

“Theirs Is: Ours”

Scripture: Romans 9:1-5

Graphic: none

Key Verses: ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ^{5b}...and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Theme: Paul was utterly burdened with the desire for the Roman Christians to be saved...to them the promises of God were given and from them came Jesus, who fulfilled those promises.

1) Introduction

- a) This morning, we'll be looking at a text in Romans that I've never preached on before...you've probably never even heard a sermon on this text. In fact, I've probably read it a few times, although I can't remember when.
- b) And when I this passage carefully at the beginning of the week, I thought, "What in the world am I going to preach about for THIS thing!?"
- c) And so a read it again and again....still not much there.
- d) I put it aside and just let it ruminate (you know what that word means? – anyone?) for a while...and then I read it on last time and it made sense. Don't you LOVE when the Holy Spirit is allowed to work in our lives and we finally see something where before we thought there was nothing?
- e) I checked my sermon preaching information on Homiletics, which is a lectionary-based worship resource for more information about Romans 9...NOTHING! In over 25 years of preaching resources, not ONCE has that publication ever covered Romans 9:1-5. And so, I'm like, this is just perfect, Lord...I'm on my own.
- f) Needless to say, I'm pretty fired up to preach this morning and this simple text that has implication and application in our lives. It appears on the surface to have little to do with us Christians today, but as we look deeper, it has everything to do with Jesus' call to find within the heart of God a burden for those who are lost, especially those who have every chance to accept Christ as Lord and Savior but who do not...
- g) Is there someone in your life who doesn't know Jesus? If so, this sermon is for you today...because it was for me and for every one of us.
- h) Turn with me, please, to Romans Chapter 9...
- i) And we will read just 5 verses...I love when we can look at a shorter section because the less horizontally we have to move, the more we can go deeper vertically...and I might just preach longer...
- j) Let's pray...

2) Scripture

a) Read verse 1

- i) Truth! What is truth? We have such a relative view of truth. When Jesus was arrested and taken before Pilate, we read in John 18:37 *Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a*

*king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the **truth**. Everyone who belongs to the **truth** listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is **truth**?"*

- ii) What is truth? Have you ever seen a beach ball? I mean a really BIG beach ball...like the kind people like to throw at football games or wherever.
- iii) Picture the complete set of things that God knows to be true to be inside that enormous beach ball. Now, in order for this to work, we need to agree that God knows all things that are true. I mean, God knows the actual number of stars in the universe at any given moment (which is always changing) and he knows your actual shoe size. God knows what is true and what is not.
- iv) Everything outside the beach ball is NOT true...and this even includes things that we THINK are true which are not, and those things which we know are false.
- v) Paul says, "I am speaking the TRUTH in Christ." Then, he goes on to support that statement by saying, 1) I am not lying, and 2) my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.
- vi) Paul is saying that what he is about to tell us is in the set of things that is INSIDE the beach ball, confirmed to be so by the witness of Paul's conscience - his spirit witnessing with and in the Holy Spirit.
- vii) And you'll recall that the Holy Spirit connects our spirits with God so that we will know Him as our loving Father, but also intercedes for us when we don't have the words. And when we don't have full assurance that something is true or not, we have to rely on the Holy Spirit who gives us that understanding (when we listen – when we listen).
- viii) Now, without the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we may stumble upon the truth just like we might stumble upon a penny in the Kmart parking lot. Every squirrel finds a nut sometimes...
- ix) But without the Holy Spirit, we cannot KNOW for sure whether a thing is true. Our convictions cannot be confirmed without the presence of the Holy Spirit. We only think it might be true...
- x) When God's spirit and our spirits are connected, we can know the truth...
- xi) And so what Paul is about to say is something about which he is absolutely convicted. It's something that he knows to be true DEEP DOWN in the recesses of his spirit...
- xii) And here's what he knows as truth...

b) Read verses 2-3

- i) That's the truth! I have great SORROW and UNCEASING ANGUISH in my heart.
- ii) There have been MAYBE 1-2 times in my life when I would say that I have had great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. And even those times have been short lived. I have had an incredibly blessed life, and I praise God for that...often.
- iii) But I also know that there are people in this room this morning who have experienced, are experiencing, and will experience GREAT SORROW and UNCEASING ANUGUISH in your heart. I've said before that when my Dad died in 2002, the sorrow and anguish for me, personally, was nothing compared to the great sorrow and unceasing anguish my Mom experienced.

