

SERMON NOTES

The Grace To Belong

Ps Josh Plumb
Nexus Church
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Rom 9-11

opening prayer

- Ask Holy Spirit to continue His restorative work in each of our hearts.
- Pray **Rom 11:36** from a personal perspective: *"For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen."*

ice breaker

Think of a time you walked into a new situation and quietly wondered whether you belonged there. What was that experience like, and what eventually helped you feel settled, if at all?

overview

- In pondering whether we are enough, we often look to our achievements, relationships, and social status for the answer.
- The gospel isn't a ladder to be climbed to reach the Lord. God has already come near (**Rom 10:8**).
- Being children in God's family is marked not by heritage, status or effort, but by a transformed heart, grounded in the person and work of Christ.
- The ground at the foot of the cross is completely level; we all come by grace. *Grace-received* becomes *grace-extended*.

go deeper

One of the deepest questions we carry through life is, *“Do I belong?”*

In **Rom 9-11**, the Apostle Paul speaks into the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers, dismantling the external badges we use to prove our worth, including our heritage, sense of achievement, social status, effort, and so on. Ps Josh’s encouraging sermon reminded us that we don’t need to climb or force our way to the Lord; He has already come near to us, just as **Rom 10:8** says, *“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.”*

Our sense of belonging is grounded only in His mercy, rather than our merit. This is expressed by growing in our trust in Him, confessing His lordship with both our words and actions (**vv. 10:9-10**). From this, that same grace and mercy we have received should be extended to everyone around us (**vv. 11:30-32**).

Ps Josh challenged us to reflect on and assess whether we’re striving to climb this unachievable ladder, simply to prove our worth. Moreover, are we ready to lay down our pride and self-reliance in order to receive the simple gift of grace from the Lord?

application 01

Identify one area of your life where you have been striving to earn approval, both from God and/or from others.

Take a moment to individually write it down, pray over it, and practice releasing it to God each morning this week, reminding yourself that He is near and that, by His grace, you stand before Him Holy and blameless (**Eph 1:4**).

discussion

- 1** Which areas do you feel the pressure to prove you're enough? Perhaps specific spaces, places, relationships, or even within your own faith. Do you tend to lean on your own achievement, relationships, perfection, status, or something else?
- 2** How does knowing God has come near to you (**Rom 10:8**) change the way you approach Him day to day?
- 3** **Rom 10:9-10** describes belonging as both an inward transformation of the heart and a confession with the mouth. Where have you seen the fruit of this in your life? Are there any areas you feel the Lord is still very much at work?
- 4** Discuss: **Rom 11:20** reminds us that we stand by faith, not because of our own superiority. Perhaps you've struggled to feel worthy of receiving God's grace. Contrastingly, while you know you live by grace, there may be people in your life you find difficult to extend grace and mercy towards.

application 02

Take a few moments to pray for one another by name, either in groups of three or as an entire group.

Pray for the areas each person has identified where the Lord is still at work; areas He is inviting them to trust Him more.

closing prayer

- That we wouldn't strive to earn God's grace, but we would experience His nearness, being transformed by His love afresh.
- Soft and submitted hearts that are open to the continued work of the Spirit.
- Boldness to extend mercy to each person the Lord has placed in our lives.