

Nourishment from the Root: Grafted in Grace, Rest in Christ — Romans 11

September 14, 2026

Nourishment from the Root: Grafted in Grace, Rest in Christ

*“You, though a wild olive shoot, have been **grafted in** among the others and now share in the **nourishing sap** from the olive root... You do not support the root, but the **root supports you**.” — Romans 11:17-18 (NKJV)*

Highlight key: = grace / *apart-from-works* truth · = the precious gift · **bold** = key terms

Grafted into the Olive Tree

Grafted by grace: wild branches share the nourishing sap of the root (Romans 11:17-18).

Romans 11 opens one of the clearest pictures of the gospel for Gentile believers: you were a wild olive branch, cut from your old stock and *grafted* into the cultivated tree. Christ Himself is the true olive tree — and His life-sap now flows into you. Three pillars hold the whole chapter together.

- **The root** — God’s covenant faithfulness and Christ’s finished work beneath everything
- **The grafted branch** — you, joined to Him by grace, not by natural descent
- **The nourishment** — the sap (His life, word, and Spirit) that keeps the branch alive and fruit-bearing

Romans 11:17-18 (NKJV)

*“And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were **grafted in** among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember*

*that you do not support the root, but the **root supports you.*** — **Romans 11:17-18 (NKJV)**

Romans 11:12 (NKJV)

*“Now if their fall is **riches for the world**, and their failure **riches for the Gentiles**, how much more their fullness!”* — **Romans 11:12 (NKJV)**

Israel’s transgression became the very doorway through which the nations received riches. You were in sickness, poverty, and bondage — yet Jesus took you from where you were and grafted you into Himself. The wild branch now shares the same sap as the cultivated tree. That is not self-improvement; it is **grafted grace**.

Think of what “root,” “branch,” and “nourishment” mean in plain language. The root is everything underground that you cannot see but cannot live without — God’s eternal purpose, Abraham’s covenant, and Christ’s finished work. The branch is your visible life joined to Him. The nourishment is the daily sap: grace, peace, wisdom, and strength flowing from the Head to every part of the body. Without all three, the metaphor collapses into religion; with all three, Romans 11 becomes a living picture of how Gentiles inherit Israel’s promises without replacing Israel’s election.

Paul warns against boasting toward natural branches, yet the deeper boast he kills is inward: the secret pride that says, “I earned my place in the tree.” You did not earn grafting; you received it. That humility keeps sap flowing and prevents the wild branch from drying up in self-righteous independence. Stay humble before the root, generous toward other branches, and hungry for the nourishment only Christ supplies. This is the soil where Romans 11 stops being doctrine and becomes daily experience for every believer.

- **Key Themes from Romans 11** — nourishment from the root; the root supports you; riches for the world and for the Gentiles; grafted in by grace, not works; remnant chosen by grace; faith, God’s kindness and faithfulness

Quick Recap: Confess and Believe

Before Romans 11, the Spirit established the entry point of salvation in Romans 10. Confession and belief are not religious performance — they are the open door

through which Christ's righteousness enters your life. This recap anchors everything that follows about root, rest, and nourishment.

Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)

*"That if you **confess with your mouth** the Lord Jesus and **believe in your heart** that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* — **Romans 10:9-10 (NKJV)**

- **Confess** — declare with your mouth what Christ has done
- **Believe** — receive in the heart what God has raised and finished
- **Result** — righteousness and salvation flow from faith, not from striving
- **Nourishment picture** — God does not want you carrying pain, crying, and burden; He grafts you in so His sap becomes your **livelihood**

When you speak what you see in the word and believe what God has spoken, you are already positioned in the olive tree. Romans 11 builds on that foundation: once grafted in, you live from the root — not from your own effort to keep the branch alive.

God's heart in this series is liberation. He does not graft you in so you can carry heavier burdens of pain, weeping, and anxiety. He removes the thorns Adam's fall introduced and restores a livelihood — a supply line — from heaven. Confession aligns your mouth with heaven's verdict; belief aligns your heart with heaven's power. Together they open the artery through which sap runs. That is why this recap matters: if you forget how you entered the tree, you will try to stay in the tree by the same self-effort that never saved you in the first place.

Elijah and Self-Effort vs Grace

Paul turns to Elijah to expose the danger of *self-effort religion*. Elijah was zealous, exhausted, and convinced he alone remained faithful. God's answer shattered that illusion: seven thousand had not bowed to Baal. The remnant is always **chosen by grace**, never preserved by human zeal.

