

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the GIFT of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” 2 Timothy 1:6-7.

Dear Covenant Family,

For some time now **Romans 11:29**, ***“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,”*** has been rolling around in my thoughts as it applies to us, today. There is a lot to say about this simple verse, its meaning, its implications, and its interpretations. As it is with so many other Bible verses, there are many different teachings. To better understand **verse 29**, the entire 11th chapter needs to be included in this survey. What was Paul’s point and how does it apply to us today?

In summary, Paul addresses the fallen, unrighteous nation of Israel, with assurance that God does, indeed, have a plan for their salvation, and especially for His remnant nation (those who still serve Him). We, the church and our nation, are running a parallel path to the Jewish nation at that time. Israel would walk in righteousness, sin, fall away, and then return back to God. God would forgive them and the cycle would repeat again. This is the nature of sinful mankind, finding God, repenting of sins, walking with God, and then growing cold and falling (walking) away from God, Who is still there, waiting, calling, hearing, and ready to answer.

God is **Merciful** and full of **Grace**. He is always doing two things: walking with the righteous and calling sinful man back to Him. Why? Oh, yes, because God loves His creation. And yes, God is full of compassion and has made forgiveness available to us through the shed **blood** of His Son, Jesus. But, does God, can God, will God ever give up on the sinful man whose nature is of the flesh? **NO**, if for no other reason than for God’s sake. ***“You shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for My Name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the LORD GOD,”*** **Ezekiel 20:44.**

Let me add that while our loving Heavenly Father is calling and waiting for the unrighteous to return to Him, He is Blessing those who walk with Him, worship Him, talk with Him, hear His Voice, and obey His Word. He is always faithful to His Word! He will never fail or leave us!

What is the difference between your **calling**, **talent**, **gift**, **skill**, and **natural ability**? What is God given, earned, learned, or inherited? All of these can be applied to **Romans 11:29**. The dictionary defines **gift** as ***“Something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation,”*** while **talent** is ***“a marked innate natural endowment or ability.”*** Let’s call **skill** as the ***“ability to do something well,”*** and **calling** as ***“a strong urge toward a particular way of life or career; a vocation.”*** Some will argue that all talents are in your gene pool, and what you have (or don’t have) is all you get. The distinctions between **gifts**, **talents**, and **ability** can get blurry at times.

Looking back at **Romans 11:29**, Paul is telling the Jewish race that they are God’s. And that God has blessed them since day one, He had given them the **Gift** of righteousness through the Law, and He has called them to be His Own. In THAT, God **will not** repent, take back, nullify, cancel, or ignore that they are the chosen race (His

Family)!!! However, God’s **Promises**, **Gifts**, **Callings**, and **Grace** are not a **“get out of jail free”** card to commit and live in sin. **NO!** To live in His Blessings, they (we) must play by His Rules. Or, be obedient to His Holy Word! Those who chose to walk in their own flesh and not in His Word, chose themselves to walk outside His Covenant, and therefore they walk away from His Blessings and His Communion. However, God **will have** a people who love Him, serve Him, listen to Him, and obey Him, if only a few. He has had, does have, and will always have a remnant of Jewish believers.

By definition, a “remnant” is a small remaining quantity of a larger quantity. We see several times in the Old Testament, God keeping His promise with a remnant of His Family. ***“The LORD said unto Noah, ‘Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this [evil] generation,’”*** **Genesis 7:1.** In a time when ALL the world had turned to the pleasures of the earthly flesh, Noah stayed righteous (obedient) to the LORD, and became the small remnant of God’s Love and Grace who God saved because He would not cancel His Covenant of Calling them His family.

Elijah felt that he was the only Israelite in all the world that still served and loved God for his nation had torn down God’s altars, killed God’s Prophets, and turned to serving other gods. God told him that there was a remnant of 7,000 men who had not bowed their knee to Baal, and thus still loved and served Him.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were part of God’s remnant in Babylon. Being part of the God’s remnant does not mean that life is rosy and there are no problems, trials, or persecutions. OH, NO. Just the opposite may be true. But it does mean that God is there beside you, walking every step with you, leading you, opening doors, and protecting you regardless of what the enemy may throw at you.

There are those who are preaching a **“Replacement Theology”** that states the Gentile Church is now God’s chosen nation, instead of the Jewish nation, because the Jews rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Nothing could be further from the truth. **Write this down**, the repentant gentile has been grafted into the Family Tree, the Tree of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (the Jewish family). **Dead non-fruit bearing limbs, regardless of race, have been (and will be) cut off and thrown into the fire, but the Tree is still alive.** There **will be** a Jewish remnant saved. There are more and more Jewish brothers and sisters blooming and bearing fruit on the Tree of Life, worshipping Jesus.

Take a brief look at the end time scriptures where God refers to His remnant being the Nation and being redeemed. Not walking too deep into end time questions, God does say that the **nation of Israel will be saved.** Whether we are talking about the 144,000 Israelites or a nation without number, there will be a remnant that will, and must, accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, for the Word says that only the redeemed will enter Heaven.

