

**ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH**  
**GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY & MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY – Chapters 9-11**

**LESSON 31 – PAUL’S PASSION FOR THE PEOPLE – Romans 9:1-5**

This lesson will show us Paul’s spiritual burden for those who don’t know Christ. These first verses from Romans 9 reveal an apostle with a broken heart over the eternal condition and destiny of his fellow Jews.

For the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul has been telling his readers...especially the Jews...that salvation is by grace through faith alone and not by the law or works. With their roots deep in Judaism, the Jews were probably asking themselves, “So where do we fit in to the plan of God?” Well...that’s the purpose of Romans 9-11...to try and explain to the Jews their role in the plan of God for salvation through the Messiah...Jesus. Now we’ve read Paul’s letter to the Romans as well as all of his other letters so we know the answer. He says in Ephesians 2 and Colossians 3 that God has joined together both Jews and Gentiles into one new body...the New Testament church. There is not a Gospel for the Jews and another Gospel for the Gentiles. There is one Gospel for both and that is the Gospel of Christ. Paul even went so far as to say in Philippians 3 that all of his Jewish advantages meant nothing when it came to salvation...only the cross of Jesus was sufficient to save.

Paul remembered how hard it was for him...as a Jew...to replace his entire upbringing with the simple message of faith in Christ. So he starts his evangelistic efforts where we should start...with a heart of love for those we want to reach. We need to remember that it’s not our judgmental words that bring people to Jesus, but the love they see in us. Paul had a broken heart full of love for those who were not saved. In addition to love, there was integrity in Paul’s passion.

**The Integrity of Paul’s Passion**

Paul begins in verse one of Roman’s 9 with a testimony about his love for his fellow Jews.

**Strong Testimony** – His testimony is “the truth in Christ.” He doesn’t just say his is telling the truth, he calls on Jesus Himself to be a witness to what he is saying. He used strong language talking about the Jews in chapter 2 so the witness of Christ adds strength to his message.

**Serious Testimony** – Strength was needed because of the seriousness of what he was saying. “I am not lying.” Paul wanted it understood that his message is not one that he invented. He is not lying or exaggerating in his teaching or his love for his people. Paul’s seriousness shows the importance of the subject he is about to raise with the Jews...their eternal status having rejected their greatest blessing...the Messiah.

**Sincere Testimony** – All the strength and seriousness in the world means nothing if Paul is not sincere in what he said. Not only did Jesus testify to the truth of Paul’s message, his conscience did as well. Paul wants his readers to know that he is completely confident of what he writes and how he feels about them.

**Spirit-filled Testimony** – Paul concludes by saying he hasn’t set up his own standards and then agreed with them. It is the Holy Spirit who validates Paul’s message. Paul believes that if what he is writing were in any way false or misleading, the Holy Spirit would correct him.

## The Intensity of His Passion

By comparing the first verse in each chapter 9, 10 and 11...it is easy to see the intensity of Paul's passion. If we ever forget that the Jews need Jesus in the same way Gentiles do, then we've missed half of Paul's intended audience. Even though Paul is best known as the apostle to the Gentiles, he never lost the desire for his fellow Jews who needed to know Jesus.

**Sorrow** – Many men feel they should keep their emotions under control and never reveal sorrow or cry. Paul apparently had not heard this advice and never hesitated to express or show his feelings. He did so here because of his intense longing to see people saved.

**Grief** – What did it mean for Paul to say he had continual grief or sorrow? It doesn't mean he wept and agonized all day every day. It is the same thing he meant when he wrote, "rejoice always" and "pray without ceasing" in 1 Thessalonians 5. It means to live aware of joy, aware of God's nearness in prayer and he was aware of the Jews' destiny without Christ. Paul embraced the burden of the lost on a continual basis.

**Anguish** – Paul felt the burden for his fellow Jews at the deepest level of his being...in his heart. His burden was not just a matter of head knowledge...it was an emotional burden. The thought of people living and dying without Christ resulted in deep seated anguish for him.

**Love** – Paul's love was inconceivable in an amazing way. His love is something that is hard for us to understand. In verse 3 he says, "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people..." It sounds like he is saying that he would be willing to go to hell in the place of these people if they would accept Christ. What Paul is really saying here is, "I can't wish this, but if I could, I would wish to be cursed..." Paul had reached a point where he had taken on God's heart for people. He is expressing his awareness that people are going to perish without Christ and that he would be willing to die in their place if that were possible.

## The Identity of His Passion

Paul's passion is a result of the privileges the Jews had received from God.

**Adoption** – This term is usually applied to individual Christians but here Paul applies it to Israel. Many verses in the Old Testament tell how God chose Israel for Himself to enjoy a unique and privileged relationship with Him.

**Glory** – In the Old Testament, glory referred to the visible presence of God among His people. His glory appeared as a cloud filling the Tabernacle and then later filling the Temple. Ezekiel 10 and 11 tell how the glory of God left the Temple because of their sin. They lost the privilege of God's glory before the Messiah ever came.

**Covenants** – The covenants made with Abraham, Moses, David and the nation as a whole were the promises that bound God to Israel. No other people received unconditional promises from God like Jews.

**Promises** – In addition to the covenants, there were many additional promises made by God directly to and only to Israel.

**Fathers** – The “fathers” were the patriarchs...Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, perhaps even David...the heroes of the Old Testament. These are the forefathers of all Jews who’ve ever lived...men of faith with close personal relationships with God.

**Savior** – The greatest privilege of all was the Messiah...Jesus. The Savior of the world is a Jew...the son of David...the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). In rejecting Jesus, the Jews rejected the primary purpose of God calling them to be His people...so they would be a blessing to the entire world (Genesis 12:2-3).

The privileges of Israel and the passion of Paul leave us with two things to consider. First...our privileges...our heritage...our ritual can never save us. If God put aside the privileges of His chosen people because they rejected Christ, where does that leave the rest of us? Second...the lack of passion in our own lives. Seeing Paul’s broken heart and passion for the lost should help us have those same attitudes for the lost around us. No experience in your Christian life will touch your heart more than personally leading someone else to Christ. We should pray for God to remove the confidence we’ve placed in ourselves and replace it with a passion for the lost.