- iv) And there are things that some of you have been through that I can only sympathize about, and not empathize...I haven't been in your shoes.
- v) This is DEEP...and it's rooted in LOVE. When a spouse or child dies...our anguish is rooted in love.
- vi) Paul had a deep love for his Jewish brothers and sisters in Rome, the people that were in his family and from his 'hood. The people he knew in the community...
- vii) And because Paul had had a life-transforming encounter with Jesus Christ on that road to Damascus and had come to UNDERSTAND Jesus' command to go and tell everyone about Jesus, Paul's love for the people and his burden to tell them about Jesus put him in the most difficult situation in his life. He wanted more than anything in the world for those he knew to know the Savior of the world, Jesus.
- viii) And his conviction was so profound that he found himself thinking that there would no other way to truly save the people that I love except to trade places with those who are lost...to be "accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people."
- ix) Can you imagine the depth of the love and pain that Paul was feeling? That led him to think that he would give up his salvation in order for other people to be saved? Those he loved?
- x) Let me ask you the same question I asked myself this week: Do I want everyone I know (do you want everyone you know) to know the Savior of the world, Jesus?
- xi) And I had to be really honest with myself and repent, because I think we have to admit that there are times in our lives (maybe more often than we think) when we're not sure if that's what we want. And we aren't obedient to Jesus' command. And we don't share our faith and don't pray for people. Not that we don't want people to know Christ, but we want someone else to introduce them and to help the relationships grow. We want the fellowship without the fieldwork.
- xii) Now, don't get discouraged on me, because the good stuff is coming...
- xiii) This is a sermon on evangelism, I think, and so let's see why Paul is so burdened...
- xiv) Speaking of the Jews...

c) Read verses 4-5a

- i) The New International Version says, "Theirs is the adoption as sons...Theirs the divine glory...THEIRS the covenants...THEIRS the receiving of the law...THEIRS the temple worship...THEIRS the promises...THEIRS the patriarchs..."
- ii) Everything that God gave to the human race he gave to the people of Israel.
- iii) The adoption into the family God came first to the Israelites. They were cutoff from God because of Original Sin and God gave them a way to be adopted into the family by law and sacrifice.
- iv) The divine glory was given to them through Moses and his encounters with Almighty God in the mountain and through the receiving of the Ten Commandments.
- v) The covenants through Noah and Abraham – to never again destroy the earth through water like in the days of Noah...to give Abraham more decedents than grains of sand...

- vi) They received the law so that they would know how to deal with their sin and have a restored relationship with YHWH.
- vii) God gave the people of Israel a place to worship Him...a temple! God raised up the Levites to teach the people how to worship him. How awesome is it when God gives us a place in which we KNOW, even before we go there, that we will be reminded of the presence of God. We did A LOT of worshipping this week at Family Bible Camp. And Dr. Bob Tuttle reminded us that worship is anything which reminds us and helps us to experience the living presence of Almighty God. The Jewish people HAD that...for real.
- viii) They had the promises from God...that God would never leave them or forsake them. That He would be their God and they would be God's people. The precious promises of God to be Abba Father to them...to us.
- ix) God gave them great men and women of God to guide them and lead them...David, Solomon, the Judges and Kings...people that God would use to shape a nation of people into a royal priesthood.
- x) God gave them EVERYTHING they needed to be in relationship with Him by faith and they didn't get it! The Law simply couldn't do what God knew it should because sin hijacked the Law and made it worthless for salvation and restoration.
- xi) Paul KNEW what God had done throughout all time for HIS people – Paul's people – but he also knew that it wasn't enough.
- xii) And so Paul's GREAT SORROW and UNCEASING ANGUISH was burning in his heart because there were people who he knew had everything that needed but refused to receive what God had given them in order to be saved.
- xiii) So many times in America, in Chautauqua County...in Panama, we assume (maybe rightly) that people have heard about God's love and God's promises...
- xiv) We have provided a place for people to come worship. We even assume that they know the stories about how God has worked in the world throughout history.
- xv) And yet, people think the church is a joke and God is a jerk because He makes bad things happen to good people. And people have the audacity to claim that things like 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina were caused by God. This is nothing new...just ask any of your unsaved friends and family sometime what they think of God and you'll find out that what I'm saying is basically true.
- xvi) But God has an answer...Paul knows the truth (he said it earlier)...
- xvii) Verse 5...

