1. Even though Abraham had other male children, only one was the child of Sarah and the rightful heir to the salvation promise of God. God, Himself confirmed that to Abraham when Sarah wanted to cast Ishmael away.
2. Isaac received the salvation of God over Ishmael because God had chosen Isaac to receive it as a child of promise a year before Isaac would be born.
3. God chose Jacob over Esau before either of them had done anything good or bad, and thus salvation itself depends on God who calls and not on any works that anyone might do, even faith, which is itself a gift of God.
4. God is not unjust because God is God, and He has the ultimate freedom to save whomever He wants to save.
5. Therefore, salvation depends not on human will (or human choice) or human exertion (or human works) but on God, who chooses to have mercy on whomever He chooses.
6. Paul concludes that God has mercy on whomever He wants and hardens whomever He wants. This decision is made totally based on God’s will and not anything anyone has done to earn their salvation, even that person’s faith, which is itself a gift of God.
7. Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? We don’t have any right to question the ways of God. Paul goes on: If we are created by God, and He determines that we should be created for a specific purpose, how can we object to the right of our Creator to use us in whatever way He chooses?
8. God shows His Holiness, righteousness, justice, wrath, and power by condemning to Hell all those who have sinned against Him and failed to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. These are the vessels of wrath.
9. God endures with much patience the loss of all these vessels of wrath for the sake of His vessels of mercy, who receive righteousness, goodness, truth, forgiveness, love, and grace in Christ through the gift of faith in Him.

Application

1. Be humbled and awed by the majesty of God that rules the universe as He sees fit.
2. Be encouraged that if you are now trusting in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then truly nothing can separate you from His love because He is the one who chooses you and calls you for His purposes.
3. Let your evangelism be fueled by the knowledge that God has an elect people in the world. We don’t know who they are, and thus anyone could be one of His people. So go out and share the good news of Jesus Christ! No one can be saved without it!