

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

God's Choices and Our Responsibility
Romans 9:1-8; 10:1-21

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Have seeds, flower pots, and water available to use during the introduction to the Bible Study.

Have large blank sheets, newsprint, or white board available.

Worship Time Leader:

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God's Choices and Our Responsibility – 04-12-08-en

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Prepare sufficient copies of the reading found on the final page of this session – so that each person who will participate in the reading will have one.

Arrange with the children's leader for the children to practice the reading that is prepared for the Offering Time. If you do not have children in your group, ask two adults to do the reading.

Music Sources:

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

“Freely, Freely” *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* (1983) #18

“The Steadfast Love of the Lord” *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* (Expanded 3rd Ed.) #306

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***God's Choices and Our Responsibility*****Focal Text**

Romans 9:1-8; 10:1-21

Background Text

Romans 9:1-10:21

Main Idea

People are responsible for accepting and sharing the message of the gospel that God has chosen them to receive.

Question to Explore

What responsibility do people have for responding to the message of salvation?

Teaching Aim

To help the church to find boldness in sharing the Good News of Jesus with those that God brings into our lives and to become sensitive to and responsive to the opportunities given to us by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for Jesus.

Gathering together:

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* (1983) #26

First thoughts:**God's Choices and My Choices**

Leader, say: The writer of our Gathering Time thoughts tells the following personal and important story. Let's listen in as if this older pastor and teacher were with us this morning and sharing his story with us, personally.

Leader: Read, or even better, have another person (an older member) read the following story:

A much loved and respected pastor who served God for many years in Canada tells his story: "I had nothing to do with who my ancestors were. That was a sovereign choice

of God. One of my great, great grandfathers was a Baptist preacher. He was long dead before I was born. I had a great, great grandmother who was a full-blood North American native Cherokee. God determined my ancestry. He knew who they would be. I had no choice in who my parents were, where I would be born, or even the country in which I would be born.

These were God's choices. I grew up during the Great Depression and dust bowl days of the 1930's. In 1936 my parents moved to California near Indio. In 1941 my parents moved to Stone County Arkansas about 10 miles south east of Mountain View. I had no choice in these moves.

During the years from my birth in 1932 until I left home to start university in 1948, there were many and varied circumstances that had an influence in my life. I had very little choice concerning the kind of circumstances. There were many people that crossed my path. These had an impact on my life. Many of these I had very little choice, if any, in their coming into my life.

However, I had a great responsibility in how I responded to these influences and circumstances. My parents did not teach me about God. They did teach me how to be honest, hard working, responsible, and respectful of others. It was my choice whether or not to rebel against some of the moves we made during the first 16 years of my life. It was my choice whether the bad influences (among the good) would be a controlling factor in my life or not. It was my choice whether I would be honest, hard working, respectful, and responsible.

God is sovereign. He is also loving and just and gracious. He engineered the circumstances that caused a young lady to invite me to "her" church where I would hear the Gospel story of Jesus dying on a cross for the first time in my life. I had just started to university. I had never met her before. All of the people, all of the circumstances of my life, and all the moves from one place to another were used by God to draw me to Him. He was making it possible for me to hear of His sending His Son to die for me.

My brother, just older than me, grew up in the same home with the same parents and participated in the same moves. However, he responded in a very different way. He resented being forced to move. His response was very different from mine and from the response of our only sister (younger than I am). He is not a believer today and is mostly bitter and selfish. God provided him many of the same opportunities as were provided for our sister and for me. He has made the wrong choices for the most part.

The burden I have for my brother and his children has not reached the point of being willing to "be accursed" if they would be saved. Prayer on their behalf is regular. Time is rapidly running out for him to be saved. He is 76 years old and his mind is failing because of dementia or Alzheimer's disease."

Our choices are of eternal consequence. And we are responsible for our choices. God's love is such that nothing can separate the believer from Him. It is also true that "it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment."

