involved and reminding those who are Gentiles, that as easily as God made a way for them to enter into this grace, how much more will He do so for those of Jewish background, of those of His chosen people who turn in belief to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Division is something that shows up in some of the ugliest forms in the world we live in. Let the church be different. Let us all remember that each of us enter this mercy through grace. That each of us have been transitioned from what we used to be to where God is taking us because by His plan of salvation we have been saved. Let each of us remember that we are introduced, implanted, and grafted into His heavenly plans by faith. None of us got here on our own. Therefore, rejoice with one another and support the growth of one another because as members of the same family of faith, we are all in this together.

Activities

- Before Christ, we were far from the family of God. We were without hope, without God. But, because of the blood of Christ, all of that has been changed (see Ephesians 2:11-13) and we have been grafted into something wonderful and beautiful; we are members of His holy heritage, “*the household of God*” (see Ephesians 2:19). Think back to the time of your personal “grafting in” moment and write the wonder of that moment on the **Journal Page** provided on site. On the **Kid’s Journal Page**, have students write three wonderful things about being in God’s family.
- In the **Draw the Scene** section, students can draw a portrait of themselves onto the tree demonstrating the concept of being “grafted in.”
- Younger students can make an “**I Am a Child of Faith**” necklace craft.
- Alternate activity sheets available such as **Word Search, Memory Verse, and more** for those who just want to work with printed materials.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: “***Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.***” **Romans 11:20.**
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)

Life

Because of Christ and His gift of salvation, we who believe, now stand as children of God by faith because God has grafted us into His family. Find time throughout this week to read through Ephesians 2. As you are reading, highlight or right down key points of faith and grace, paying special attention to our position now that we have Christ in our life.

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“Grafted in by Faith”

Romans 11:11-24

VERSE DISCOVERY: Romans 11:11-24 (KJV, Public Domain)

The Jews of the Apostle Paul’s day struggled first with accepting God’s plan of salvation by faith. Rather, in their own righteousness, relied more on the works of the law (Romans 9:31-33). Romans 10:4 declares, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

Another thing they struggled in was the acceptance of the Gentiles into God’s spiritual family. Rather than depend on the law, as the Jews previously had done, and the works of the law, they, the Gentiles “have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith,” (Romans 9:30). Although through the centuries the prophets foretold, “I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved,” (Romans 9:25; see also verse 26).

Paul continued to teach when it comes to accepting Christ by faith, “There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” (Romans 10:12-13; emphasis mine).

Does this mean that God has cast away His chosen people? (Romans 11:1). Absolutely not! But, by God’s grace, there is still a remnant that will worship Him through faith (Romans 11:1-6). While some remained spiritually blind, God was using this as an opportunity to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

Neither group had a reason for division amongst them. God loves the Jews and the Gentiles alike and wants all to be saved if they believe.

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LESSON SUMMARY

Romans 11:11 “I say then, **Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.**”

“Have they stumbled that they should fall?” Referring to the unbelief of those early Jews and their rejection of Christ as the Messiah, as God’s plan of salvation – does this stumbling at this divine truth mean that this is the end for them? Are they now a people that are done away with because they have no more purpose in God’s plan? Has their fallen status become who they are to be permanently identified as?

“God forbid.” Absolutely not! God still has a divine plan and purpose in effect for His people Israel. They may have initially rejected the Christ and transgressed against Him through their unbelief, but God was not completely done with them.

“But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.” As noted in last week’s lesson, salvation was never supposed to be exclusive. God’s chosen people were designed to be carriers of His truth and His revelation to the world – to be a witness to the world of His desired relationship with all mankind.

Due to their current unbelieving status, a doorway would now be opened for the **“Gentiles”** to have a shot at receiving **“salvation.”** Acts 13 tells us what occurred when Paul and Barnabas were blasphemed against and contradicted by the Jews: “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles,” (vs. 46). Thus, the preaching of the gospel was on the move toward the Gentiles.

Does this mean all Gentiles will be saved at the Jews rejection of the Christ? Again, absolutely not! Regardless of ethnic background or regional heritage, all must come to Him in and through faith – Jew and Gentile alike.

While the Jews rejection of Christ opened a door of acceptance to the Gentiles, the Gentiles too would become a tool to touch the heart of the Jews, **“to provoke them to jealousy.”** Deuteronomy 32:21 foretold, “They have moved me to jealousy with that which is

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not God; they have provoked me to anger . . . I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,” (see also Romans 10:19).

Romans 11:12 “Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?”

