

Romans 9:1-5

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[0 : 00] Well, a very good morning to you all. I'll ask that you take out your copy of God's Word and turn to Paul's letter to the Romans. We're going to continue our study today, beginning in chapter 9.

And before I go further, I want to distract you for a moment from this in the hopes that you won't be distracted later.

And I don't even know if you can really see it anymore, but I look like I got punched in the face. My nose is a bit bruised and swollen. I did, in fact, get in a fight with a deer stand, and it won.

And I've noticed this morning that as the swelling has gone down, I think my nose is a little more crooked than it was before. And I'm told that beautiful people have symmetrical faces. I already wasn't a beautiful person, so I don't really care.

I think my nose is a little off to this side after the fact. But that's what happened here. And now we can focus on what's going on in Paul's letter to the Romans, beginning in chapter 9.

[1 : 06] Before we read that together, the first five verses is what we're going to study today. I just want to remind you of where we've been in the book of Romans. Starting out with the theme, chapter 1, verse 17, Paul says, For in it, being the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. And he's been building a case in the first eight chapters that righteousness comes to us. A right standing with God comes to us by faith alone.

There is nothing we can do to earn God's favor. It is given to us freely as a gift. And he works through. The believers here in Rome would have been both Gentile and Jewish believers.

And so he deals with them, saying that the Gentiles have no excuse for their sin against God. And the Jews have no excuse for their sin against God.

And chapter 3, none is righteous, no, not one. Every one alive has transgressed God's law and have sinned against Him.

[2 : 12] For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Chapter 3, verse 23. Then he goes on to talk about how we've been set free from the demands of the law to live by the Spirit.

And we work through some of the logic of that. And he talks then in chapter 8 about what life in the Spirit looks like and how it's a struggle because we still carry around the burden of our flesh.

Our old self, the sinful self, still corrupts us. But we have the Spirit of God in us now. And there's a conflict that happens as we endeavor to live the Christian life.

And beyond that, we suffer externally as well. So both internally and externally, there's going to be suffering in this world for Christians. Life doesn't get easy when you place your faith in Christ.

And he finishes chapter 8 with beautiful and precious words, beginning in verse 28. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

[3 : 13] For those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined. To be conformed to the image of a Son in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom He predestined, He also called. And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. God is sovereign over all things in our life from the beginning to the very end.

He's written it out. And it will come to pass. Verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who

indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Lord, as it is written, for your sake we are being killed all the day long.

[4 : 18] We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because He is sovereign over our salvation. Because we are His. Because He made us His. And therefore, that cannot change.

What a thing to rejoice in. And then we come to the beginning of chapter 9. And as I said last week, I at times wish that He had just skipped to the beginning of 12.

And just not talked about the next three chapters. It seems random. It seems like an insertion in His flow of logic. However, it's not. So let's read the first five verses.

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

[5 : 38] They are Israelites. And to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs. And from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever.

Amen. Join me in a word of prayer. Father God, I thank you this morning that we can come to your word, that you have given us spiritual eyes to see it and hear it and apply it.

But I pray, Father, that you will help us with that this morning. That you will find us coming humbly to be spoken to by you. We won't stand over the word judging you, but we will put ourselves underneath it and we will learn.

And I pray that our learning will lead to different living this day. And I pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. So Paul suddenly turns to speak of the Jews.

And he does so because he's anticipating the questions. He's built this case all throughout Romans so far.

[6 : 47] Justification by faith alone. And he hammers it home at the end of eight. Our salvation is God's doing. And because of that, we are secure in him.

We are saved for future glory. That is joy for life. We can endure anything because we're gods. But then people will say, Paul himself, a Jew, would say, But what about Israel?

What about the Jews? Aren't they God's special people? And we see that many of them are not receiving Christ. Many of them are hardened and turning away.

Many of them still are practicing the old Jewish rites. What about them? And he laments that.

Verses 1 through 3. Paul is burdened by it. He has great sorrow and unceasing anguish on behalf of the Israelites.

