

Burdened For a Lost People

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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April 23, 2023

Text: Romans 9:1-5

Purpose: Paul was so passionately burdened for his fellow Israelites that he grieved over their lost condition. Israel had been given so much and turned away from accepting the truth about Jesus being the anticipated Messiah. How many people do we know that are also lost? Are we concerned enough to grieve over their lost condition?

On a cold day in December, some years ago, a little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold.



A lady approached the young boy and said, "My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window."

"I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boy's reply.

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her.

She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair on the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes.

She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, you will be more comfortable now."

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her, "Are you God's wife?"¹

In the first eight chapters of the book of Romans, Paul has been telling his readers that men and women are saved by trusting in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. Their works and their rituals will not save them. Only by faith are we saved.



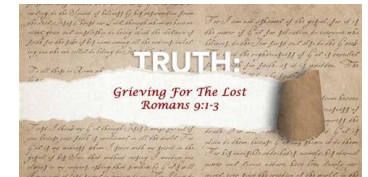
If you were a Jew reading this passage, you might get the idea that Jesus is only for the Gentiles. Especially since Paul has emphasized that their hope is not in being an ancestor of Abraham. Paul's word in chapter nine is focused upon his intense burden for his native Israelites. Yes, Paul is known as the missionary to the Gentiles, but his heart is for all people that have yet to name Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The opening verses in chapter nine teach us the kind of heart we should have towards the lost around us. We need

to become aware of their lostness and begin to take steps of intercessory prayer for them. When the opportunity arises for us to speak with them about accepting Christ as their Savior, we need to be willing to do that.

For a few moments this morning, I want us to examine the burden that Paul had for his fellow Israelites and how we too should have a burden for our family, friends, and neighbors.

I. A MANIFEST OBLIGATION (v. 1-3)



We see Paul has a tremendous burden for Israel.

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh," (v. 1-3)

A. Paul's Honesty (v. 1)

We see that Paul is establishing his credibility with his Jewish brothers. They may have denied many of the things that he has said. Paul has declared to them time and time again that the only way of salvation is in Christ. So, to many of the listeners of Paul, they may have thought he was lying.

Paul has been very hard on the Jewish unbeliever. He has told them that they were an outcast and hopelessly written off by God if they don't accept Christ as their Messiah.



His love for his brothers was deep and it was sincere. Paul told them that he was willing to be separated from Christ if they would only accept what he was saying. He chose the most precious thing to him and was willing to sacrifice for the sake of his unbelieving brothers.

Moses was willing for his name to be blotted out in order for God to spare the Israelites coming out of Egypt. Paul was willing to separate himself from the thing he loved the most if they would only believe.



How many of us have that kind of burden for the lost people around us? We may have a casual interest in their accepting Christ, but are we willing to sacrifice our most precious possession in order that others might be saved?



I must admit to you that at times I have failed to have this depth of compassion for others. Yes, I want them to come to a saving knowledge of Christ, but I have not had the burning passion for their salvation like I should have.

B. Paul's Heaviness (v. 2)

Verse two tells us how Paul seems to be paralyzed by the constant presence of grief for unbelievers. If you have ever seen the television of various mourners in the Middle East as they have lamented over the death of someone they loved, you begin to grasp the kind of grief Paul is mentioning here.

Paul's heart is burdened to the point of breaking for the lost sinner. He lives under the constant burden of the reality that they are headed towards Hell. The fact that they are perishing lies heavy on his heart. The weight is almost unbearable.



We are surrounded by people that are just as lost and are destined for an eternity without Christ. Often, we act like we do not care. We live our lives and attend our worship services and never consider the eternal damnation others will experience.

- When is the last time you were burdened to pray for a lost sinner?
- When was the last time God woke you up in the middle of the night so that you could seek His face for a person who was lost in sin?
- When was the last time that it moved you to think that men and women were going to Hell?