Romans 11:2-4 (NKJV)

“God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’” —

Romans 11:2-4 (NKJV)

1 Kings 19:10, 14 (NKJV)

“I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts... I alone am left.” — 1 Kings 19:10, 14 (NKJV)

Elijah’s cry reveals the heart of self-effort: *I have done; I alone remain*. He leaned on his own strength to serve God. Yet grace had already preserved a people he could not see. The same pattern appears in every generation — believers trying to hold the kingdom up by their own arm.

Romans 11:5-6 (NKJV)

“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.” — Romans 11:5-6 (NKJV)

Galatians 3:12 (NKJV)

“Yet the law is not of faith...” — Galatians 3:12 (NKJV)

Self-effort (Elijah’s posture)	Grace (God’s answer)
“I alone remain” — focused on my performance	“I have reserved seven thousand” — God preserves by His choice
Zeal powered by my strength	Remnant chosen by grace, not earned by works
Law mindset — faith in what I do	Grace mindset — faith in what Christ has done

Israel's zeal could not save them; yet Gentiles who receive grace live in a way that makes the world marvel. When you stop depending on your own arm and start drawing sap from the root, your life becomes evidence that **God's strength** — not yours — sustains the branch.

Notice the irony Paul exposes. Israel pursued righteousness by works and stumbled; Gentiles who did not pursue it obtained righteousness by faith. Now believers live so boldly in grace that Israel looks on with wonder. That is not arrogance — it is the fruit of sap. When the world watches a wild branch bearing olives it never produced naturally, the only explanation is the root. Your family, colleagues, and neighbours are meant to see something in you that makes them ask how a Gentile branch shares Israel's fatness. The answer is never "I am very zealous." The answer is always "I am grafted in."

The Root Supports You

Boasting is the natural fruit of self-effort. When you think *you* carry the root, pride enters. Romans 11 reverses the picture: the root carries *you*. Righteousness came through one Man's obedience — not through your perfect record.

Romans 11:18 (NKJV)

*"Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the **root supports you**."* — Romans 11:18 (NKJV)

Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

*"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by **one Man's obedience** many will be **made righteous**."* — Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

- **Stop boasting** in your spirituality, service, or survival skills
- **Start receiving** — the root already supplies what the branch cannot produce alone
- **One Man's obedience** — Christ's finished work is the ground of your righteousness

- **Life recovers** when you depend on His strength instead of reliving Elijah’s “I alone remain”

Are you running your business, family, ministry, or future on your own arm? The branch was never designed to feed the root. Turn from self-support to **root-dependence** — and watch sap flow again.

Some believers secretly think spirituality means becoming the root — supporting God with their prayers, fasting, and sacrifice until He “owes” them an answer. Romans 11:18 demolishes that fantasy. You did not choose the root; the Gardener grafted you. You do not sustain the covenant; the covenant sustains you. Boasting against natural branches is useless; boasting in your own devotion is worse. The moment you accept that the root supports you, pressure lifts: your job is to remain connected, not to manufacture sap.

Old Covenant vs New Covenant

The old covenant calls you to stand on *your* strength; the new covenant invites you to stand on *God’s* strength. Paul makes the contrast sharp: law and faith do not mix. Trying to reach God’s promises by self-effort is like climbing a ten-storey building when an elevator has already been provided.

Old covenant — self-effort	New covenant — God’s strength
Depends on your obedience to climb higher	Depends on Christ’s finished work to bring you up
Prayer powered by fear and performance	Prayer powered by faith in the cross
“I must reach the tenth floor by my legs”	“Christ already ascended — I enter by faith”
Law is not of faith (Galatians 3:12)	Righteousness is by one Man’s obedience (Romans 5:19)

Galatians 3:12 (NKJV)

“Yet the law is not of faith...” — **Galatians 3:12 (NKJV)**

- **Building analogy** — imagine a ten-storey tower. Under law, you sweat up the stairs, floor by floor, hoping your legs hold out. Under grace, Christ is the lift — the cross already reached the top on your behalf.
- **Prayer test** — faith-filled prayer rests in what Jesus finished; self-effort prayer tries to twist God's arm with your performance.
- **Why it matters** — without this distinction, you will reject faith and live like an old-covenant climber in a new-covenant building.

You do not need to master covenant theology to live free — you need to know which floor you are standing on. If Christ has already reached the top, stop climbing in your own strength and **rest in His ascent**.

James says the prayer of faith saves the sick; Galatians says the law is not of faith. Put those together and a pattern emerges. Old-covenant prayer treats God like a vending machine fed by your coins of obedience. New-covenant prayer treats God like the root who already paid the full price. You are not begging from afar; you are abiding in the vine, asking from union. That shift is not subtle — it is the difference between Elijah's exhausted "I alone remain" and Mary's quiet "I will listen first." Every time you catch yourself praying to impress heaven, you have slipped back into the stairwell. Every time you pray because Christ already ascended, you ride the lift.