“There shall in no wise enter into [Heaven] anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life,”

Revelation 21:27.

The Voice of God is calling everyone to “come.” ***“Unto you, O men, I call; and My Voice is to the sons of man,”*** Proverbs 8:4. This calling is for everyone, forever. ***“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the CALLED according to His purpose,”*** Romans 8:28. Here is a simple question, “What is the purpose of man?” Or one might ask, “What is the purpose of life?” The answer is as simple as the question. As our pastor recently said, ***“To know God and to make God known!”***

Each and every one of us has a special **Gift, Talent, Skill, or Ability** given to us from God. Oh, there are unique Gifts given by the Holy Spirit, i.e., *administration, apostle, discernment, evangelism, exhortation, faith, giving, healing, helps, hospitality, knowledge, leadership, mercy, prophecy, serving, teaching, wisdom*, and more. One or more of these gifts may be given to a person as a major part of their life in serving the LORD. However, I feel that a little of each of God's gifts are in the soul of every Child of God to be used at one time or another, or several times as the LORD directs the Holy Spirit to lead us as His servants, His willing vessels on Earth.

God has called you and me to be His ministers on this Earth. To be His willing Vessels of Service, when and where we are needed. His Calling could be that of a faithful mother supporting her husband, raising her children, working in the church, hands helping her neighbors, and using every one of God's gifts in her daily walk. Or, God may have given you a large helping of only one gift, such as *teaching, standing in faith for others, or wisdom and understanding* of His Word. Every gift, every talent, every skill, and natural ability should be used to further the Kingdom of God and bring Glory to His Name. Oh, your gift may be used in your everyday life to make a living, but you still must serve the LORD. You (and I) are accountable to God for every **Gift and Talent** given to us.

God has called you to the Cross of Calvary for a reason more than to just be saved. He has a purpose in life for you. We are to be more than just His Kids around the supper table.

We are to know God AND make God known!

In recent months, I have heard myself talk on different radio and TV interviews about our accountability to God for the opportunities given to us for His Kingdom, about using our gifts to fulfill His calling on our lives. Many Christians do not know what their calling is and may not even know what their gifts are. I know for a fact what my calling is. My first calling is to my family; to be a son, brother, uncle, husband, father, and now grandfather (papa), because God gave me this family to love, teach, and lead. He gave me my neighbors to befriend, help, and to be a witness. He has given me Christian friends to love, help, share their burdens, and support with my prayers. And yes, I was called to be a son of God in that calling, I was called to walk closer to my Heavenly Father, just like you are called to walk closer to Him. And lastly, I know that I was called to do His work. You have a calling to do His Work, somewhere.

Do you know what He has CALLED you to do?

Remember that all of us will stand before the Great

White Throne someday and give account of what we have done for the LORD. Have we used our gifts and talents for Him, for ourselves, or did we let them gather dust or even die? God **has not** and **will not take back** the **gifts or talents** that He has given us. God will not take back His **calling** on our life to serve Him. He will not! They are ours. We must own them. What have we done with His calling? Have we done what He has asked us to do?

I do not want to stand before Jesus and have Him say, ***“Phillip, why didn't you use the gifts that were given to you for the Kingdom?”*** or ***“Phillip, their blood is on your hands because you did not share the Gospel with them when I gave you the opportunity to speak with them.”***

No, NO, NO! I want to hear my Savior say, ***“Well done My good and faithful servant. Enter into My rest!”*** Praise God!!

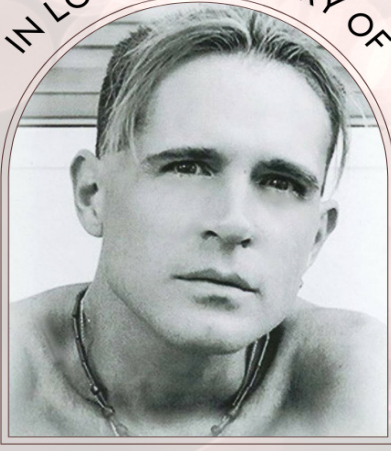
I love you in the LORD, and therefore, I must ask you today, ***“What GIFTS has God given you that you are not using for Him?”*** ***“What CALLING has God called you to that you are reluctant to go into or have put on the shelf?”*** We all are called to serve HIM as long as we have breath in our lungs. ***“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”***

Your Covenant Brother in Jesus Christ,

Phillip L Buttram

Phillip L Buttram

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



David Paul Buttram

03/12/1964 ~ 03/24/2024

David was grandson of Lester and Ethel Buttram, son of Paul and Donna Buttram. David had worked at Gospel Tract Society for over thirty years, following in his father's footsteps. David faithfully kept track of our book keeping needs and corporate records. He loved the tract ministry. A few times when there was an issue with a bank deposit, I always knew that the error was the bank's fault as David was always spot on with his math and record keeping. David was passionate about family history/genealogy and meticulously researched the family tree. David loved history, finding amazing antiques / artifacts, and bringing them back to their former glory. David is survived by his brother, Robert and family. Roberts works as plant manager for Gospel Tract Society,