If through their “fall” and “diminishing” the “world/Gentiles” become “rich” (spiritually so at the accepting of the rich gospel of Christ through faith), “**how much more their fullness?**” Those who were not formerly considered to be blessed are now presented with the opportunity to be spiritually blessed. Israel’s loss is the world’s gain (as some would note it today).

With the offering of Christ and all the blessings a child of God would receive now available to them – greater would be the spiritual riches when the hearts of the Jews are stirred toward the realm of faith in Christ Jesus, bringing them to their “**fullness.**”

Just imagine and compare the difference it would make. How much more would their own faith (speaking of those future Jews), touch and turn others, causing a global domino effect of God’s blessings and the turning of people in faith as it ripples through this world?

It would be simply amazing.

Romans 11:13-14 “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.”

Lest they become haughty in their thinking, Paul directs his next line of thought directly to the Gentiles. Careful heed should be taken given their now privileged position in Christ. Paul, “**the apostle of the Gentiles,**” (compare to Acts 9:15), acting with authority to his calling, says, “**I magnify my office.**”

The Apostle Paul was the founding father of many churches located in Gentile nations. His reputation of authority preceded him to the Roman church as well. As their spiritual leader, he had no qualms in letting them know, “**If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.**”

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Paul may have been an apostle to the Gentiles, but he still had a heart for his own kinsmen. In Romans 9 he carried, “great heaviness and continual sorrow” (vs. 2) in his heart for his fellow flesh that rejected Christ. To the point where he stated, “I wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,” (vs. 3).

His love for his own people never waned though his mission took him to others. So, if there is some way for their hearts to be pricked to receive the gospel; to open themselves up to God’s truth of salvation through all of this – then, so be it. He would be enamored with the idea. To really know his feelings toward his people, think of your own family and the unsaved in it. What if the similar would happen to cause them to accept Christ? Wouldn’t you be overjoyed to see them come to salvation? I would!

So, it is Paul’s hope that the Gentiles turning in faith would provoke his Jewish brethren that as many as will may be saved and brought back from the dead spiritually. For another analogy, picture if you will in your mind an EMT bringing to recovery a loved one battled in a life or death crisis. There is rejoicing. There is joy over the recovering of said loved one. The same with Paul.

As the Gentiles gained from their loss, oh what it would be if the provocation of such would awaken those Jewish sleeping souls to rise up and grab hold of Jesus for themselves, and “**save some of them.**”

Awesome!

Romans 11:15-21 “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”

If their rejection and unbelief have given place for the door of the gospel to be opened to the rest of the world, how much more “**shall the receiving of them be, but life from the**

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dead?” A national prodigal son story of restoration, if you will. A people literally brought back to life, being spiritually resuscitated and restored once again.

Therefore, the one who has this privilege bestowed upon them, the Gentiles, should not **“boast.”** It’s not of their own goodness (far from it – but, a work of grace) that caused God’s mercy to extend salvation beyond the spiritual borders of His chosen people. Their disobedience [God’s chosen] made a way for the measure of reconciliation, through Christ, to be made available to all who believe.

Would it not benefit the Gentiles to remember from where they came; their “parent body” of faith to be saved, if you will? **“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the braches.”**

In speaking of the “firstfruit” Paul breaks down for them, the Gentiles, the importance of their faith and what role the Jews played in that. In Numbers 15:20-21 we learn the importance of the word firstfruit where they would offer up in appreciation “the first of your dough.” Not until that first portion was offered was it permissible to eat the rest.

Given that the first portion to be offered was considered **“holy”** (set apart and consecrated), the **“lump,”** the source of the original would also have to be viewed as holy once it was consecrated. Thus, making those first-century Christians, who were Jews by birth, vital in the foundation of their faith as well.

“And if the root be holy, so are the branches.” The root system of any tree supports the branches. Whatever the root is or has is transferred to the branches that grow from it.

There are varying opinions on which the **“root”** here is referring. Some cite the patriarchs, some says God, and some refer this verse to the first Jewish Christians. I won’t argue either point here. Regardless of whom it is actually speaking of the main point for the Gentiles believers (whom Paul is currently speaking to) is to realize they and their newfound faith are grounded in the **“holy”** which came before them. Again, there was no need to be boastful and haughty in their current status in Christ. Those that were before them are foundational in their faith now.

Therefore, they are instructed not to lift themselves up with a prideful spirit, as if they are now superior to those Jews who refused to believe. For God can, at any moment, cut them off as

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well. **“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”**

Some of those natural branches were disobedient in their unbelief to believe in the fulfilled promise of Christ. Thus, they were **“broken off.”** A great spiritual pruning had taken place and **“some,”** not all, of those branches that lack to produce spiritual fruit, were done away with while others were **“grafted”** in.

