

Romans 9:1-5

Start Here

March 19, 2023

**Main Point:** Paul has just marveled how nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. But what about Jewish people? At the beginning of this new section, Paul starts with anguished compassion from love for his fellow Jewish kin.

What do you do when someone close to you is not walking with the Lord? A close friend, a child, a parent. They have heard the good news of Jesus' victory but they haven't received Him yet. What do you do? You start here.

9:1-5 is a personal lament. In the long biblical tradition of laments – complaining to the Lord while trusting Him with all the strength you have.

Paul is lamenting with all his heart the fact that so many Jews have rejected the gospel of Jesus.

This passage and these next 3 chapters are great confidence builders for us as we wrestle with why seemingly so few receive the good news. God has His remnant, and He calls us to love others from the depths of our hearts and to speak the truth.

**SI:** beginning of new section – intro all of 9-11. The simplicity of salvation by faith, but so many want salvation by works b/c it is self-salvation! (10:1-4, 11:12)

Read passage.

Can you relate? Do you have someone in your family who is not walking with the Lord? Would you give your own life for them? Would you be willing to go to hell for them, in their place?

When you see so many who double down on their own works, their own perceived goodness, or are blinded to the light of the gospel by their materialism, their consumerism, their distractions from culture and media, where do you start? How do we begin to reach people? Reaching people begins with emotional engagement with people – this is Paul's starting point.

Paul is at the top of this beautiful summit. He is taking it all in, exulting in it. 8:38-39. As he looks around, he sees an objection forming in the minds of some... but what about your own people, Paul? What about the Jews, the Israelites? The majority of them who have heard the gospel have not received it. Therefore, Paul's corresponding deep anguish and grief in this section.

So start here. From love, speak the truth.

**1From Love vs. 1-3**

This is good for us to pause and linger here b/c Christianity starts here – why do I say that? Was it enough for Paul to clearly define and explain the gospel in Chs 1-8? No. Of course we need that. The gospel is the announcement from afar that the king has been victorious and if you receive His victory, it is yours, too. Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah, has fought against all of God's enemies – sin and the devil – and by His atoning death, resurrection, and ascension, He is victorious forever.

But just explaining the gospel is not enough. Paul is helping us to see that the power for evangelism comes from a love that hurts. Love like Paul is displaying is not Valentine's Day kind of romantic, feel good love, or even brotherly love of team camaraderie or fellowship. This is love that hurts, this is love based on love that has been offered but has been rejected.

ILLUS > many of us know something of this – haven't you seen a loved one in the hospital and b/c you love this person so deeply said to yourself, I wish I could take this for them, I wish it could be me instead of them?

And certainly Jesus felt this – Luke 13:34 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”

Paul defending himself – 3 times he says he is being truthful – reacting to possible accusations of him leaving behind his own kin

And answering the question, what becomes of the Jewish people's status as “God's chosen people”? Has Israel been disinherited, or even replaced? (See 3:1-4)

Why haven't more Jews seen that Jesus is the promised Messiah? Paul's own anguish in his soul. **Read 10:1-3**

Speak to the student, the worker, the family member who is burdened and asking why so few Christians? Why do so few come to Christ? Why is conversion so hard? Think back to your own conversion story - Being born is very hard – anguish, pain – all for the sake of a new life.

What do we do with our sorrow, anguish, longing for people to be saved? We start from love. We go slow. We seek to be gentle, to enter in with kindness and courage.

Give plug for Baby Steps class – evangelism and outreach are difficult – take it slow – “All my friends are heathens, take it slow, wait for them to ask you who you know. Please don't make any sudden moves, you don't know the half of the abuse.” (21 Pilots)  
“Is there anyone listening? Lord, please send me anyone.” - Demi Lovato

Most of us have observed people double down on their own efforts. Self-medicating. Excuse making. Hearing wisdom but not taking it in. This is why Jesus describes Hell as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth – see Luke 13:28 (22-30) -

Immense sorrow and bitter anger at God for not accepting my own efforts to be good and to earn my place in Heaven. Why can't it be the way I want it to be?! And so Hell is the place where people go who don't really want God, and God gives them what they want. They wanted themselves and their own way and then they pay the consequences for it for eternity.

And then the witness of the Church through the ages – some will see, some will be jealous and long for what we have been given and some will then be saved – Rom 11:13-14!

Paul not anti-semitic. He is pro-Semitic! - glorying in the mystery of God – His sorrow and anguish over his fellow Jewish brothers and sisters, those closest to him according to the flesh – his flesh and blood, his earthly kin – look at all we share, look at all the foundation we share!

How do we get there? How do we get to the place of this kind of compassion that is willing to have anguish in our souls? It's right here – the power of seeing what we have been given, the power of grace again. The power of marveling over what we have received. (Trans to 2) This is what Paul does in these next verses.

From Love,  
**Speak the Truth > vs. 4-5**

The background to these truths of vs. 4-5

The necessity of conversion – the individual's standing before God is at the center of Paul's gospel, which requires a personal response (1:16) – conversion requires seeing that you are something, turning away from that and becoming something else – not always a Damascus Road experience, and some Christians cannot tell a time when they did not know Christ, but no one is born a Christian, we must be born again – even Jews realize this – John 3

There are no birthright Christians even though we are born into a Covenant community. And also, God has not abandoned any people group, certainly not Jewish people.

This is what Paul is saying by listing all these background truths to Jesus and the NT.