Closing the Gathering Time:

Leader say: God in His sovereignty has declared that whoever wills may come to Him. The way is clear. No person has an excuse to turn away from God. It is urgent that each person respond with the right choices in life.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

God’s Choices and Our Responsibility

Focal Text

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Introduction to your personal study:

It was the Sunday before Christmas. Mr. S arrived at the end of the nursing home service with the usual box of candies that he brought each Christmas to say “Thanks” for ministering to his mother. As I put the books away I asked casually, “How are things going with you?” To my surprise Mr. S pulled a letter out of his jacket pocket and handed it to me. The letter was short and pointed. It was a letter of confirmation of a conversation Mr. S. had with his doctor indicating that Mr. S only had a few months to live. Fortunately, in spite of the unexpected news, I responded appropriately and asked Mr. S if I could visit with him soon. He indicated that he was going away for a few weeks but when he returned he would like to visit with me. Prior to my visit with Mr. S, I had enlisted some fellow Christians to pray specifically for him. On the evening of the

visit we talked about many things, but the time came when I whispered a prayer. I shared my personal testimony of how Christ had worked in and changed my life. I also shared a few Bible verses. Mr. S listened very carefully and when I asked him if he would like to ask Jesus to be his personal Saviour, he replied “YES”. I led in prayer that evening and when I said “Dear Jesus, please forgive me of my sins” Mr. S repeated it. Off in the corner of the room, Mrs. S also repeated the prayer. That evening two people entered the kingdom of God. Mr. S died a short time later and Mrs. S moved away, but they received salvation, not of works, but by the free grace of the Lord Jesus.

The lesson today will help the members to understand that we all must be prepared to share the opportunity to have a relationship with Jesus. The Good News will be a revelation many have not heard. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we must share the free gift of salvation. Our confession of Christ will be seen in our actions and the words that come from the heart.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

At this time the church in Rome was made up mainly of Gentiles with a Jewish minority. The number of Jewish members was small due to their own self-exclusion. Paul desired that all people understand they were under God’s judgement, but they could each receive forgiveness because of God’s grace.

Chapters 9-11 of Romans deal with the status of the Jews and their future. Some writers believe these chapters were an addition to the manuscript, because of the smooth flow from chapter 8 to chapter 12, but this does not preclude the idea that chapters 9-11 were part of the original book.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Love Offered and Rejected (9:1-8)

9:1 Paul wanted his readers to know the truth, and not the falsehoods that were being spread by many Jewish people. The church was composed of Gentiles and only a few Jews. The Jews continued to promote that belief in Christ alone was not enough, but it must be accompanied with complete obedience to all other Jewish practices.

9:2 Paul’s sorrow (anguish) was rooted in two concerns:

1. It was Paul’s desire for the Jewish community to accept Christ’s forgiveness completely without any additional qualifications.

2. He feared his anguish might be seen as self-serving and not simply his desire for all men to know Jesus as their Saviour.

9:3 Paul would suffer anything just to have his Jewish brothers know Jesus as their Saviour. It is important to keep in mind that this is Paul's wish for his brothers, but he knew that each person must personally ask for forgiveness and claim Christ as Lord, Saviour and Master of his or her life.

9:4,5 The verses give the reader seven factual descriptive phrases for the Israelites. These points when explored identify that Israel was a chosen people. They also indicate clearly that God has tried to guide (bless) this nation, but they had rejected the true worship of God and in fact they crucified His Son. The descriptive phrases are: *adopted sons, the glory, the covenants, the law, the (temple) worship, the promises and the patriarchs*. The final point in this passage is that Jesus Christ came from among them and they rejected him.

9:6,7 These verses are packed with two very important teachings:

1. God's word did not fail; therefore it brings forward the concept of free choice. All people must accept or reject God's leadership.
2. Your heritage does not automatically give you entrance into God's kingdom. You must confess your sin and accept God's grace, forgiveness and his lordship. Paul makes it clear that a family has a line of descendents and not all members partake in the "glory" of the family, only those who are chosen.

9:8 Here, this writer believes people get confused. The Old Testament Biblical promise came through the birth of Abraham's son, Isaac. Israel had a long history of living as the chosen people. But this verse indicates that this lineage of chosenness has now passed from a blood relationship to a faith relationship. The chosen ones are the people who choose to follow Jesus Christ in the forgiveness of sin by mercy and His lordship as Lord, Saviour, and Master. Thus, those who follow Christ are the offspring of Abraham.