[7 : 54] He says that he's speaking the truth in Christ. He's not lying. His conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that this is how he feels. And he knows that he can't give away his salvation.

But that if he could, he's saying, honestly, I would. If I could trade myself for the sake of the nation of Israel, I would do it. He says, for I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers.

He means that. That's a guttural thing he's saying to us. I would consider myself accursed, separated forever from Christ for the sake of the Israelites.

To the Jewish readers of this letter, those hearing it, read to them. This would have been striking to them, Paul's opinion.

Paul's desire for them to come to Christ. Because Paul reflected the heart of Moses. The Jewish believers would have known their Old Testament.

[9 : 03] And in Exodus 32, 31, this is after the golden calf has been created and worshipped in the valley. Moses is up meeting with God on Mount Sinai, receiving the Ten Commandments.

You'll remember he comes down off the mountain, is so angered that he breaks the tablets. He then gets a group of men that go through the people, slaying people, setting that right.

He goes back up on the mountain to meet with God. He goes back to God's presence. And he

pleads for the people. In Exodus 32, 31, it says, So Moses returned to the Lord and said, Alas, this

people has sinned a great sin.

They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin. But if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written. He says the same thing. You can blot me out of your book for the sake of your people.

It's also the heart of Christ. Matthew 23, 37, Jesus says, Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

[10:14] How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings? And you were not willing. So Paul properly cares for Israel.

They were God's special people. And he goes on to tell us how it is that they were. We see in verses 4 and 5 that Israel was uniquely blessed with eight privileges.

Uniquely blessed with eight privileges. These were all privileges ultimately designed to show them Christ. Paul is heartbroken because according to the flesh, by all human understanding, if any people should have understood who Jesus was, it should have been the Israelites.

They had a picture constantly being painted before them of their great need of a savior. And he came and so many missed it.

So from purely human understanding, they should have all followed Christ. And yet so few did. And he's going to work that out in further degree in the coming chapters as he talks about God's sovereignty over the salvation of all of his people, including those of us who are not Jewish.

[11:34] I don't think anybody in here is probably of Jewish descent. That's okay if you are. I'm actually happy if you are. That's fantastic. I'm not. I'm a Gentile. The other category of people that the gospel has been carried to.

And you have here even Paul who has been given a special mission to the Gentiles, but yet has this great love and concern for the Israelites. So let's look at these eight privileges together.

As Israelites, they have received, number one, the adoption. As God's people. Isaiah 46, verses 3 and 4.

It says, Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been born by me from before your birth, carried from the womb. Even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you.

I have made and I will bear. I will carry and will save. There's lots of language in the Old Testament, speaking of Israel being the children of God. And yet they missed that in him was the adoption that came through Christ.

[12:38] Romans chapter 8. We see in verse 15, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

Verse 16, The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And they missed that. Secondly, the glory. I had so much fun studying this little phrase.

To Israel belongs the glory. What Paul is referring to is the visible presence of God. The glory. The visible presence. It's not in the Bible anywhere, but later on Jewish scholars have called this Shekinah.

So if you ever hear that phrase, Shekinah glory. Shekinah means the glory. It's that visible thing that the Israelites could see that represented God's magnificence.

And the first mention of it is in Exodus 13, when the Israelites are led out of Egypt. They were led by a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night.

[13:45] These are the best explanations we get of what these things looked like. I do not know if it was actually billowy, cumulus kind of cloud. I highly doubt it.

But that was the words that they had to say. It looked like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. But what we tend to forget is that for 40 years, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness and it was with them all that time.

The Sinai Desert is a really, really phenomenal place. One of the most difficult places to survive on Earth. The mean temperature throughout the year in the Sinai Desert during the day is 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

You know that? I had no idea. 150 degrees. The mean temperature at night in the Sinai Desert is 35 degrees Fahrenheit. So on an average day in the Sinai Desert, the temperature change is 115 degrees.

