

Does God Keep His Promises?? PT. 1

Romans 9:1-13

Romans 9:1-13 NKJV - "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. 6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

- Romans 9 seems like an odd pendulum swing. Having taken us from the heights of glory regarding the understanding of God's love and the life of the Spirit, Paul not goes into deep sorrow. From chapters 1-8, Paul expounded and argued of man's desperate need to solve the problems of sin and death, how the laws of the Old Covenant and man made solutions were powerless to help us, and how that need was met by God through the glorious provision of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- So it seems almost a random tangent that in Romans 9-11, Paul focuses entirely on Israel. Yet, if you slow down and take the time to work through the text and its meaning, not what we want it to say but what it truly says, there is no random jump. In fact, Paul is once again anticipating arguments from his detractors. These chapters are still part of his overall message that salvation comes by grace through faith.
- As he expounded about the inability of the Old Covenant Law to save, spoke of the salvation available through the Gospel and how we can be secured and made sure because of Jesus' love, he always anticipated the questions of those who would go against him. In chapter 6 he anticipated the arguments of those who would say "Paul, if you preach so much grace and forgiveness like you say, it will lead people to sin!" and he showed them how they were wrong. Then in chapter 7, he answered those who still held that the Law, be it the Old Covenant or man made laws, could offer some hope of salvation or are necessary for a spiritual life, and showed them how the law cannot accomplish the life of the Spirit. Then in chapter 8, he spoke of what the life of the Spirit is like and how we can be secured in God's love no matter what comes our way because of the New Covenant we live in.
- He's still doing that in chapter 9-11. In these chapters, he's going to look at Israel's past history in chapter 9, present rejection in chapter 10, and future restoration in chapter 11. and in chapter

9, anticipating certain questions that would go against what he's established in chapter 8, he shows how they have no merit.

- He seeks to answer two possible questions from two groups of people:
 1. **From the Jews they would ask "What about us? What about the promises God gave our nation? Does this New Covenant mean they are forfeit?"**
 2. **The second is connected to it "What about the Jews? Did God's promise fail them? They were chosen, and now you saw they've been set aside to build the church? Will He do the same to us someday?"**
- Paul is going to spend the next three chapters covering these questions to show God does not break His promises, that Israel's history actually magnifies His faithfulness, in all things God is righteous and just, and that He is not done with Israel. This is also important because Paul, for all intents and purposes, had been labeled public enemy #1.
- It's important to realize that in Rome, there were a lot of Jewish Christian believers. No doubt, word from home meant that Paul did not have a sparkling reputation. If you were with us in our study of Acts on Wednesday night, we saw how his relationship with the Jerusalem church, its leaders and Jewish believers there was tense at best, and outright confrontational at worst. Even worse was his relationship with the Jewish leaders at the temple, since he had been one of them. Added to this, Romans was written after he had his missionary journeys where the reports would have been he caused problems in the synagogues and it was normal for the Jews to hunt him down, lie about him, try to get him imprisoned, and so much more. The reports of Paul were those of a traitor, a miscreant, a lawbreaker, to name a possible few.
- So in these first few verses, Paul is setting the record straight. He is no traitor. If anything, Paul was the greatest patriot anyone had ever witnessed! What he says in these verses shows the extent of his love and sorrow for his fellow countrymen, and it is a great example to us of what having a heart like Jesus is like.
 1. **Romans 9:1-2 NKJV "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart."**
 2. **Romans 9:1-3 NLT - "With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. 2 My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief"**
 3. **Romans 9:1-3 AMP - "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me [enlightened and prompted] by the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart."**
- Paul makes clear everything he is saying is true, with Jesus as his witness, which was not something he'd say lightly. He expresses the sorrow that fills his heart when he thinks of his country not knowing Jesus. He knows Israel rejected their Messiah, as he'll expound on that soon. But their continual rejection brings him the deepest of griefs. The meaning of the words in the original language is that of mega sadness, and continual distress. His heart for his people, his desire they experience the freedom in Christ and believe in Jesus, is such that just thinking about it caused him sorrow and pain.

1. **Romans 10:1 NKJV - "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel[fn] is that they may be saved."**

- This is not the heart of a traitor, but of a true patriot. His greatest wish was to see every person in his country believe the Gospel and be saved. He is expressing the furthest depths of his heart so they can see that whatever accusations they heard about him aren't true. This is a man who loved his country, and wanted the best thing for it, that they would all believe in Jesus and experience the entire of the freedom and power from the law and sin that he spent 8 chapters explaining to us.
- In fact, the next verse shows just how far Paul is willing to go if it means that his people would believe in Jesus.

1. **Romans 9:3 NKJV - "For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,"**

2. **Romans 9:4 NLT - "for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them."**

3. **Romans 9:4 AMP - "For [if it were possible] I would wish that I myself were accursed, [separated, banished] from Christ for the sake [of the salvation] of my brothers, my natural kinsmen,"**

- Paul is saying in no unclear words, that if him willingly losing his salvation, giving it up and losing Heaven, losing his connection to Jesus, losing everything and instead suffering the fires of hell itself, meant that everyone in his nation would believe, he'd do it.
- How far are you willing to go to bring the gospel to others? How much are you willing to sacrifice personally? Would you give up your salvation if it meant everyone in your nation would be saved? Some might try to sound spiritual and say "of course!". But if the opportunity came, would you?
- Maybe if you're a parent and when I ask that question you think of your children, and you go "I would for my kids salvation!" But that isn't the question. Would you give up everything, your chance at eternal life, and instead choose suffering and judgment, not just for your kids and people you like, but for the adulterer, for the murderer, for the thief, for the person who hurt, for the person who lied about you, for the person who did you wrong?
- In all of the Bible, there is one person in the Old Testament who is recorded as saying the same thing. Moses.
- In Exodus 32, the people of Israel, tired of waiting for Moses to come down from the mountain, after having rejected out of fear the chance of meeting God themselves, built a golden calf and worshiped it. When Moses came down he found them participating idolatry and gross worship and activities. He got those who had remained faithful and not participated, and had them attack those who did, resulting in 3,000 deaths of those who participated in such gross acts.
- Yet, when he met with God, and God said He would wipe the nation out, and start a new nation from Moses's lineage, this was his prayer.