The Truth (10:1-4)

10:1-4 Paul wished that Israel would leave their 'religious rules' and come to the saving grace of Christ. Mosaic Law was meant to point people to the Messiah where they would find salvation. Israel, not unlike many in your group, got busy doing religion. The Jews were involved in keeping the rules or were so involved in temple activities that they lost sight of the objective and began to seek righteousness by works. They missed the true knowledge of Jesus. Many believers are unaware or selfish when it comes to the truth of Christ. We quietly encourage people to live by our standards and traditions and we miss God's righteousness. Jesus Christ completed all the law requirements; therefore we must not try to create more. We must believe all can be saved. We must share God's Love in every way we can to bring people to Christ. Paul wanted his

readers to understand that their actions must be based on love and not laws. Israel stumbled over the law and missed the free grace of Christ.

The Vision (10:5-13)

10:5-13 Paul tries to help Israel to see the contrast between what they have as head knowledge and what they have for salvation. The law limited their vision and they missed the 'revelation' of Jesus Christ and his death so mankind could have salvation. Their works made their life a set of rules and rituals and they had no room for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Works, which were of man, were seen as a means of salvation. The Jews missed the true story of salvation through Christ. True confession comes from the heart. The heart is the center of one's being and it can influence the whole being. Verse 10 has the correct order of events: believe in your heart and then confess with your mouth. This is not a two-part activity. The confession is a pouring out of what was happened in your heart and may take place in front of a group but a louder confession is by your action.

Before we leave this section it must be clear that Israel's rejection of the Gospel was for the following reasons:

1. A relationship with God was perverted into legalism.
2. The Jewish people were too proud to believe they were missing the plan God. They misunderstood the law and its purpose.
3. The Jewish people believed they had no need of Salvation because they had 'religion' and rituals.

The Orders (10:14-17)

10:14-17 Here we not only see the remedy for Israel's rejection of Jesus Christ, but also our mandate to be on mission, at home, at work, or around the world. The Old Testament is filled with individuals sent out to proclaim the word of God. The New Testament directs you and me to be on mission personally. Matthew 28:19-20 is clear that we must go – ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”***

For people to feel the call of the Holy Spirit speaking to them they must believe. To have them believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, believe in his death for the forgiveness of sin and in his resurrection, they must hear. Hearing is a two-part assignment. The Holy Spirit will help them hear to the point of faith, but they must hear our words of testimony. Hearing will not happen unless you and I respond to the call and go when we are sent.

Some feel these verses are Paul's defense against the criticism that the Jews leveled at him. They had three issues that they felt justified their unbelief. First, they believed there were no messengers to the Jews—but the Lord sent the disciples out along with others to share. Second, they believed that they had no opportunity to hear—but they often closed their ears to the words of Christ or were blinded by their legalism. Finally, they argued they could not understand the gospel—but the Gentiles, whom they believed to be inferior to them, had understood the message.

Judgement (10:18-21)

10:18-21 The result of the Jewish action was two fold:

1. Most Jews have rejected Christ and they will be held accountable for the rejection. Yet God is waiting for them as he waits for all mankind to turn to him in faith.
2. Most Gentiles have not responded totally to Christ. Therefore they will be held responsible for their inaction.

Our days are numbered. We must be about God's work of sharing the Gospel.

A very personal note to you, the teacher for this week, from your writer:

As I sit to write I am reminded of my father. My dad had many opportunities to have the gospel shared with him, but he rejected it. I thought my father would miss the assurance of God's love because he was becoming more anti-church. But God does have a plan if we are faithful. During this time I was told that I had an incurable lung disorder that would eventually cause my death. I am sure that my father was watching and God was merciful with me, but all the while he refused to come to church (because they would visit him and talk about Jesus). Then, my father was told that he had lung cancer.

One evening, shortly after he had been told about his cancer, I felt a need to visit him and share the Good News of Jesus, exactly what my father did not want to hear. That evening I took my daughter to visit her grandparents and, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, I was able to hear my father ask Jesus Christ to forgive his sins and become his Lord and Master. If I had stayed home that evening I would have missed that opportunity to welcome my father into the kingdom of God. Yes, we must be prepared and then we must go.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Simply put, your goal as the leader and guide for this Bible study is to encourage the congregation to find boldness in sharing the Gospel with another person—and to acquire a sensitivity to and response to opportunities that God's Spirit offers each of us to witness in His Name.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

God's Choices and Our Responsibility

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Romans 9:1-8; 10:1-21

Background Text

Romans 9:1-10:21

Main Idea

People are responsible for accepting and sharing the message of the gospel that God has chosen them to receive.