Martha and Mary

Mary chose the good part — seated at His feet, receiving the Word (Luke 10:38-42).

Jesus visited Bethany and two responses appeared. Martha rushed in service; Mary sat at His feet and heard His word. One life was fuelled by doing; the other by **resting and receiving**. Jesus said Mary chose the good part that would not be taken from her.

Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

*"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also **sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word**. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not*

*care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But **one thing is needed**, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’” — Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)*

Martha — doing	Mary — resting
Distracted with much serving	Sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word
Worried and troubled about many things	Chose the one thing needed
Strength drawn from activity	Strength drawn from presence
Old-covenant pressure to perform hospitality	New-covenant posture of receiving Christ

Righteousness is not the reward of your busy serving — it is the gift of one Man’s obedience (Romans 5:19). Martha is not condemned for working; she is invited higher: stop letting activity steal the seat at His feet. When guests arrive, serve — but do not let service replace **sitting with Jesus**.

Martha’s frustration sounds modern: “Lord, do You not care?” Service without rest always feels like unfair division of labour. Mary was not lazy — she was positioned at the source. Jesus did not tell Martha to stop cooking; He told her that one thing cannot be stolen from the listener. Hospitality matters; hearing matters more. When you know old and new covenant difference, you stop trying to become righteous by serving and start serving because you are already righteous in the one Man. Martha tried to earn favour at the table; Mary received favour at His feet. Which posture feeds the branch?

Abide in the Vine

Abide in Me — fruit flows from remaining connected, not from straining (John 15:5).

Romans 11’s olive tree and John 15’s vine teach the same truth from two angles: life flows from connection, not from strain. Abiding is not frantic activity — it is

remaining where sap already flows.

John 15:5 (NKJV)

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” — John 15:5 (NKJV)

- **Abide = remain seated** — the branch does not chase fruit; it stays connected and fruit appears
- **He holds you** — you are not gripping Him with white knuckles; He sustains the graft
- **Without Me, nothing** — every attempt to produce apart from Christ dries the branch
- **More connection, more fruit** — increase comes by staying, not by striving

When you feel you must *do something* to stay saved, blessed, or useful, return to the vine. Fruit is the overflow of abiding — not the price of admission.

Many believers misread abiding as white-knuckle endurance — gripping the vine until fruit appears. John says the opposite: you remain; He produces. Picture a child held in a parent’s hand crossing a busy road. The child is not dragging the parent; the parent carries the child. Abiding feels like sitting because rest is the posture of trust. You are not staring at your own feet wondering if you are connected; you are looking at Jesus knowing He joined you to Himself. Wild branches do not become cultivated by effort; they become cultivated by grafting. Stay where the Gardener placed you.

Enter His Rest

Hebrews ties rest directly to faith. Israel failed to enter Canaan because of unbelief; believers enter rest because they trust what God has already finished. Rest is not laziness — it is ceasing from your own works so God’s work can flow through you.

Hebrews 4:1 (NKJV)

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” — Hebrews 4:1 (NKJV)

Hebrews 4:3 (NKJV)

*“For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,’ although the **works were finished** from the foundation of the world.” — Hebrews 4:3 (NKJV)*

Hebrews 4:9-10 (NKJV)

*“There remains therefore a **rest for the people of God**. For he who has entered His rest has himself also **ceased from his works** as God did from His.” — Hebrews 4:9-10 (NKJV)*

Hebrews 3:19 (NKJV)

*“So we see that they **could not enter in because of unbelief**.” — Hebrews 3:19 (NKJV)*

- **Stop your works** — the moment you cease striving in self-effort, God begins to work in your situation
- **One fear worth having** — Hebrews 4:1 warns against coming short of rest, not against missing a performance target
- **Wilderness warning** — Israel had the promise but wandered because they would not believe
- **Rest posture** — like Mary, sit; like the believer in Hebrews, trust what is finished

Rest is remaining in Him — not collapsing into passivity, but working from finished victory rather than toward uncertain acceptance.

Hebrews warns believers not to repeat Israel’s wilderness mistake. They had manna, cloud, and fire — yet unbelief kept them circling. The promised land was real; rest was available; only trust was missing. You can sit in church every week and still miss rest if you believe God helps those who help themselves first. Entering rest means agreeing that works were finished before you woke up today. Your meeting, your exam, your diagnosis — none of them start the clock on God’s grace. The clock started at the foundation of the world when the Lamb was slain in God’s counsel. Rest is aligning your Monday with that finished timeline.