d) Read verses 5b

- i) For Paul, and for us, the answer is Jesus Christ. And that answer is not some tired religion – we need to get off religion and into a relationship. We need to stop being fans of the church and being followers of a man.
- ii) Jesus came to set the Israelites free from the bondage of the Law, which didn't work anyway because it was hijacked by sin. God didn't send Jesus, primarily for the Gentiles. Jesus came primarily to the Jews.
- iii) Jesus was a Jewish man, probably had long hair, a beard, a hook nose, and looked like any middle-eastern man. Born a Jew...died a Jew.

- iv) Yet, when God sent Jesus to earth, fully divine and fully human, He did that so that what was meant for the Jews, God's chosen people, would then be made available to ALL people because that's the way God rolls.
- v) And because we are grafted on the stump that Jesus grow out of, we are part of the family tree...
- vi) And so now, as brothers and sisters with Christ and with each other, OURS TOO is the adoption...OURS is the divine glory...OURS is the relationship and the covenants and the fulfillment of the Law...OURS is the worship...OURS are the promises that God will never leave us or forsake us...OURS are the shoulders of giants in the faith who have come before us to teach us and walk us to Christ...

3) Application

- a) Do you see it? If all those things that Paul listed God gave to the people of Israel...and those are the things that gave him to greatest sorrow and unceasing anguish for those he knew God wanted to love...and if because of Jesus, all those things are now ours...
- b) How can we not pray for God to give us great sorrow and unceasing anguish for those in our lives who are not saved?
- c) Maybe you're sitting here today and have to admit that you have never brought another person to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- d) Don't beat yourself up about that, but don't dismiss it either. Start with your own children, if you have them. Ask them, if they are old enough, if they have accepted Jesus as their Savior...these are you kids! Talk to them.
- e) I'll admit to you this morning that I have not brought as many people as I would like, and you might expect in a pastor, to Christ personally. But that doesn't mean that I'm willing to give up on myself and those around me.
- f) I pray the God will give every single one of us here today, not only a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, but great sorrow and unceasing anguish for the lost and unsaved.
- g) When Pastor Joe Pascoe comes to Campfire for Christ, I KNOW that he will be bringing us a message about evangelism because God has gifted him with great sorrow and unceasing anguish for the lost...make sure you come to hear him...

4) Conclusion

- a) A quote from Interpretation Commentary: *Regardless of denomination, evangelism retains for Christians its strong and rightful appeal. The reason is that it is not tangential to Christian faith but rooted in the apostolic identity of the church. From baptism and Sunday school, Christians are shaped by a biblical narrative that enjoins them to make disciples of all nations. The risen Jesus delivers his great commission on a mountain in Galilee. Peter stands up on Pentecost, and 3,000 persons are said to hear his summons to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And Paul travels the roads of the Mediterranean world on three journeys to proclaim God's salvation to the Gentiles. As the activity that corresponds to these narratives, Christianity is unthinkable without evangelism.*
- b) It's who we are...it's who we are called to be...it's who Christ expects us to be for the Kingdom...
- c) May God give us a burden for the lost and give us to courage to do something about it...
- d) Let's pray...