**13th Sunday after Pentecost Sermon**

**Text:** Romans 11:13–15, 28-32

**Theme: God’s Grace for all people!**

The word “all” has almost become a bad word today! You have to be careful how you use it. Take for example the phrase “people matter” or “lives matter”. If you add the word all, use it in one of those phrases today, you may find yourself in hot water. The social and political climate is such that words said one way, can be used against you.

In out service for today. I want to use the word “all”. When we connect it to what God has to say, it is not a bad word. In fact, is a real good word. A word of great comfort. Listen to what God says; **“This is good, and pleases God our Savior,  who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”**

“**God Grace Is for All People”** This is our theme. Yes, for all! Our lessons for this Sunday have the same message. No one who comes to Jesus in faith is cast aside. The Old Testament Reading from Isaiah promises salvation for those outside Israel. All who love the Lord will be gathered. This is for all people.

The Gospel is the well-known account of Jesus’ dealings with the Canaanite woman who comes to him on behalf of her daughter. Although at first, she suffers rejection from the disciples and, it seems, even from Jesus, she persists with her plea. In the end, she is not pushed away. She receives more than she first asked. Her daughter is healed, and her faith is strengthened.

In our text for today from Romans 11 Paul looks at the struggle between his own people, the Jewish nation, and those he is ministering to. **13I am speaking to you Gentiles. For as long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I am going to speak highly of my ministry. 14Perhaps I may make my own people jealous, and so save some of them. 15For if their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, what does their acceptance mean other than the dead coming to life?**

Even though they had the Romans as their oppressors and conquerors, even though the Greek culture was strong among them, the Jewish had built a wall around themselves. They did this to protect their race and culture, and they looked down on other peoples. Paul knew this. The Jews believe they were the “chosen People” who had Moses, Prophets, Patriarchs Abraham, the Covenant and promises from God. They mistakenly thought that because God had chosen them that made them superior.

This was a big challenge for the first Christian Church, as many of the first Christians had Jewish background. As people from other backgrounds confessed Jesus as Lord and joined the Jewish Christian community, how would be the relationship among them all? God had established a special relationship with Israel as the nation through whom the nations of the world would come to know Him.

But Israel failed in her mission, in spite of being aware of God’s promises to all since the first promise given to Abraham, that “**all peoples on earth will be blessed through you**” (Genesis 12:3).

Most people today believe that people get what they deserve and they deserve what they get. This is no doubt what Paul’s listeners were thinking. Those who rejected Jesus! Those who cried out that he be crucified. Let them be lost. They deserve what they get!

But Paul has something to say about this. **28In regard to the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But, in regard to election, they are especially dear for the sake of the patriarchs, 29because God’s gracious gifts and call are not regretted. 30For just as you were once disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy due to their disobedience, 31so also now they have become disobedient, so that by the mercy shown to you they may be shown mercy too. 32For God imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may show mercy to all.**

**“**I regret saying that”; is what you hear today when the cancel culture swings into action. Do not use the word “All”. But God says he doesn not regret using the word all. In fact we need to hear it. Yes, **“all”.** Now we need to listen to God’s talking points:

The refusal of Israel to believe in the Messiah, does not mean that God is done with them. Paul reminds us that God loves Israel because of the promise to the patriarchs that God’s gifts and call are irrevocable. God and His love never change despite the response of the people whom God loves and has called.

Paul is especially careful to emphasize the “equal treatment” that both Israel and the Gentiles receive. That equal treatment and equal footing is reinforced by the solemn conclusion of verse 32: **For God imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may show mercy to all.**

This imprisoning is perhaps not understood. It could be put this way, turned in or handing people over to the consequences of their sins. We are all equal in that respect. There is no difference, nationality, color, race, religion, we are all the same…sinful….. and our sinful nature would be right there, crying out with the crowd, crucify him. Crucify him. Cancel him!

This is where the Author of cancel culture comes in. The Devil is the one who says, don’t’ listen to him. You need to cancel him. The devil says, listen to yourself. Listen to society, listen to me.

Last Sunday we focused on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus! The author and perfecter of our faith. What happens if we loose focus? A Professional golfer was playing in a tournament with a caddy with a reputation of constantly talking. The golfer told not to talk and only answer with a yes or no when asked a question. On the second hole the golfer found the ball next to a tree in the rough. He would need to hit it under a branch, over a pond to get it onto the green. He checked out the possibilities and asked the caddie for a 5 iron. The caddie said, remembering his directive to answer only yes or no, said “No.” The golfer grabbed the 5 iron, hit the ball which landed on the green about 2 feet from the hole. He turned to the caddie and said, “You can talk now. Tell me what you think of that shot.” The caddie said, “That wasn’t your ball.” (from Ignorant of God’s Mystery by Steve Shepherd, 01/27/2014 – SermonCentral.com)

We often take our focus off Jesus, off God and cancel him. You cannot talk. I will follow my son. My desifres, my own thinking. This is when God often shows us that doing so we will bring trouble. Judgment on ourselves. **30For just as you were once disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy due to their disobedience, 31so also now they have become disobedient, so that by the mercy shown to you they may be shown mercy too.** God does this so that it might be clear to us that we are sinners whose only way of escape is through God’s mercy. God’s ultimate desire is not to damm, but to save. God wants to offer mercy to **all**, all who listen to him.

Jesus came to restore the original plan of God to reach all with His mercy and grace, without distinction of race, language, culture or other differences. God’s grace is for all people! Now, especially now, it the time for us to share this with our neighbor, our countrymen and women and the world!

**AMEN**