Rest in the Storm

Cease from your works — when you rest, God works (Hebrews 4:9-10).

The disciples once crossed the sea while Jesus slept. Waves rose, fear screamed, and their own strength failed — yet the Master of rest was already in the boat. Storms expose whether you trust your arm or the Root who calms wind and wave.

- **Waves all around** — pressure at work, family, finances, or ministry can feel like the boat is sinking
- **Martha in the storm** — worry says, “Do more, fix it now, God does not care”
- **Mary in the storm** — rest says, “Sit with Jesus; let His word steady the heart”
- **Your strength cannot save you** — but when you lean on God’s strength, you can rest even while the wind blows
- **Jesus asleep** — rest is not the absence of storms; it is confidence in the One who commands them

When you **cease from your works**, He begins His work in your life. Stop rowing in panic; the Root who supports you is not shaken by the weather.

Hebrews 4 and the storm narrative converge on one lesson: unbelief strives; faith rests. You were not grafted in to white-knuckle every crisis — you were grafted in to draw sap from Christ while the sea rages.

Notice who could not rest in the boat: disciples who knew Jesus personally yet trusted their rowing more than His word. Storms reveal theology. If you believe the root supports you only on calm Sundays, waves will expose you. If you believe the root supports you especially when water fills the boat, you can sleep while others panic. Martha in a storm would be in the kitchen calculating supplies; Mary in a storm would be at Jesus’ feet hearing “Peace, be still” before the wind stops. Rest is not waiting for circumstances to improve; rest is trusting the Root while circumstances shout.

Greater Than Solomon

Scripture never treats godly prosperity as accident. Abraham, Job, David, and Solomon walked in wealth under God's hand. Yet the greater truth for believers is this: **Jesus greater than Solomon** lives inside you — so your glory should exceed what the world saw in Israel's golden age.

- **Israel should marvel** — when Gentiles live from grace, the nations wonder how weak branches bear such fruit
- **Solomon's splendour** — thrones, temples, and treasure pointed to a greater King
- **Lilies and Solomon** — Jesus said even field flowers are clothed better than Solomon; how much more those grafted into Him?
- **Inside, not outside** — Solomon outside you is history; Christ inside you is present reality
- **The exchange at the cross** — He became poor so that you might become rich in every grace (2 Corinthians 8:9)

If the **greater than Solomon** dwells in you, then your identity is not “barely surviving wild branch” but **heir connected to holy root**. Count what that means for wisdom, provision, and influence.

Do not apologise for blessing that flows from the root. When sap is genuine, fruit is visible — and the watching world sees that God's kindness to Gentiles is richer than human merit ever earned.

Jesus compared lilies to Solomon's wardrobe on purpose. Solomon's glory was external — gold, cedar, and international fame. Your glory is internal — Christ formed in you, the hope of glory. That is why poverty theology misses the point: the sermon is not “chase Solomon's bank account.” The sermon is “recognise who lives inside you.” If the greater than Solomon is in you, your wisdom, peace, and influence should reflect Him. Abraham's blessing, Job's restoration, David's kingdom, and Solomon's wealth were shadows; the substance is Christ in Gentile branches, producing a harvest Israel will one day marvel at again when fullness comes in.

Firstfruit Makes the Lump Holy

Romans 11:16 connects agricultural holiness to covenant life: what is holy at the root sanctifies the whole. Paul uses firstfruit and lump language that every Hebrew listener would recognise from the tithe laws — the first portion sets apart the remainder.

Romans 11:16 (NKJV)

*“For if the **firstfruit is holy**, the lump is also holy; and if the **root is holy**, so are the **branches**.” — Romans 11:16 (NKJV)*

Leviticus 27:30 (NKJV)

*“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. It is **holy to the LORD**.” — Leviticus 27:30 (NKJV)*

- **Firstfruit principle** — the first portion represents the whole; when it is holy, the lump is holy
- **Tithe (maaser)** — giving the first tenth is not paying a debt; it is declaring that the root — not your salary — sustains you
- **Hands open upward** — “I depend on Your strength for my life, wisdom, and provision”
- **Remainder sanctified** — what you keep after honouring God is blessed because the first portion acknowledged His ownership
- **Root holiness** — Christ the holy root makes the grafted branches holy; tithe is one practical amen to that truth

Tithing under grace is not old-covenant bargaining. It is faith saying: the root supports me, the firstfruit is holy, and the rest of my life belongs to the One who grafted me in.

