

Lent Day 27

Friday March 31, 2017

Reading: Romans 11:25-36

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited

Reflection

One of my wife and my favourite movies is *Can't Buy Me Love*. It's the story of a 'nerd' (before that was cool) who paid the coolest girl in school to pose as his girlfriend and help him become accepted by her friends. The plan is wildly successful and as his credit rises, so does his ego. At the height of his popularity he rejects his former nerdy friends — after all cool kids are cool because they don't associate with nerds! As you can imagine the whole thing goes bust and he goes back from hero to zero.

Paul has a similar plot in mind in this passage. He has spent a large portion explaining how it is that God has now made Jew and Gentile his people on the basis of faith in Jesus' work, his death and resurrection. For the predominantly Gentile community this is great news, but there is also a risk; they may begin to think, falsely, that God had done with his 'former' people Israel. But even more, they may think God has selected them, the Gentiles, because they are Gentile and not Jews. Arrogance!

In *Can't Buy Me Love* everything goes wrong because the lead has forgotten he doesn't belong there with the cool kids because he isn't cool. It is his conceit that undoes him. Paul says the same to us, if you become conceited and think there is actually something about you — whether race or morality — that entitles you to be a part of God's family they you have missed the point and you need to hear the gospel again. There is nothing about you, it's all based on God's grace. You can't buy love, or popularity, or salvation.

It is a sad thing that there are those who have rejected God's offer of salvation through Christ, but that isn't a he chose me and rejected them situation. That is a situation that God, mysteriously, can use to further his plan which should make us rejoice without assuming we earned it.

Prayer

Keep us humble O God and do not let our hearts become proud. Help us to cling to your salvation. Amen.