

Road Trip Devotion - Romans 11:22-23

by Jake Christian, Adult Ministries Pastor

"Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree." (Romans 11:22-23; NLT)

Is it possible to lose my faith? Once I have accepted Jesus and begun a relationship with him, is it possible to walk away from that relationship? Some Christians believe that once we have chosen to accept Jesus, it is impossible for us to "lose" our salvation. But this passage calls this idea into question. Paul says that God is kind to those who trust in God's kindness . . . but that those who *stop* trusting will be cut off. It is a sober reminder that free will means we can always choose to walk away from relationship with God. God will not stop us - and he will certainly work to call us back. But ultimately we must decide if we are going to remain in relationship with him.

But there is good news here too, isn't there? Paul has talked in chapter 11 about how many of the Jewish people have been cut off because of their refusal to believe in Jesus. They thought that they had special status with God through their covenant, and that this special status automatically meant they were "in." But Paul tells them that God has sent his promised Messiah - and their refusal to place their faith in him means that they had been cut off.

So where is the good news? Paul assures his readers that it is possible for the Jewish people to turn from their unbelief and once again be grafted in. Refusing to believe in Jesus does not mean that a person is outside of faith once and for all - at any point, if they repent and choose to trust and follow Jesus, God will graft them back into the tree. They can again be part of his people.

And this is good news for us as well. Because it means that no matter our past - whether we have continually rejected God, or if we have simply walked away over time - the door is always open. God always desires for us to return, and welcomes us with open arms.