Can you believe that? God led his people, which is estimated to be 2.5 to 3 million people, into a place that we would have to be so equipped to survive.

[14:56] There have been a number of expeditions, successful ones and not. The ones that survived were very well equipped to survive exploring the Sinai Desert and yet God protected with a cover during the day that cloud that spread out over the people and shaded them, 2.5 to 3 million people, during the day and by night was as fire and it kept them warm.

Isn't that phenomenal? When Moses erected the tent of meeting, there would be a funnel that would come down from the cloud and would rest over the tent of meeting. And God used that to show them when it was time for them to pick up and move and when he wanted them to encamp. So when that lifted, they would pack everything up and the cloud would move and they would go with it. And when it rested down, that's where they would stop. For 40 years, God's glory dwelt with the people in this way.

That's one of the great miracles of the Bible. Ask somebody to list off the miracles of the Bible. Most people would totally miss that. But for 40 years, God cared for his people with his glory.

Sometime after they go into the promised land, there's not a mention of it any longer. But we do know that God's glory dwelt in the Holy of Holies when the tabernacle existed and then when the temple was built.

[16:21] Actually dwelt physically. The priest, the high priest, would go in there and actually see this glory. The cloud. Not exactly sure what it looked like, but would actually go and see the physical glory of God.

And then we see in Ezekiel chapter 11 as a punishment to the people of Israel. It finally leaves. It's carried. Ezekiel sees in a vision the cherubim, carry it to the Mount of Olives, which interestingly is where Jesus also ascended, carry it to the Mount of Olives, and then the glory leaves.

It goes back to heaven. Isn't that awesome? When do we see it again? When does it come back? I hope your mind's running right now.

When does the glory of God, the physical picture of who he is, come back to his people? The birth of Jesus Christ. At the birth of Jesus Christ.

The shepherds sitting in the field, and they were surrounded by glory, not language. That's when it comes back and then manifests in Jesus himself.

[17:30] 2 Corinthians 4, 6 says, For God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Isn't that phenomenal? So the Israelites, those who Paul is lamenting over here, had this picture that finally was realized in Christ.

He came and he walked amongst them. And then he ascended from the Mount of Olives. And guess what? He's coming back. 1 Thessalonians 4, 17 says, Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

And so we will always be with the Lord. And this would be read or rendered with them in the cloud. The Greek term used here is the same Greek term used in the Septuagint, which the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

It's the same word used of the glory. The cloud, the fire that led the Israelites, that covered them, it's the same word used.

[18:39] So, for Thessalonians, Paul's not saying that we're going to be all sopping wet because we're going to be in the clouds, right? But we're going to be enveloped by God. I don't know what it's going to look like, but by the glory of the Lord.

That's phenomenal. And they had this picture. And those who were alive in this day knew this. They had a history told to them of how God had dealt with them. And they missed the fact that it was the Christ.

Number three, they had the covenants. God made many promises to the people of Israel throughout the Old Testament. The three major ones are the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic, and the Davidic.

Right? So to Abraham, he gave the covenant of blessing, which is found in Genesis 12, 2 and 3. To Moses, the covenant of the law, Exodus chapters 19 through 21. To David, the covenant of an eternal kingdom, 2 Samuel 7, 8 through 16.

These were the promises given to the people. Acts 3, 25 and 26 is when Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. And he says, You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

[19 : 56] God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. The covenants were given as a picture of what was to be fulfilled in Christ.

Chapter 9, verse 6. Drawing beyond where we are today, but Paul says, It is not as though the word of God has failed, for not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

The covenant promises of God have extended beyond just the nation of Israel as they understood it to the true Israel, the church. We get to get into all of that in a greater degree later.

But the covenants were meant to show us that these promises that God made would not fail, but they just looked different than the Israelites thought. the fulfillment of them was not what they expected.

Number four, the giving of the law, which was God's standard of righteousness. This came to the Israelites and told them, this is how you must live to be found right in me, and was meant to teach them that there was no way they could possibly fulfill the law.

