

Romans 9:1-5

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[0 : 00] One of the blessings of going verse by verse through books of the Bible is it prevents you from skipping over hard things. And here we are running into a section of Romans that starts in chapter 9 and goes through chapter 11.

And so, but I do want to say, try to look at this with fresh eyes today. We'll be in Romans 9 with the next today and then three more Sundays.

But just join me in a quick word of prayer. Lord, we're just grateful to come together around your word today. And I pray that it would have your desired effect on our hearts and our lives.

And help me to remain submitted to your word, to remain humble, to put all things before you.

Just ask that you be honored in this time. In Christ's name, amen. So we will, Nathan took us through Romans 8, arguably one of the greatest chapters that we find in the scripture.

[1 : 11] In Romans 8, connect directly to Romans 9. And we're going to just start with the first five verses today. So let's just read together from God's inspired and inerrant word.

Romans 9, 1 through 5. Paul says, Back in the book of Romans, it's just a good reminder that we never graduate.

We never graduate from the gospel. We never move on from the cross, but only a more profound understanding of the cross as we grow in our faith.

And if the gospel is true, then it must stand up against the hardest scrutiny. We need it because we are banking our souls and trusting our souls to this message.

And arguably, the book of Romans gives us the fullest detailed at length explanation of the gospel.

And so, after reading these five verses, one of the things that I learned that has helped me in the past is when you preach on a particular passage of scripture, preach the mood of that scripture.

[3 : 09] If it's joyous, you should be joyous. If it's sad and convicting, then that's how you ought to preach it. And I just want to confess to you that I can't, without God's help, preach the mood of this text.

It is a very sorrowful lamentation. And so, before we move on, I want you just to notice that why does Romans 9, 1 through 5, it comes following Romans 8, which is one of the greatest explanations of our future glory in Christ.

That nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. A promise to save us, to glorify us with Christ. Romans 8 gives us great assurance, great hope, and great confidence of our eternal salvation.

There's just a tremendous mountaintop that we reach in Romans 8. And when we get to the summit, we stop there. And there's just something that just blows my mind here.

After Paul reaches the heights of Romans 8, reaches the summit of that mountain, he immediately thinks about those who aren't there with him.

[4 : 33] He thinks about those who are still lost in the valley, living in darkness. When it comes to his Jewish kinsmen, when it comes to his family, the people that he knows, the nation of Israel.

And so, this kind of poses a problem. This is why this matters, okay? We're asking the question in the next three chapters.

Has God's promises to the nation of Israel failed? Have they fallen short? Gone unfulfilled?

Because by and large, the nation at this time had rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

So have those promises failed to Israel? And if that's true, if they have failed, then how can we be sure that God will keep his word to us?

See the problem there? Like, that's the question that Paul is going to tackle in the next three chapters. How can we trust the promises that he has made to us in Christ, if the promises he's made to the Jewish people have gone unfulfilled?

[5 : 42] That's why it matters. And so he begins this new section answering these questions at length, chapters 9 through 11. And he's demonstrating that indeed, God has been faithful to his word.

And that he has kept his promises towards Israel. So in these chapters, he will show, he will prove that within the nation of Israel, right, as there's a larger circle of ethnic, national Israel. Within that is a smaller, concentric circle of saved, spiritual Israel. A remnant that God has chosen for salvation.

Just a very similar connection to us today. Just because we see a larger circle of the gathered church. But we know that just because we can see a church gathered doesn't mean that everyone inside that gathering belongs to Christ.

There are, within these larger circles, smaller, concentric circles of the invisible church. And that's the way it is with this passage. This is what he's going on to prove.

[6 : 52] But before he goes into that at length, he wants us to take a glimpse into his heart for his fellow Jews. It's very important because I think if we see how he answers this, how he brings us out, it'll help us later look at these amazing but hard doctrines of salvation, sovereign election, and what God talks about.

So there's only two parts, two points really, of our message today. Part number one. Or number one. See Paul's personal connection to unbelieving Israel.

Paul's personal connection to unbelieving Israel. He says in verse one, I'm speaking the truth in Christ. I'm not lying. My conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unsecretly 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. And so many, many believers give lip service to their sadness for the loss.

That's just so bad. That's just too sad. Paul, on the other hand, wants us to understand this is not just sentimental. A sentimental aside from what he's talking about.

[8 : 19] It's not just lip service or how bad he feels about the loss. He truly, actually, sincerely feels deep sorrow in his soul for his Jewish kinsmen that are living in darkness away from Christ.