Question to Explore

What responsibility do people have for responding to the message of salvation?

Teaching Aim

To help the church to find boldness in sharing the Good News of Jesus with those that God brings into our lives and to become sensitive to and responsive to the opportunities given to us by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses for Jesus.

Connect with Life:

Have some seeds, dirt, flower pots, and water available as the people arrive and have them plant the seeds. At the other end of the table have a Bible.

After everyone has planted some seeds ask them to make the seeds grow to the beautiful flower they are meant to be.

Ask someone to take the Bible and make a person a Christian.

Share the following idea:

The farmer is not unlike the Christian. The farmer and the Christian each have some special seed to sow. They each have to decide what and how they will sow it or even if they will share what God has given them. The farmer has a plan and he must deal with the dust, the insects and the weather to plant the crop, but only God can make it grow. There would be no crop if the farmer did not seed and likewise there would be no crop unless God works a miracle on the seed.

The Christian knows that they have the message of salvation for all mankind. Like the farmer they have some enemies. They must be faithful or many will perish. The Christian will miss the joy of seeing a person come to a relationship with Jesus unless they are willing to step out and share the Good News.

Guide the Study:

Request two members to share in reading Romans 9:1-8 aloud to the group.

Call for an answer from someone in the group: What did Paul want the Jewish people to do?

In verse 3, discuss with the group: what Paul would be willing to suffer for the salvation of his people.

Invite the group to discuss: What much do you think the average Christian would suffer for his or her people to know Christ as Lord?

From verses 4 and 5, ask, “Why were the Jews so sure that they did not need Jesus?”

Ask the group to share the question, Who are the chosen people? among themselves and think carefully before presenting an agreed upon answer.

Read 10:1-21. Then ask someone to share a life situation where they were subject to a lot of rules that made no sense to them.

Seek opinions on this: What was the purpose of the Jewish rules?

Discuss with the group this question: What responsibility do people have for responding to the message of salvation?

Investigate this with the congregation: What are the steps of salvation as seen in verses 5-13? Record the replies on newsprint, white board (if you have one) or other paper—and discuss what each may appear to look like in an individual's life.

Now ask: If Christ is holding His hand out for all that have not turned to him, what must we do?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Encourage members to turn to the person on their right and share with them in one or two minutes 'How Jesus came into their life.' or 'What Jesus has done for them.' After the time limit, have the other person share their testimony.

Tell the story found at the end of the **"Teacher Preparation"** (From Your Writer). Ask the group to explain how the writer might feel if he had not shared when he knew he must. Also, ask how the members of your group think the writer felt when his father passed away.

Close the class in prayer, asking Jesus to help all members to be bold in sharing their testimony with others along with inviting others to ask Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

God's Choices and Our Responsibility **Romans 9:1-8; 10:1-21**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Ways, Means, and Opportunities

Have you ever been to a Christian camp where the gospel was preached and salvation offered to unsaved boys and girls? If you are a Christian young person at such a camp, what are ways in which you can help other youth be able to understand and believe the gospel? What are some ways Christian young people sometimes keep their friends who are not Christians from wanting to be Christians?

Today's Bible study contains great Bible verses explaining the way to receive salvation. Spend some time memorizing the passage, then say it to one another for practice.

Romans 10:9-10 “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;

For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***God's Choices and Our Responsibility***
Romans 9:1-8; 10:1-21**Beginning the Service:**

Sing "**Freely, Freely**" *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* (1983) #18
 "**The Steadfast Love of the Lord**" *Maranatha! Praise Chorus Book* (1983) #38

Offering:

A reading for children:

Psalm 118 1-4

Girls: **Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;**

Boys: **"His love endures forever."**

Girls: **Let Israel say:**
"His love endures forever."

Boys: **Let the house of Aaron say:**
"His love endures forever."

Girls: (Turning to the congregation and inviting, with hand movements, the congregation to respond.) **Let those who fear the Lord say:**

All the congregation: **"His love endures forever."**
"His love endures forever."

Collect the offering reverently.