[21 : 10] That's where the sacrificial system came in, all as a shadow of what was to come in Jesus Christ, the spotless lamb, the perfect sacrifice for sins. Galatians 3, 10-14, it says, For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse.

For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them. Now it is evident that no one justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith.

But the law is not of faith, rather the one who does them shall live by faith. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who hanged on a tree, so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

The law was meant to point to the coming of Christ. Now in the West here, we think, in our logic, we think very linearly.

So, A plus B equals C. It's a very linear logic. If this is true, then this must be true. That's how we think. Eastern logic does not work in that way.

[22 : 25] Eastern logic says, not this, or this, or this, or this, but this. Eastern logic tells you all the things that can't be so that it can show you what can be.

That's what the Old Testament does for us. Gives us all these pictures of what can't be so that we see when the can be arrives in Jesus Christ.

That's what the law was meant to do. Which leads us to the next one. The worship. Some translations might render that or the temple service.

What Paul's referring to here is the sacrificial system. That was given to the Israelites to again show them that when they transgressed the law, blood was required and there were so many different sacrifices that had to take place.

There's actually five different types of offering. For the sake of time, I won't get into them, but these things happened continually. Those of you who have been here a while probably are tired of hearing me say this, but the temple was an incredibly busy place and you have to understand what was going on there.

[23 : 41] Constant sacrifice happening day in and day out. There's a whole tribe, the Levites, their job was to carry out this process. They didn't do any other work.

They didn't have time. All they did was make sacrifice for Israel day in and day out. The blood flowed constantly. A special day of the year was the day of atonement.

The day when the high priest went into the holy of holies and made a special sacrifice. Many of these sacrifices were meant to cover unintentional sins.

Sins that the Jewish people didn't even know they had committed. Unknown sins. It was a phenomenal system. You would have to be highly trained to be a priest because the processes that you had to go through to carry out the sacrifices properly were amazing.

Ephesians 5.2 says, Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Hebrews 7.27-28 Writer of Hebrews says, He has no need like those high priests to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

[25 : 00] For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, that's speaking of Psalm 110.4, which came later than the law, appoints a son who has been made

perfect forever.

That whole system was meant to show them that they needed a perfect sacrifice, which was Christ. The spotless lamb.

He's seated at the right hand of the Father. He has done his work. The significance of Jesus' works, it is finished. That's what he's talking about.

There's no longer that sacrifice needed. The temple curtain was torn in two, allowing access to the presence of God. With me?

It's amazing. And the Jews missed it, in large part. They missed what was happening, why the temple service was given to them.

[26 : 00] Number six. Sixth privilege. The promises. Now, I don't know all the promises that Paul's referring to here, but I do know he's at least referring to the promises of the coming king, the eternally perfect king.

Turn with me real quick to Acts chapter 13. There's a little text heavy for you not to look at it with me. This is Paul preaching in Antioch, Acts 13, beginning in verse 32.

And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus.

As also it is written in the second psalm, you are my son, today I have begotten you. And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.

Therefore he says also in another psalm, you will not let your holy one see corruption. For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption.

[27 : 22] But he whom God raised up did not see corruption, speaking of Christ. Let it be known to you, therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Beware therefore, lest what is said in the prophets should come about. Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish, for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe even if one tells it to you.

So, the promises to bring about an eternally perfect king were also given to the Israelites. The privilege of the patriarchs, number seven.

In Exodus 3, 6, when Moses first encounters God, God introduces himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. That's quoted by Peter in Acts 3 and by Stephen in Acts 7. They're phenomenal sermons. It's the only time that God connects himself by name to any man, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, to distinguish who he is.

[28 : 32] He has never said the God of Nathan. Is he my God? Absolutely, he is. But that's not the title that he's given himself. He's the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.

And he speaks of them in Hebrews 11, verse 16, he says, but as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he's prepared for them a city.

They had the patriarchs. they had those who have believed by faith in God for their salvation as an example to them, and they missed it.

And finally, and most importantly, they had the privilege of being the people from whom Jesus came.