As we unpack this verse by verse, he says, I'm speaking the truth in Christ. I'm not lying. So he's calling on the very presence of Jesus himself to bear witness that he is not lying.

He is being truthful. We might be tempted to lie, but if we actually had an awareness that Jesus was there with us, we would have a much harder time uttering a lie.

And so he's not exaggerating. He's speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So giving further certification to this, he says, My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit.

You ever notice that when we lie, when lies can out of our mouths immediately, there's something that convicts us?

[9 : 26] It says the law of God is written on our hearts in Romans chapter 2. And when we lie, we sin against our conscience. So Paul calls his conscience to bear witness in the Holy Spirit.

All right, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. So the Spirit himself is bearing witness of the truth of what he is going to say.

And our consciences should be bathed in the light and warmth of the Holy Spirit at all times to maintain integrity. A conscience surrendered to God's Word and to the Holy Spirit.

That's what we must aim for. So then he says he invokes that as a witness to his truthfulness and his reliability. So you might think like, Well, Paul, have you been lying to us elsewhere?

Like, why do you feel now the need to say, Hey, I'm telling you the truth? Because aren't you always telling us the truth? It's a fair question. But here's the point. Why he feels the need to express his true motives about this.

[10 : 32] Because what he's about to say could seem so unbelievable, so incredible, even exaggerated, that we might be tempted to think that he's not actually telling us the truth.

So that's why he emphasizes this. Everything from out of his mouth, he truly, sincerely believes. So he looks at his lost kinsmen, the Jewish people, the Israelites.

All right? So following, again, the most glorious explanation of the gospel recorded in human language in Romans 8, he immediately breaks into this lamentation.

His tone moves from the apex of joy to very solemn. As Sinclair Ferguson said, Paul goes from ecstasy to anguish.

Just like that. Paul confesses he suffers great. That's the word mega. Great sorrow. Which means immense sadness and deep distress.

[11 : 37] And then he says unceasing anguish. Which means this constant pain and perpetual torment. Something that he can't just have a moment of and then put it aside.

And it's after him all day and all night. This perpetual anguish in his heart about his unbelieving Jewish kinsmen.

Later on in chapter 10, verse 1, he says, Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them, the Jewish people, is that they may be saved.

So he has this desire for all of them to come to know Jesus as the true Messiah. But isn't it interesting, again, that on the summit of hope in chapter 8, he immediately thinks about those who are not there with him.

It reminds me of a missionary who went to Papua New Guinea and shared the gospel with the tribe. The Moak people shared the gospel at length, unpacked it for them, and they're all just sitting there in suspense, waiting to know what's going to happen, and tells them that Jesus died and that Jesus rose again, and that they put their hope and trust in Jesus, that they will be saved.

[12 : 55] And they break out into celebration, like a joyful celebration, that if they put their hope in Christ, they will be saved. And it turned into dancing and praising God.

And then the missionary said, At some point following that, they all just broke down weeping and crying uncontrollably. And he inquired why this was happening to one of the village elders.

And he goes, I think they've just realized that all their family who has gone before them is not with God. And then they actually returned back to rejoicing not long after that.

That's what we see here. Paul deeply and truly loves the Jewish people from whom he was born and raised. He treasures the rich heritage, right, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, and the prophets.

Like he loves his people. Paul loved their customs and their traditions. He wrote in Galatians 1.14, that he was extremely zealous for the traditions of his fathers.

[14 : 08] A deep love for them. And then he says, For their sake, right, some of us may feel sorrow in our hearts. I know I do, but not to this degree of anguish.

What he says, most of us could never follow. Like, in our conscience, I'm like, I don't know if I could say that. But he says, I wish that I myself were accursed, cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

All right, now, now understand, Paul knows in his head that that's an impossibility. Because of what he just wrote in Romans 8. He knows that nothing can separate him from the love of Christ.

That's in his head, but his heart is still aching with conflict for his lost kinsmen. Indeed, if it was even possible, he says he would choose to be accursed for their sake.

that's a word that some of you may be familiar with. It means anathema, cut off, to suffer the fury and wrath of God is what it means. To suffer their punishment, their kinsmen, according to the flesh.

[15 : 23] He's basically saying, I'm willing to lose Christ if they only could gain Christ. Now, I only picked one place for you to turn today.

It was hard to settle in, but I want you to just join me briefly in Revelation 20. Hold your hand, Romans 9, and look at Revelation 20.