Praying for the World:

Truth Baptist Church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada is a Mandarin-speaking congregation. A new church, they have had an effective ministry in teaching English as a Second Language and in helping new immigrants to Canada. Pray for the dedicated members of Truth Baptist that they may continue their helpful work.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

The Final Goal

Introduction:

Before God created the heavens and the earth; before he created man, it was in His heart to redeem mankind. He had in His heart always, ***“that He is not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance”*** (2 Peter 3:9). God has always had in His heart to have fellowship/communion with man. This means that mankind must be of such nature and character that a holy God could have fellowship with us.

1. A fatal flaw in mankind

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Because of this fatal flaw in man's character, God must do something to change him in order to have a personal relationship with him and to have communion with him. God is sovereign. He is in control. Since man was totally helpless to change himself, to change his nature, God must do something to make possible this change.

2. A choice for mankind

Man is free to make choices. This seems to be in contradiction to a sovereign God. However, it is a central teaching of the Scriptures. God has always chosen a people to make known who He is – a God of love. Since God is Spirit; since He is holy, since man cannot know Him unless He reveals Himself, it is spiritually impossible for man to do anything to have a personal relationship with God. It was necessary for God to become one of us in order for us to know Him.

In the Old Testament God chose a nation, Israel, to be on mission with Him. Israel was chosen, not because of being a special people, not because they were more responsive to Him, not because they were better nor more spiritual, but because He is sovereign. God chose Israel to be the people through whom He would ultimately come to us

personally to reveal Himself. Israel, as a nation, was not chosen to have special privileges, but because He loved them and desired to demonstrate that love to a world. God did not choose them to have special privileges but to bring glory to Himself through them. The ultimate purpose of God in choosing Israel was the preparation for and the human means by which He would send His Son into the world.

3. God's call to mankind

If we look at God's calling, God's choosing or election to salvation, we'll miss what Paul is talking about and even come to the conclusion that God did not or is not keeping His promises to Israel. However, if we see that God's choosing or election is to service, we'll get a better grasp on what Romans 9 and 10 reveal to us. God's call is always an invitation to join with Him and is always given in light of the task or assignment for which He chooses an individual or nation.

We see that Israel's election was an honor and even was given divine privileges. But remember, God's call was not to privilege. Her call as a nation was to duty and responsibility. When the nation responded in faith to God He justified the people, as in the case of Abraham.

God chooses whom He wills. His choosing is His sovereign choice. Our responsibility and our right choice is to obey Him, to say "Yes, Lord." We can do this by faith that is in itself a gift from a merciful and gracious and loving holy God.

4. A task for mankind

So what was Israel's task? And was it fulfilled? Was she faithful? To answer these questions we need to look to God's purpose and what He had in mind. First, He must reveal Himself to man. Second, He must deal with the problem of sin. Israel served as the means by which God revealed Himself. We read in Hebrews chapter one and verse 1-2 that God did do this – **"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world."** What God did through Israel in the Old Testament was in preparation for the final and complete revelation of Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ.

So primarily and ultimately God chose Israel in preparation for and the human means by which the Father might send His Son into the world. Now, Israel did not always understand that her service to God was limited in this fashion. In fact, Israel often acted as though God were dependent on her in order for Him to redeem the lost. Israel's ministry was pointed toward something higher and better and ultimate.

Israel, as a nation, lost her election, because she did not fulfill God's goal. The nation lost sight of her task. God's goal was reached in Christ (Romans 10:4) **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."** Israel, however,

failed to recognize the hand and choice of God and failed to submit to Him in the new covenant ***“written on the heart.”***

Call to Commitment:

Let us remember, God said in the past and now says, ***“Whosoever will may come.”*** If God were not sovereign we would not and could not have this choice. Will you by faith receive the promise of God? Will you by faith choose to accept the offer of God to “follow Him?” The choice is yours. But it is also your responsibility. It is for this—to glorify the Father—that you were chosen.

Concluding the Service:

Sing again, **“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”**.

A reading for children:

Psalm 118 1-4

Girls: **Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;**

Boys: **“His love endures forever.”**

Girls: **Let Israel say:**
“His love endures forever.”

Boys: **Let the house of Aaron say:**
“His love endures forever.”

Girls: (Turning to the congregation and inviting, with hand movements, the congregation to respond.) **Let those who fear the Lord say:**

All the congregation: **“His love endures forever.”**
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