A Heart Broken for the Lost

Romans 9:1–5

Big Idea: Those who truly understand sovereign grace do not become cold toward the lost; they become burdened for their salvation.

Intro

- Ask: Think of one person you love who remains outside Christ.
  What happens in your heart when that name comes to mind?
- Romans 8 ends on a mountaintop-nothing can separate believers from Christ's love.
- Romans 9 opens in a valley-with Paul weeping over those separated from Christ.
- A person may live near a hospital and die untreated, own a Bible and never submit to its Christ, or grow up around the gospel and never believe it.

Highlight the emotional turn from Romans 8 to Romans 9. Paul's theology of sovereign grace did not freeze his heart; it deepened his concern for those outside Christ.

Paul's sorrow was SINCERE – vv. 1–2

- Paul establishes sincerity through Christ, conscience, and the Holy Spirit.
- His sorrow is great and unceasing. Confidence and grief can coexist.
- Lostness has names, faces, histories, and relationships.
- QUOTE–Thomas Watson: "Sinners in scarlet are not objects of envy, but pity."

Illustration: A photograph on the table turns an anonymous crowd into names and faces of family; Paul refuses to speak of Israel as a statistic because these are his brothers and kinsmen.

- Individual application: write one name and pray specifically.
- Family application: speak personally about repentance and faith rather than assuming family culture saves.
- Church application: treat unbelievers as souls needing mercy, not merely as cultural opponents.

Let the Lostness of People Become PERSONAL

Practical response: identify one person at home, one in your regular routines, or one in the community; write the name, pray daily for seven days, and ask for one natural gospel opportunity.

Transition: Paul's burden was more than inward feeling. Verse 3 reveals how far his love was willing to go.

Paul's burden was SACRIFICIAL – v. 3

- Note *Paul* would run the world. He even went so far as to say he would instantly take their place in torment to see them saved (Rom. 9:3).
- Do you see the irony? It is intentional. Someone had already taken their place in torment. Yet they rejected their Messiah. And if they rejected the Son of God, why would they accept the same gift from a little evangelist from Tarsus? This led Paul to list seven advantages enjoyed by the Hebrew children of Abraham, none of which compelled the majority of Jews to see the truth.
- Paul's wish is deliberately extreme and theologically impossible; it reveals sacrificial love.
- Neither Moses nor Paul could bear another sinner's guilt.
- Jesus alone actually bore the curse for sinners.

Application: Compassion costs time, comfort, attention, and courage. Pray for others by name and create room for honest spiritual conversations.

Let Compassion Move You Toward SACRIFICE

Practical response: Make room for sacrificial witness through unhurried listening, purposeful hospitality, patient follow-up, clear gospel speech, and persistent prayer.

Transition: Paul now explains why Israel's unbelief grieves him so deeply: no nation had received greater spiritual privileges.

Israel's privileges were STAGGERING – vv. 4–5

Paul lists **seven advantages** enjoyed by the Hebrew children of Abraham, none of which compelled the majority of Jews to see the truth.

- "***Israelites***"–When God established His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12), He promised to bless generations of people without regard for merit. In other words, the descendants of Abraham would receive blessing and privileges simply because they were born of Hebrew parents–a privilege no one could possibly earn or even choose. This was an unconditional covenant.
- "***Adoption as sons***"–When God interceded for Israel and freed them from slavery in Egypt, He claimed them as His children (Exod. 4:22).
- ***shekinah*** (God's Glory) remained above the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple (Exod. 40:34–38).
- "***The covenants***"–When God brought Israel out of Egypt to establish them in the land of Canaan, it was to fulfill His **unconditional covenant with Abraham** (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–21; 17:1–22). At the time, He established a **conditional covenant**: *"'But if you truly listen to his voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries."* (Exodus 23:22, LSB). When they reached the border of Canaan, a remnant urged the majority to trust God, but the majority balked at the size and strength of the inhabitants. Consequently, the entire company had to wander in the wilderness until the unbelieving generation had passed away (Num. 13:25–33; 14:33–38). Forty years later, Israel claimed the first portion of their Promised Land in faith, at which time God reestablished and clarified His covenant–again **conditioned** upon their obedience (Deut. 28). Later still, God established another **unconditional covenant with King David**, promising that only his descendants would hold legitimate claim to the throne of Israel (2 Sam. 7:12–16). And during one of Israel's darkest periods, the Lord promised to establish a "***new covenant***" (Jer. 31:31–34). **Whether the covenant depended upon man's obedience (as in Sinai) or whether God acted unilaterally (as with Abraham), the blessing came to God's people, the Jews.**
- ***"The giving of the Law***"–When God established Israel as a nation, He gave them a perpetual code of conduct that reflected His holy character (Deut. 5:1–22). The laws of other nations came and went with the whims of selfish kings. No other nation or race could claim the privilege of absolute truth as the basis for justice.
- "***The temple service***"–When God gave His people a code of conduct, He also provided a means of restoring them when they inevitably failed to keep it (Exod. 25–30). He established the temple as a means for men and women to approach Him, and He entrusted its care to His covenant people.
- "***The promises***"–When God chastised Israel, He also gave them hope: the promise of a Messiah, who would be the mediator of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34).

These seven advantages illustrate God's perpetual faithfulness compared to Israel's long history of stubborn rebellion.

Were it not for a faithful minority within the nation at key moments in their history, Israel would have been lost entirely. Furthermore, this quick inventory of Israel's blessing and privilege underscores their lack of excuse for failing to believe. The unbelieving majority ignored the mountain of evidence before them and *chose* not to trust God, proving that their unbelief is a moral issue, not an intellectual one. Ironically, they turned their unique relationship with God into an idol–again mistaking the gift for the Giver–supposing their heritage would save them apart from faith.

These were real privileges. They were not spiritualized. They did not automatically produce salvation. Christian family, church attendance, baptism, ministry, and biblical knowledge cannot replace faith.

Quote–John Flavel: "There is no seeing or conversing with God, in the greatest plenty and purity of ordinances, without faith."

Illustration: A person may own the prescribed medicine, read the label, and live beside the pharmacy, yet remain untreated because the medicine is never taken.

Proximity to gospel privileges is not possession of Christ.

Church: We honor God's purposes for Israel AND carry the gospel to Jew and Gentile.

Never Confuse Spiritual Privilege with SAVING FAITH

Thank God for every privilege, examine whether you personally rest in Christ, speak to children about conversion rather than assumption, and use the church's privileges to point others to the Savior.

Conclusion and Response

Righteousness is not inherited from family, achieved through works, or earned through religion.

Righteousness is received through faith in Christ.

Return to one name. Believers should commit to seven days of prayer and one appropriate gospel step. Religious but unconverted hearers should abandon inherited confidence and come personally to Christ. Paul could only wish to bear the curse; Jesus really bore our sim upon Himself on the cross of Calvary.