\*Therefore, we are evangelicals – people committed to the necessity of conversion. Jesus came to make us New. He didn't come to refine us, to show us an example, He came to make us New People, not Good People. Jesus doesn't make us better people, He makes us New People.

For there are those who use the church for moral improvement, which it can do. But morality cannot save your soul. Don't do that. Don't let the church be your tool for your own moral improvement project. The reality of Christianity is that God crucifies our morality, our self-improvement projects and sin management techniques. You cannot establish your own righteousness. You must lay your deadly doing down. Down at Jesus' feet.

This is the truth of who they are:

All these are forerunners of what the Messiah would fulfill

"And to them belong" – twice

**Israelites** – descendants of Jacob/Israel – from the 12 sons of Jacob –

**Adoption** > not the same as 8:15, but in context of OT – you are God's sons, don't disinherit yourselves – Those who trust in Christ by faith become God's adopted sons and daughters so that God loves you like He loves His own Son and even more b/c those who are adopted are all the more prone to unbelief so He tenderly and gently and constantly draws us near – why do you think the Bible is so long? So that we get evidence upon evidence every time we read it from all the different angles and literary genres of God's love for His own...

The **covenants** > all of God's history of dealing with the Israelites through covenants – God's initiative to announce what He will do – so the covenant with Noah, "I will never flood the earth again" and the sign of the rainbow. The covenant with childless Abraham – "I will make of you a great nation" and the sign of circumcision. And now in Christ, the New Covenant with the law written on our hearts and bought with the sacrifice of Christ and the sign of the bread and the cup at communion – "The new covenant in my blood" - In Christ we are under a New Covenant – "To hear the law by Christ fulfilled, to hear His pardoning voice, turns the slave into a child and duty to choice." (Wm Cowper, 1754)

The **giving** of the law > again, the privilege the Israelites had of receiving God's gift of the law – "this is the way, walk in it" – God's commands are clear but no one for not even one day can fulfill them – so Jesus the Christ did for us.

The **worship** > Israelite sacrificial system – Blood sacrifice is required to atone for, to cover, to remove the guilt and shame of sin – Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God who sacrificed Himself for us.

The **promises** > given to Abraham and the patriarchs of Israel – "I will make a great nation of you, kings shall come from you." To David – one from your line will sit on the throne forever and ever (2 Sam 7:16) – Jesus is the King of Kings who reigns on High for us, protecting us, going to war for us, defeating evil for us.

The Christ, according to the **flesh** > important that Paul qualifies this in order to highlight it – Christ Jesus is fleshly related to you by way of racial descendancy, but as far as salvation – that means nothing in God's sight and can even be a stumbling stone, a rock of offense b/c this is radical stuff that kindred, race, ethnicity, culture are not most important, not where your identity is found...

Implicit: What will you be united to? Your fleshly, natural, this-worldly giftings, or to God in Christ who is other-worldly, supernatural, spiritual? (See Rom 1:3-4)

Why this list? To again compel the Jews to see what they have been given and what they are rejecting.

App: For Southerners, for Americans – before you reject, turn away from, or indifferently ignore and then reject – see what you have been given

When you share the gospel, you are sharing a piece of this truth. Do you have to explain it all? No. But you need to know it yourself. That way the Holy Spirit can call it to mind when you are engaged individually with someone.

One of my favorite evangelism stories is from walking around the park with a friend I had made and we were doing one of our 6 question listening interviews and after one of his responses the Holy Spirit brought something specifically to mind – oh that reminds me of when Jesus said that he came not for the righteous but for the sinners... (my friend was doubling down on his own moral behavior through religious observance) it wasn't a spiel, a sales job, but a stone that was put in his shoe... he even said, I've never thought about it that way...

So, Paul is calling to mind for his Gentile audience how they have been grafted in, and for his Jewish brothers and sisters what they have been given: vs. 4-5

### **Conc:**

Start here, yes, with sorrow and anguish from love.

And end with how Paul ends this section. End with Christ.

The Christ

Savior, God over all, blessed forever, Amen. Repetition. Emphasis.

Paul assuring himself and us that this is how we end. This is who we leave people with, this is the meaning and purpose of all of our lives.

Christ Jesus is God Himself.

He made the only way possible for people to be saved from themselves. From their own goodness, from their own self-salvation efforts.

He is the fulfillment of all the promises from the Hebrew Scriptures.

As you are compelled by the Love of Christ for you, from love, speak the truth.

**Bene:** Rom 11:33-36

## Questions for Community Groups

### Romans 9:1-5 Start Here

1. Try to think of someone in your life that you are not sure is a Christian. How does the reality of their life and the reality of Hell compel you to feel love for them? Or if it doesn't, how could the Spirit lead you to pray?
2. Can you think of any examples from the larger culture that contribute to the idea of salvation by works? What is so appealing about this idea? (See Rom 10:1-3)
3. Consider why conversion is often so difficult. Can you think of the multiple deaths you had to go through before you were able to fully embrace Christ as your Savior? How can this help you have patience with friends and family who don't yet know Christ?
4. What would it be like to use the church for moral improvement only? How has Christ crucified your moral improvement projects or sin management techniques? (See Matthew 5:1-12, the Beatitudes, for help.)
5. From vs. 4-5, what is particularly moving or encouraging for you from what Jesus has accomplished by fulfilling all of these things?
6. Could you pray that God would give you a heart to build genuine friendships with non-Christians in your world?