What does this look like? You know, all of us will face God's judgment one day. Some of us are prepared.

Some of us are not prepared. And I want you to think about where you may be as well as what about the state of those who you love and you care about?

Your family, your friends, those that you have contact with. And I want you to think about approaching the judgment. Or to envision them approaching the judgment.

[16 : 30] But God is called the righteous judge. He always does what's right. We've seen a lot of corruption in our world and in our nation with courts and law being used in unjust ways.

God makes no such mistakes. He is the righteous judge. And he's vowed one day to judge all humanity that has rebelled against him.

Look at Revelation 20. Go to verse 11. This is following chapter 19 of the armies of heaven coming down to judge and make war. And before the before the new heaven and the new earth in chapter 21 we find this image of the great white throne judgment.

A phrase that scared the junk out of me when I was a kid. And justly so. Revelation 20 verse 11 John says I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

From his presence earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead the great and the small standing before the throne and books were opened.

[17:44] And another book was opened which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done.

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And they were judged each one of them according to what they had done.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death the lake of fire. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire.

I hope that in a good way this passage sobers us this morning. We look at God's throne that's high and exalted and it's white which means pure and holy and at God's presence the fallen creation just flees away.

Like it's too unclean to be in his sight. Making way for the new heaven and the new earth. And it says that all people all men the powerful the great the strong world leaders the rich the poor the beggar on the street and the most powerful leader among us all stand before the throne.

[19:07] And it says that there are books plural see that books recording more than likely every thought every deed and every sin committed by individuals.

And then there is a singular book the book of life that contains the name of all those who have trusted their souls to Jesus Christ the book of life of the Lamb.

And it says that in God's perfect judgment he examines all these things and it says if anyone's name was not found in the book of life they were cast into the lake of fire.

The first death is physical we all will suffer that the second death is spiritual far worse and if we do not have Jesus approaching this day we will perish under God's just and righteous judgment.

And that individually makes me I will say I'm I'm scared but I'm not terrified if that makes sense.

[20:23] A reverence for what is to take place there but I also can look over and envision those that I know my family members my friends people that do not have Christ approaching that throne they will not they will not make it they will not survive and so I want to as best I can try to get to where Paul is I hope that you ask God to help you see that to see yourself and those that you love facing this oncoming judgment from God this is not just a sentiment that Paul himself had Moses likewise shared in that when he was on Mount Sinai an Israelite camp turned to idolatry in a pagan awful celebration of depravity and unbelief so Moses feels

God's righteous indignation towards the nation he knows that punishment will come and he jumps between the people and God and he offers himself much in the way Paul does here to save you from turning there if you want to look at later Exodus 32 30 through 33 but he said if you will forgive their sin but if not blot me out from your book that you have written and the Lord said to Moses whoever has sinned against me I will blot out from my book and so Moses himself felt this need to intercede for his people but as we know only Jesus can bear the punishment as a substitute and take God's wrath no man is capable then finally we know that our Lord himself upon approaching Jerusalem before he was to be arrested beaten and crucified upon looking over the whole city Jesus cried out oh Jerusalem Jerusalem the city that kills the prophets and stones them 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 were not willing so Jesus himself felt broken heartedness for the people so this is all Paul's personal connection with unbelieving Israel now point number two is God's personal connection to unbelieving Israel and if you look at verses four through five back in Romans 9 says they are Israelites and to them belong the adoption the glory the covenant the giving of the law the worship and the promise to them belong the patriarchs and from their race according to the flesh is the Christ who is God over all blessed forever amen notice he says to them belong meaning the Hebrew nation they were marvelously privileged by God he entrusted things to Israel that he did not entrust to the Amorites to the Egyptians to anybody else he chose them by his grace in a general sense as a nation right God graciously gave them types and prefigures which are these examples or pictures that God designed beforehand and he placed them in history to point forward to a greater larger fulfillment namely Jesus Christ and he he gave them so much and yet they rejected as for the most part by and large they rejected Jesus as the Messiah it says in John 1 verse 11 that he Jesus came to his own and his own people did not receive him so the reason for highlighting all this was to say how privileged they were as a nation is to show how tragic their condition is to be cut

off from

God because they've been given so much so not the true Israel some of us may think someone may not trust in God because they haven't just had enough exposure to God's truth you ever felt like that before ever heard that well this proves that that's not true Israel is the ultimate example of that every advantage was given to them and they squandered it for the most part they had so many things given from God let's just walk through these things briefly it says first the adoption not used in a general sense of giving salvation to every individual born in ethnic Israel rather that God in a general sense chose them and privileged the entire nation to manifest himself to to reveal himself to he gave them so many things in Exodus 4 22 God calls Israel my son my firstborn meaning that the provisions for the nation were like that of a firstborn son his care and special attention was given to them all these blessings were poured out upon them yet most of them failed to lay hold of that great blessing and they squandered it the glory is the next part of this possibly referring to this visible we call the