Jesus Christ, not a white man, not a black man, a Jew. He was Middle Eastern in descent.

[29 : 36] He was an Israelite. Verse 5, he is called the Christ. We believe that Paul was carried along by the Spirit, that the Word of God is the Word of God.

Paul penned it. God gave it to him to speak. It's significant that he uses this term. Christ. It's the Greek for the Hebrew word Messiah.

It means Savior or Liberator. We have picked up that language for Jesus, Yeshua. That's what he was known as in his day.

But we have called him the Christ because we know who he is. He is our Savior. He is our Liberator. And he is God.

God. Chapter 9, verse 5, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. Paul never misses an opportunity to establish Jesus Christ's deity.

[30 : 39] Read any of his writing. Anytime he gets a chance, he slips in there, help us to understand that the man who came and dwelt amongst people was God himself.

and he was one of them. And they missed it. So what does all this mean for us?

Paul's lament as he has this anguish continually in him for the Jewish people because in all respects, all human logic, they should have gotten it.

Before anybody else, they should have gotten it. What does that mean for us? What's the point?

What's the value? What can we wring out of it for us today? Three things.

Firstly, we should share in Paul's lament for the Jewish people. God has not turned his back on the Jews.

[31 : 37] Again, we'll talk about that more in the coming chapters. God has not turned his back on the Jews. There has been much anti-Semitism that has risen out of Christianity.

Kind of seems easy to hate the Jews, right? They rejected our Savior. They crucified him. It's their fault, right?

It's not. It's by God's foreordained plan that that happened. And he has not quit on them. And neither should we. we should be actively carrying the gospel to the Jews.

In fact, later on, I believe in chapter 11, Paul says that many Jews are going to come to salvation because of their jealousy of us. They're going to recognize that we have a true relationship with the God they think they're worshiping by all their old Jewish rite and passage, and see that we have the true relationship through Jesus Christ.

We should actively seek the Jew and their salvation. Secondly, we should lament for all peoples.

Do you have the same heart of Paul for the people around you?

[32 : 57] Could you honestly say, were it possible, which of course is not, that we could ask God to cut us off. He would never do that. But if it were possible, would you offer yourself up for the sake of others?

I don't watch a lot of reality television, but Sam's kind of got me hooked on Master Chef. And there were some characters, and one of them had won a challenge thing, and they asked him if he had the opportunity to save somebody from going into this elimination challenge deal, who he would save.

Who would you save, Frank? Who would it be? And he picked some guy, Josh, I think, got him Josh. I'd pick Josh, great cook, I'd pick him. Awesome.

Yay, Frank, man, you're so sacrificial, good for you. And they said, okay, well, guess what, you do actually have the option to save somebody. Who are you going to save? He saved himself. That's not what Paul's doing, right?

He's speaking the truth in Christ. He's not lying, his conscience bears witness. He would actually give himself up. Do we have that kind of heart for people?

[34 : 09] Do we just give lip service? Yeah, I love people. Or do we actually have anguish in our hearts for the people around us that they might come to Christ? The evidences are all around.

Now, Gentile people don't have all these privileges. It's not been a history that's been given to them. but the evidences are all around them and we ought to lament for them as well.

Thirdly, we as humans should make no excuse for seeing that Jesus is the Christ.

He is the one that has been sent for the remission of sin. The one in whom we must believe to be saved. You notice the article in verse 5? That he is the Christ?

Not a Christ, not a way, one of the many ways, the path of goodness. He is the Christ. The only way, if you don't know him today, if you don't have saving faith, that he is the Christ.

[35 : 21] That all of these things we've been talking about, all this religious activity was meant to show us that we needed him, you have no excuse. You're sitting in this room right now, none whatsoever.

You will be judged one day. If you're found in Christ, it will be said of you, well done my good and faithful servant, you'll enter into eternal joy and blessing with God. If you don't, eternal damnation, hell and misery, separation from God is what awaits you.

So you have no excuse. Join me in prayer.