1. **Exodus 32:32 NKJV - "“Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.””**

- Moses said "spare them, and if to accomplish that, remove my name from the book of life. Let me take the punishment for the people."

- At that moment, Moses was a picture of someone, that same person whose heart echoed in Paul's as Paul prayed so similarly. It points to Jesus.
 1. **Romans 5:6-8 NKJV - "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**
 2. **Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV - "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."**
 3. **Galatians 3:13 NKJV - "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")"**
 4. **2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV - "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**
- The heart of Paul that was willing to surrender his very salvation and accept damnation if it meant his nation would be saved is the heart of Jesus, that had so transformed Paul. This is a great application for us, to ask ourselves what are we willing to give up so that others might be saved.
- **Warren Wiersbe - "What a man this Paul was! He was willing to stay out of heaven for the sake of the saved (Phil. 1:22–24), and willing to go to hell for the sake of the lost."**
 1. This not advocating that you, as some do, neglect your family under the premise of "I need to serve God!". Because then you may lead your family to reject Him out of bitterness! Which is very counter productive!
 2. But it is an exhortation for us to reject things like ease and comfort. To be willing to sacrifice a night out with friends in exchange for a late night visiting someone who needs it. To sacrifice some sleep so that we can spend time in fellowship with God in the quiet. To realize it may cost us our next trip because we used the money to support missions. I'm not saying go empty the bank account to give, to many churches do these callings for filthy gain.
 3. What I am saying is that ministry does require sacrifice. It isn't comfortable. And it requires a heart that is called and given over to the Lord.
 4. A lot of people love the idea of working at a church. But once they are inside, they quickly become disillusioned. Do you know why? Because they see it as a profession, as the next step in a career. There was a sentiment amongst people that I came to really hate when I was a youth pastor. It was that to many people saw leading youth as a stepping stone to become something more. Youth Pastor was the temporary job to become a Real Pastor.
 5. That's sickening. That's outrageous. That reveals a heart that is looking at ministry as a corporation to be promoted in. And when they step in and realize it is not like that, they will either force the church to become like a corporate entity, or they will become embittered.

- Paul's heart is that of a person who understood the depths of God's love for people. He was willing to give everything he was for the sake that others may know Christ.
 1. **A great example of this is Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, and Roger Youderian. Who went to preach the gospel to the Auca tribe in Ecuador. They were an unreached people group and it was a dangerous mission. They went in slow, dropping gifts from a plane to make them feel safe when they saw the plane. Then they landed at a distance and slowly tried to build trust by exchanging gifts. But all their labor ended in their deaths when the Auca warriors speared them to death on January 8, 1956.**
 2. **Yet, their sacrifice impacted the world, and invigorated mission's work across the globe. But even more so, the work with the Aucas did not go without fruit. The Aucas realized these men had carried guns, and did not use them when they were attacked. These men chose to die for the gospel rather than defend themselves and set the efforts back. Because of this, it allowed Elizabeth Elliot, Jim's widow, and other women and missionaries to bring the Gospel in and the conversion to faith of the Aucas.**
- This was Paul's heart for his people, Israel. With that heart, he wanted to show them the extent of God's plan, that He had not forgotten them or abandoned them, and therefore prove that, for those of use who now belonged to the New Covenant, we have nothing to fear, and can remain secured in God's love and salvation.
 1. **Romans 9:4-5 NKJV - "who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."**
- Paul now begins to talk about the nation of Israel's history and wonderful election In fact, this makes his sorrow and pain all the more severe, because he considered how God has blessed them with the great privilege of being His own special people.
 1. **Israel was adopted by God as his own special people (Exodus 4:22-23)**
 2. **God gave them His glory (Shekinah) in the tabernacle & temple (Exodus 40:34-38 & 1 Kings 8:10-11)**
 3. **God gave Israel His covenants: First to Abraham, then additional ones to Moses & David.**
 4. **He also gave them the Law, to govern their political, social, and religious life.**
 5. **He gave them the ministry of the tabernacle and temple.**
 6. **He gave them the promises and patriarchs.**
 7. **All ultimately pointing to and the greatest blessing He gave was that Jesus was born a Jew, in Israel, that God came and dwelt with His people! No other nation had any of these blessings.**
- This entire spiritual legacy makes their unbelief so much more problematic. They had everything they needed, and yet rejected their Messiah. Does this rejection mean His promises were forfeit? Did God's plan for them fail? Did they divert God's plans to where He could not accomplish them? Paul's resounding answer to all of it will be NO! He will take the next few

chapters to explain how God is faithful, can be trusted, and is not done with Israel, and in the process encourage us that we are secured in Him!

- Notice that Paul also makes a strong declaration here of the deity of Christ.
 1. **Romans 9:5 NKJV - "of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."**
- Some have tried to change the structure of the sentence in order to say that Paul is speaking of God the Father, but the language and grammar structure of the original language argue that contrary. This is a strong declaration of the deity of Jesus.
- Why would Paul have that there? Because He's about to make clear that regardless of what man does, or how unfaithful we can be, God is always faithful. Jesus is always faithful. And He keeps His promises!
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