[26 : 19] Shekinah glory this visible sign of God's presence and a pillar of cloud or fire that we saw around Sinai the tabernacle the holy of holies a visible presence of God among them but also you could easily say when God reveals his glory to someone what he's doing is revealing himself to someone he's revealing his character and who he is and his mighty deeds and he did that for Israel he made known to them saving revelation you want to know how to be made right with me I'm going to show you yet the majority of ethnic Israel failed to be amazed by that glory and most did not partake of it so nextly we see the covenants see that we all know what covenants are a legal binding promise a contract an agreement between two parties and God's reveal it you know if you study the covenants it's just such a wonderful picture of

God's grace he condescended came down and entered into a contractual relationship with those who were in Israel right you have the Abrahamic covenant the Mosaic covenant the Davidic covenant and on and on where God pledged himself to them and swore by his own name to keep his word towards them he didn't do that with the other nations he chose to do it with Israel yet most of them failed to see his grace in those covenants and failed to keep their part of those covenants then fourthly we see the law could definitely refer to the ten commandments but also countless other principles that God gave so that we would know how to honor him and obey him! the Hebrew word law Torah which means not just legal stuff but instruction teaching God gave us careful instructions right as a loving father gives his child showing him how he ought to live in the world specific revelation the scripture and y'all know that like they so many of them had exposure to the scripture God's specific revelation about his character and what he desires yet most of Israel again they failed to see the purpose of the law they failed to lay hold to the reality that the law is a servant leading us to Christ then you look at the next part the worship also referring to like mainly the temple service what happened at the tabernacle and the temple that the sacrificial and ceremonial system that God had revealed to

Moses Exodus 29 and through it God's people could place their faith in him and provide atonement for their sin and as we know the supreme temple service was the Passover we're all aware of that that is Exodus 12 yet the majority of Israel failed to see that those animal sacrifices pointed forward to a final sacrifice for sin namely Jesus Christ and this is why Paul wrote Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed 1 Corinthians 5 7 so Christ has made the final atoning temple service by dying on Calvary's cross and they failed to see that all those things were pointing forward to him then lastly you see the promises that could be taken with the word covenant the covenant and the promises kind of summing it all up all the promises that

God made pointing forward to the coming Messiah hundreds of prophecies pointing forward to Jesus fulfilling them bringing salvation in eternal life in his kingdom the new covenant though most of them rejected the new covenant that was coming to replace all the old purchased by the blood of Christ for those who believe Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians all the promises of God find their yes in him Jesus Christ that is why through him that we utter our amen to God for his glory and if you look next you see the patriarchs from the loins of those patriarchs the fathers Abraham Isaac and Jacob came the nation and God revealed himself specifically to those men and from that line came Jesus the Messiah which is next through the Christ who is over all blessed forever!

[31 : 24] Amen! Jesus that's why it's important look at the beginning of Luke and the! Matthew you see this lineage of Jesus it's important it's saying he was the one he came through the line he was a descendant from David Jesus is not just merely a human being but also fully God divine sovereign

over all and then Paul ends in praise if he can't think about Jesus without busting out into praise so in closing of this part of it the nation of Israel had every advantage every grace given to them to know God and be redeemed by him to worship him rightly so that escalates their accountability and their responsibility to act upon the truth that was given to them that's Luke 12 48 so much is given much is to be expected right so some closing application for us

God does not look at the world through good people bad people he doesn't look at it through a political lens democratic republican conservative liberal he doesn't look at it through gender he doesn't look at it through race he only looks at it through those who belong to him and those who don't and that's it so those of you today who are without Christ or you're uncertain about where you stand with God I want you to see that your attendance here is not by accident or coincidence you may be even unaware but this very moment is ordained by God it says in Proverbs 16 9 the heart of a man plans his way but the Lord establishes his steps you are here today we've been told numerous times in God's word that he guides and directs the steps of our lives so here's what's scary ready for this know then that greater privileges have been afforded to you than even Israel because you live in the time of the fulfillment of these things Jesus came he fulfilled these promises so what about you if you are uncertain about where you are with God what advantages has God given you you live in the Bible Belt there are Bibles everywhere so many nations in this world are without God's word that's an advantage a grace given to you how many of you have Christian friends or family members that God has placed in your life special privileges of knowing and hearing God's word taught parents who took you to church a grandparent who prayed for you a father who sat down and talked about Jesus with you and yet why do you remain opposed to Christ do you see these things as grace in your life doesn't owe you he doesn't owe anybody anything the only thing that we rightly do is judgment we don't deserve the grace of