Sadly, most of us are not concerned about it. Sure, we are sorry that they are lost, but not enough to pray for them and tell them about Jesus.

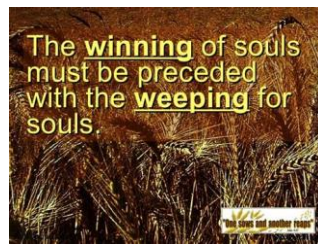
Maybe we need to confess our callous attitude and ask God to kindle a fire within us that will burn for those that are perishing.

Several years ago, Dr. David Jeremiah taught a series on "Praying for Whosoever." I ordered several booklets and distributed them to those that come to our Wednesday night bible study and prayer meeting. I encouraged those to take



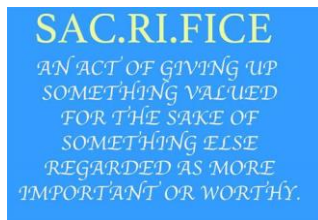
one and list those that they knew that were not saved and begin to pray for them.

Over the years a few have been answered on my list. But by and large, most have not responded. I have been praying for them to stop running from God and repent and accept Him as their Lord and Savior. Paul had a burden for his lost countrymen and we need a similar burden for our people. Time is so short, and life is so fragile. We need to rekindle our hearts once again.



C. Paul's Hunger (v. 3)

Verse three tells us the seriousness of Paul's passion for the Jews. He was willing to go to Hell if it meant they would be free. Are we willing to make that kind of sacrifice for those we are burdened for? Are we willing to sell all we have so they can know of Christ's love for them? I have met several missionaries that have given their ALL – families, money, life, plans, future – simply so one people group in the world can experience salvation through Christ.



I have mentioned my friend Melanie on several occasions who is serving as a missionary in South East Asia. She is home for a few months to spend some time with her family. She has chosen to make it her life's work to serve a group of people known as the Pao. As a gateway to present the gospel, she has brought water to villages, taught basic hygiene techniques in the schools, and provided a special lye soap to help with skin diseases for little boys serving in Buddhist Monasteries. Her country is constantly in the

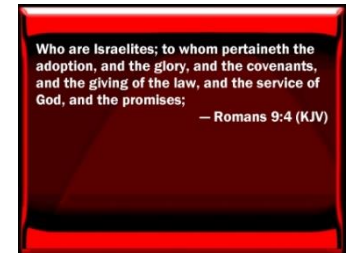
news due to the civil war there. What I saw in Melanie's eyes was a willingness to sacrifice everything to help those people that have been placed on her heart to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Do we have this kind of heart for those on our list? Our list of unsaved people may include family, friends, and neighbors. But are we burdened for their soul? Could we say, "Father if it means that I must be stricken, or even if I die, save them!"

II. A MISSED OPPORTUNITY (V. 4-5b)

Paul wants the Jews to understand that there was an opportunity for them to turn back and accept Jesus as their savior. They may have missed understanding the significance of Jesus when He first came, but they still have time to respond.

"Who are the Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh," (v. 4-5b)



A. God's Gifts to Israel (v. 4-5a)

Israel had been partakers of so many gifts from God. They had been accepted through Abraham. They had the promise of various covenants dating back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had been given the Law through Moses which was a blessing to them if they obeyed and a curse if they

disobeyed. They had the opportunity to serve God through the temple daily by the Priesthood of Levi.

They were promised a messiah in hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament and they **STILL** missed seeing that Jesus was the Promised One of Israel.



B. God's Grace to Israel (v. 5b)

They got so bogged down in doing the works of God that they forgot to see God incarnate as He stood among them. How could they ignore raising Lazarus from the dead? How could they ignore the feeding of the 5000? How could they ignore the blind seeing and the deaf hearing? How could they ignore the hundreds of people healed of many different diseases? What they did was blindly ignore what God was telling them. They choked on the law while the law giver was in their midst. When they squelched the Holy Spirit, they sinned their season of grace away.

