

Sermon on Romans 9:1-4a
Dr. Wesley G. Rowe, Senior Pastor
Calvary Bible Church
June 29, 2003

Turn with me please this morning to Romans 9. I will be reading Romans 9:1-4a and then I will read Romans 10:1-4.

Romans 9:1-4a:

V. 1, "I speak the truth in Christ-I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-

V. 2, I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

V. 3, For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,

V. 4, the people of Israel."

Romans 10:1-4:

V. 1, "Brothers, my hearts desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

V. 2, For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

V. 3, Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

V. 4, Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes."

Let's pray.

Sometimes we Christians are accused of being unloving, divisive persons. I sincerely hope that there is no legitimacy to that claim. For Christians, the Word of God is very clear. It is God's will that every Christian seek to be known as a peace loving, peace pursuing person. God's will is that Christians avoid contention, strife, arguments of little consequence and useless debates. Many passages of Scripture remind us to live this way with all persons, believers and unbelievers.

Hebrews 12:14 says, "Make every effort to live at peace with all men."

Romans 12:18 says, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for THEY will be called sons of God."

James 3:17, "The wisdom that comes down from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving."

Yet, there is a corollary truth found in Scripture that we Christians, if we are true to Christ and His will for us, no matter how hard we try to pursue peace, we will be accused of being unloving, divisive persons, contentious persons. This is because unbelievers will be offended with us due to our convictions about God, sin, the need for

salvation and eternity. As we try to share the gospel with unbelievers, they will often be offended and accuse us of being unloving, troublemakers and divisive persons.

It appears that this is what could be happening to the Apostle Paul as we come to Romans 9. You'll recall that Paul himself is a Jew. And yet in Romans 1-8, Paul has affirmed dogmatically that his family, his relatives, Jews are lost and bound for hell.

Romans 3:9, Paul said, "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin."

Romans 2:12, "All who sin under the law (Jews) will be judged by the law."

Such language would bring the accusations against Paul that he is not a good Jew or that he doesn't love his family, or that Paul is a divisive person. So Paul begins Romans 9 with a trinity of affirmations that he does indeed love his Jewish family. Notice that with three statements, Paul affirms to us that he is telling the truth that he loves his fellow kinsmen according to the flesh.

1. **"I speak the truth in Christ . . ." (positive affirmation)**
2. **"I am not lying . . ." (negative affirmation)**
3. **"My conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit." (an appeal to a pure conscience with the Holy Spirit as a co-witness)**

What is Paul speaking the truth about? What is it that he affirms that he is not lying? What is it that his conscience confirms with support of the Holy Spirit? Before telling us, Paul informs us that whatever it is, it is something that he is deeply torn apart with in his heart. Look at v. 2.

V. 2, "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart".

"Great sorrow" means grief; "unceasing anguish" means unceasing pain or consuming grief in his heart. Why? Because the Jews were rejecting Christ as their Messiah and this made them lost.

Notice in v. 3 that Paul says that his sorrow is so real, so intense, so great, so deep that he could wish something:

V. 3, "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel."

Paul is saying, "You want to know how much I love my lost relatives, my lost kinsmen, my lost brothers according to the flesh? I love them this much. I love them so much that if it were possible, I would give my own soul, I would sacrifice my own salvation, I would swap places with them and I be cursed and doomed to eternal hell, if only they would get saved.

Now Chapter 10 makes it very clear that the salvation of the Jews, Paul's kinsmen, is what Paul is speaking about. Look at Chapter 10, v. 1. **"Brothers, my hearts desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved."**

Now there are **Four important truths** that we need to learn at this juncture from what Paul says.

1.) Paul is proof that a Christian can affirm the lostness of relatives and friends and yet still intensely love them. Unbelievers are wrong when they accuse us of not loving them because we don't believe them to be saved. Elsewhere Paul

reminds us that unbelievers have no ability and thus no right to judge Christians (I Cor. 2:15).

God has awakened Christians to the truth of salvation and eternity in heaven or hell and the Holy Spirit regularly agitates our hearts for the salvation of lost relatives and friends. We should not fight against this movement of the Spirit in our hearts, but seek to cooperate with it by witnessing faithfully.

2.) Paul is a model for all believers. Like Paul, we are to love, intensely love, unbelievers and long (and pray-10:1) for their salvation. Do you? As much as is humanly possible, are your actions and communication showing love for your lost relatives and friends? Do you pray for their salvation and do you attempt to take the gospel to them?

3.) Paul dogmatically affirms that Jews (or any persons who reject Christ) are lost, regardless of their upbringing or spiritual privileges (9:4-5, 2:17-29).

Many Catholic and Protestant groups now affirm that the Jewish religion is an acceptable way of coming to God and acquiring salvation. Further, many Catholic and Protestant groups have promised to "not seek to witness to Jews, but to recognize that they have found God through their own religion." Paul refutes this in Romans 10:1-4.

4.) Paul's statements about the Jews affirm that it is very common for persons to talk about God, be zealous for God, be interested in God, appear to live outwardly as committed to God, and yet not be saved (10:2).

Why were the Jews lost? They were so privileged and had been called God's children. Yet, the Scriptures affirm that as a whole the nation ended up lost. Why were they lost? Because they did not submit to God's way of righteousness. What way? Through Christ (see Rom. 10:1-4).

Encouragement for continued and successful witnessing to lost persons whom you love:

1.) Don't make an issue about the temporal, unimportant things of life. No matter how irritating unsaved relatives and friends can be, through God's grace and power, overlook the insignificant events that are certain to occur for the higher purpose of maintaining a close relationship.

2.) Make it your goal to always leave a warm, positive impression when you leave. Christians accomplish this through, at all times, being kind, considerate, loving, friendly, and giving.

3.) It usually won't be the big issues that ruin future opportunities for impact in the lives of your unsaved relatives. Rather, it will be the times that you were grumpy, nit-picky, critical, selfish, angry, or legalistic.

4.) Living the Christian life in the presence of lost relatives and friends is not sufficient for bringing them to salvation. The Christian life must be lived, but it must be coupled with verbalizing the Person of Christ and the need to repent and trust in Him. Paul did both. He went into the synagogues and talked openly about Christ.