**NMBC Small groups** – week beginning 5th July 2020 Study questions to choose from.

**“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”** Romans 11:33

**Romans 9-11**

**1 9**:2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel.

Paul writes with great emotion. Describe his feelings as he bridges the gap between Jew & Gentile.

**2 9**:4 Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship & the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, for ever praised! Amen.

There are 8 wonderful privileges that the Jews had from the Old Testament.

To what extent are these blessings the same or different for us, in our Christian experience?

**3 9**:13 Just as it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’ 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 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.’

God’s attitude to Esau is a dramatic Hebrew way of expressing preference – see Luke 14:26 ‘If anyone does not ‘hate’ their family…’. Describe Esau’s character: Genesis 25:29-34 & Heb 12:16.

Do any of us deserve the mercy of God? Remind each other of the reality of Romans 3:9-20.

**4 10**:6 The righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 ‘or “Who will descend into the deep?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth & in your heart,’ that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 if you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ & believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Explore the strong link in Old & New Testament thinking. See the way Moses & Paul use the same ideas: Deuteronomy 30:11-16. What is the place of the Word of God in our faith experience?

**5 10**:13 ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’

What does this say about evangelism? How much is it a priority for us?

**6** **11**:1 I ask then: did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don’t you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah – how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me’? 4 And what was God’s answer to him? ‘I have reserved for myself 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ 5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6 And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

Paul says, ‘No, God has not rejected his people!’. Can you find 4 pieces of evidence he gives?

**7** **11**:17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.’ 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. 22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

Can you find a warning to Gentiles - who are believers… and a promise to Jews - about their future?

**8** **11**:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 ‘Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?’ 35 ‘Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?’ 36 For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.

On Sunday we looked at two ‘mysteries’: the future of the Jewish people, & the tension between God’s sovereignty & human responsibility. Are you all right living with these mysteries?

How would you explain more fully the meaning of the first sentence of verse 36?