This does not mean that God has done away with the Jews as a whole (referring back to the introduction and beginning of the lesson). Only some were broken off showing God still has a remnant of those that believe. But the unbelieving Jews were taken out and believing Gentiles, **“wild olive tree,”** was put in to grow **“among them”** and **“with them partake of the root and the fatness of the olive tree.”** Tied into the natural tree, as the farmer of an orchard would add branches through the process of grafting, they too would produce spiritual fruit.

The Gentiles believers were always to remember **“thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.”** The ones that were broken off were done so because of **“unbelief.”** Those who are now grafted in are done so by faith. Ethnicity didn't cause the loss of the promise – unbelief did. Ethnicity didn't compel the gain of the promise – faith did. Everything hinges on whether one believes or not.

Living a life of faith through Jesus Christ will gain one a future with God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us beyond a shadow of a doubt that you cannot please God without faith. The feet of faith walk forward believing God is, “and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” (Hebrews 11:6). Faith in its highest form removes all worldly shackles. Ethnicity, background, and prestige all fall away in the eyes of our Savior whose only view is that of an opened heart filled with belief.

Obtaining the promise of being grafted in is directly related to one's **“faith.”** A mind of humility and godly **“fear”** is to be had as opposed to boastfulness when one realizes the goodness of God.

Romans 11:22-24 “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in

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again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

God's "**goodness**" has now allowed access to those who formerly had none, and in His "**severity**" He has cut off some of those who were formerly allowed access from the promise.

Again, everything hinges on belief and unbelief. Those who believe will experience the goodness of God and those who refuse Him, His severity.

The Bible says, "Good and upright is the LORD," (Psalm 25:8). It tells us, "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations," (Psalm 100:5). Over and over again we read of His goodness. God wants to bless people. He wants to see them thrive in the spirit, drawing nearer and nearer to Him. Only the feet of faith will walk one there.

Unbelief is delusional and a robber of the goodness of God. It separates one from where He wants them to be and through their lack of faith, they experience His severity (cut off).

How much are people missing out due to their lack of faith? Apparently, a lot. An eternal promise lies in the balance and faith is the key to enter. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our **faith**," (1 John 5:4; emphasis mine).

"If thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Initial faith is not enough. One must continue in the faith to continue experiencing the goodness of God or else they too would be subject to losing out on the promise; being "**cut off**."

The warning for the Gentile Christians is to take heed the path they walk lest they end up in the same destination as those Jewish people whose rejection of Christ led them away from the promise. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away . . ." (John 15:2) – Jew or Gentile.

"God is able to graff them in again." If the Jewish heart that was once unbelieving has now turned to Him in faith, God is able to restore that branch back to the tree. Their relationship with God can be healed. God has not totally washed His hands of His chosen people, as

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some believe. Any heart that turns to Him, Jews included, God, can bring back into His promise. God specializes in restoration, healing relationships with Him **“again.”**

“For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” By nature’s law one of one’s **“own”** is more easily and readily grafted in than a wild one, or one who doesn’t originally belong.

Some packs of animals carry a specific scent for their particular pack. One who does not bear the same scent would have a harder time being accepted into the pack. We see a similar example in the human body with organ transplants. It is so wonderful that God has allowed science to take on such a procedure, but parts that are trying to be incorporated in could suffer rejection because they were not naturally a part of that particular body.

If Gentiles, who were not of the natural olive tree (who weren’t originally God’s chosen people; who didn’t have God’s ordinances and such) can be grafted in – how much easier for the Jews who hearts have been turned to a life of faith (those who bore the markings of the natural)?

CONCLUSION

God welcomes all to partake of His promises – Jew and Gentile alike. He can graft any believing heart into the family of God when they operate with a heart of faith.

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TOPIC:

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Romans 11:11-24

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T** or **F**. The author of the book of Romans is Peter.
2. “The _____ were broken off, that I might be grafted in.” (Romans 11:19)
A. Branches **B.** Roots **C.** Trees **D.** Seeds
3. Briefly explain the **grafting** process.

4. What does the word “**Firstfruit**” mean?

5. “Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by _____” (Romans 11:20)
A. Nature **B.** Goodness **C.** Thyself **D.** Faith
6. **T** or **F**. Any who believe, no matter their background, can be grafted into God’s family.
7. The writer of Romans hoped that when the Gentiles received salvation, it would spur some of his own countrymen to want to be saved (Romans 11:11-14). Are there some in your family who you want to be saved? What would be your prayer for them right now?