God so have you been faithful to lay hold of those graces that God has given you they're here so know that your sin puts you at odds with God but see your presence here as grace and God is beckoning you to come to Christ you're here in a worship service hearing God's word taught there are many people here myself the elders people who brought you who are willing to talk with you about this but in Hebrews 3 Hebrews 3 7 through 8 it says therefore the Holy Spirit says today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts in rebellion as long as it is called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin if you feel any love or desire or need for Christ go to him don't hesitate you don't have to walk an aisle to do that you can just do it in where you're sitting and talk to us afterwards so those are for people who may not know where they are with God but for those of us who do know who have the confidence of Romans 8 behind us I want you to think about how to rightly apply this passage to yourselves if you have an unbeliever that you're with at work the park the school that you go to the gym what are your feelings towards them do you remorse any burden for them at all and if not why not so what I want to tell you might hit you pretty hard hit me what we believe about Romans 9 reveals a lot about what we believe about Romans 8 okay this exposes our true convictions as we walk through Romans 9 we'll be going over what at least we at this church believe and many others but referred to as the doctrines of grace reformed theology Calvinism

[37 : 02] Augustinianism all kind of saying the same thing but as we do that our burden for loss and perishing souls can be revealing about what we actually believe about those things right if we truly believe versus what we claim to believe and I want to submit to you again that I struggle to get to this level of anguish in my soul for the lost and our attitude should be like Paul's now some nerdy academic theologian may sit down with Paul Paul don't don't you realize that unbelievers are sovereignly in God's hands they're there Paul I mean like Paul understands that he's about to write about it right but before he does he wants you to see that his heart is broken for his unbelieving kinsmen rightly understanding

God's sovereignty and salvation his predestination and election rightly understood will throw not cold water on the fire of evangelism but it will throw fuel on the fire of evangelism it will give you great zeal rightly understood it should not never make us apathetic merely academic towards these things and we have to ask God to give you that type of sorrow it is not something that you can just psych yourself up into you can't just work yourself up into a frenzy and feel that way it is something given to God by his grace it is an overflow of our walk with Christ in love as we imagine ourselves and others approaching that final day so we must ask God to give us that but in closing a very I'll try to

I have a lot of them but as someone who loves sharing the gospel who loves connecting with unbelievers and going to weird places to reach people many years ago when this was introduced to me I struggled I was like what is the point if God has a people already chosen for salvation why do we go what does the great commission mean in light of this why is there a need for missions and evangelism genuine questions I was having but again rightly understood this is just catapulted like sprung me forward into more I'm just going to give you one reason right here it's right out of our text Paul desires to go after them and rescue them his heart breaks for those who do not know Jesus as the psalmist said my eyes shed tears of streams because people did not keep your distress for unbelievers was not due to his lack of grasp of

God's sovereignty and salvation his distress actually demonstrates how deeply and truly he believes those things so many souls are waiting anxiously for the news that God will use to save their soul so we should go through whatever extreme necessary Proverbs 24 verse 11 says this rescue those who are being taken away to death hold back those who are stumbling toward slaughter Jude 122 have mercy on those who doubt save others by snatching them out of the fire right that's that's why I mean rightly understood our hearts should long to bring others with us I have a quote and then we'll pray Spurgeon who did seek the lost he says have you no wish for others to be saved then be sure of it you are not saved yourself he says if sinners be damned at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies and if they perish let them perish with our arms wrapped around their knees imploring them to stay if hell must be filled let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions and let not one go unwarmed or unprayed for join me in Matthew chapter 9 we'll close together Matthew chapter 9 begins with Jesus we should end with Jesus and I want you to see the heart of our Lord towards those who are suffering and lost Matthew chapter 9 look at verse 35 verse 35 chapter 9 and Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and affliction when he saw the crowds he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like a sheep without a shepherd then he said to his disciples the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few therefore pray earnestly!

[42 : 38] to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest join me in prayer for to eat for time to the