We often get a season in our life when we know we need to respond to the offer of grace extended to us. But over time, we harden our hearts and then when God knocks again; it becomes easier to ignore the person at the door of our heart. Please, don't ignore it anymore. You never know when your life may soon pass. We are not promised tomorrow. We only have now. Today is the day of salvation.



III. A MAGNIFICENT OBSERVATION (v. 5c)

Paul ends this section by making a magnificent observation concerning the person, the power and the position of Jesus Christ. Paul reminds us that Jesus was not simply a person that preached too long and got himself hung on a cross. No, Jesus willingly laid down His life for you and me. As we respond to Him, we find salvation.



Paul tells us, *“Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”* (v. 5c)

A. Concerning the Person of Jesus

Paul declares in two simple words, *“Christ came,”* the word Christ means Anointed. This is a reminder that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises and prophecies in the Old Testament. He is the One God the Father promised to send. He is the One Who came to take away the sins of the world. He is worthy of our faith, our love and our worship and praise.



B. Concerning the Power of Jesus

Paul declares that Jesus is *“over all.”* Jesus was there at creation.

- John 1:3 says, *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”*
- Matthew 28:18 says, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*

- Revelation 19:16 tells us of a robe that Christ wears that says, “*King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*”
- Hebrews 1:3 says, “*Upholding all things by the word of His power,*”

Since Jesus is “over all,” we can trust Him to do what He has promised. Ephesians 3:20 says, “*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*”

God is able to save sinners through Jesus Christ.

C. Concerning the Position of Jesus

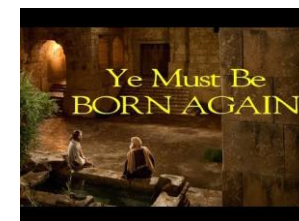
The final phrase says, “*Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.*”

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. When God sent His Son to die for our sins, it was as if He was sending Himself. He loves us so much that the best of God was sent to save us from our sin. Moses was willing to sacrifice what he loved most for those he loved. Paul was willing to separate himself from God if it meant that the people he loved, could experience salvation. God sent His best so we could be restored.

If God sent such a great sacrifice for us, why do we delay in accepting this gift? If you have never accepted Christ as your savior, today is your day! Hear His voice calling you to repentance and come.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to speak with a young man that I had known for several months. When I first met this man, he was a dedicated catholic that was caught up in the traditions of the church but didn’t know the Savior that they claim to represent.

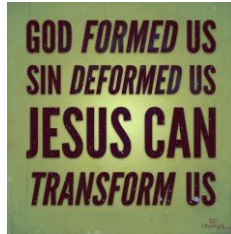
He told me that in his whole life, he had never heard, “*You must be born again.*” I simply could not believe it. But he went on to say that for the first time in his life, he has contentment in his life like he has never experienced before.



When he confessed his sins and asked Jesus into his heart, he felt a total transformation inside. He knew he was different. He began to read the bible with a passion. He was learning more and more about who God is and what he had been missing all of his life. He told me that now the day is brighter, the sky is bluer, the grass is greener, and life is worth living now. His situation in life has not changed. He is still financially in the same shape. His family is still going through the same struggles. But his outlook on life now has hope.

He immediately began looking for a church home that can help them grow so their family can have a place of ministry, growth, and involvement. He said that he wanted the whole thing. He doesn’t just want to come to church on Sunday and then go home. He wanted to make it central to who he has become. I only listened and smiled because I knew that he had caught it. It was real to him. It was not a form of Godliness; rather what he had experienced was transforming his life.

That is exactly what God wants to do for you. That is what God wants to do for your family and friends. We must pick up the torch and pray for them. We must be willing to sacrifice for them so they can hear the good news. We must. If we don't pray, if we don't sacrifice, if we don't go, then how will they hear? If we don't do this, who will?



LET US PRAY

¹Mikey's Funnies, A Shoe Funny, March 17, 2023