Leviticus taught Israel that the first portion belonged to God so the remainder could be handled as holy, not common. Paul lifts that logic into Romans 11: if the root is holy, branches participate in holiness; if the firstfruit is holy, the whole batch is holy. Practically, when you bring the tithe, you are not buying God’s favour — you are agreeing with Romans 11:16. You say, “My strength did not produce this income; the

root did. Here is the first portion that acknowledges Your ownership.” What remains is not cursed leftovers; it is sanctified supply because the firstfruit declared dependence. That is the opposite of Elijah’s mindset, which hoards credit for zeal. Tithing under grace is rest made visible in your wallet.

Nourished by the Word

Branches do not manufacture sap — they receive it. In the same way, believers are nourished by the word of faith: Christ-centred doctrine that builds, roots, and matures you from the Head downward.

Colossians 2:19 (NKJV)

*“And not holding fast to **the Head**, from whom all the body, **nourished and knit together** by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.” —*

Colossians 2:19 (NKJV)

1 Timothy 4:6 (NKJV)

*“...**nourished in the words of faith** and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.” —*

1 Timothy 4:6 (NKJV)

Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, **rooted and built up in Him** and established in the faith...” —*

Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

Acts 20:32 (NKJV)

*“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the **word of His grace**, which is able to **build you up**...” —*

Acts 20:32 (NKJV)

Psalms 1:3 (NKJV)

*“He shall be like a **tree planted by the rivers of water**, that brings forth its **fruit in its season**...” —*

Psalms 1:3 (NKJV)

Psalms 92:13-14 (NKJV)

*“Those who are **planted in the house of the LORD** shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bear fruit in old age...” — Psalm 92:13-14 (NKJV)*

Romans 10:17 (NKJV)

*“So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by the **word of God**.” — Romans 10:17 (NKJV)*

- **Hear like Mary** — sit at Jesus’ feet; let preaching about the cross feed faith, not fear
- **Meditate on finished work** — faith grows when you hear Christ crucified, risen, and seated
- **Rooted, not rushed** — Colossians 2:6-7 ties walking to being planted first
- **House of the LORD** — Psalm 92 promises fruit even in old age for the planted ones
- **Core progression** — His strength is the Root → Rest is remaining in Him → The Word nourishes us → Fruit grows naturally

“His strength is the Root → Rest is remaining in Him → The Word nourishes us → Fruit grows naturally.”

When you keep hearing the word of faith, you stop trying to squeeze fruit out of a dry branch and start receiving sap from the Head. That is nourishment from the root — practical, daily, and alive.

Colossians warns against being cheated through philosophy and empty deceit; the antidote is holding the Head. First Timothy says ministers must be nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine — not gossip, not fear-news, not law-heavy speculation. Acts 20 commends elders to the word of His grace, which builds up. Psalm 1 and Psalm 92 complete the picture: planted people flourish in drought years because their supply is underground at the root. Romans 10:17 is the daily habit — hear, hear again, keep hearing. When you listen to preaching, choose messages that exalt Christ’s cross, not your cross-shaped performance. Sit like Mary. Stay like the branch. Let faith rise because the word is entering your ears and heart until rest feels natural and fruit feels inevitable.

The Takeaway

1. **You are grafted in by grace** — a wild branch sharing the sap of the true olive tree; boast in the Root, not in yourself (Romans 11:17-18).
2. **Self-effort dries the branch** — Elijah's "I alone remain" is replaced by God's remnant chosen by grace (Romans 11:2-6).
3. **The root supports you** — righteousness flows from one Man's obedience, not your performance (Romans 5:19; 11:18).
4. **Live from the new covenant** — God's strength, not yours, is the elevator to every promise.
5. **Rest like Mary, not strive like Martha** — abiding and entering His rest means ceasing from your own works (Luke 10:38-42; Hebrews 4:9-10).
6. **Firstfruit holiness reaches the whole lump** — tithe and trust declare that the holy root sanctifies the branches (Romans 11:16).
7. **The word nourishes what grafting started** — faith comes by hearing; stay planted and fruit follows (Romans 10:17; Colossians 2:19).

Romans 11 is not a chapter for theologians only — it is a manual for daily living. When pressure rises, ask: am I trusting the root or boasting in the branch? When weariness hits, ask: am I Martha at the stove or Mary at His feet? When finances tighten, ask: does my tithe confess that the firstfruit is holy? When doubt whispers, ask: am I hearing the word of faith again until rest returns? The progression is simple because God made it simple: His strength is the root, rest is remaining in Him, the word nourishes you, and fruit grows naturally without forced striving.

Scripture-based study on nourishment from the root, grafted grace, and rest in Christ. If it strengthened you, share it with someone who needs this truth today.
