“I AM TELLING THE TRUTH”
Romans 9:1-3
January 22, 2017

INTRODUCTION: NASB “I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.”

Paul writes with a burdened heart, as one whose heart is literally breaking in two, because his own brethren, those so near and dear to him, had refused to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their own Savior and Messiah.

It is not without significance that this passage follows hard upon Chapter 8 of Romans; for only a man who knows the Spirit-filled life of Romans 8 can appreciate the evangelistic heartthrob of Romans 9.

Also, I have come to believe, through my own experience and the testimony of my own efforts, that you never win people to the Lord unless somehow you develop, down in your heart, a genuine, real-life burden and compassion that they come to know the Lord. If the Lord Jesus had to shed His blood on the cross of Calvary that we might be saved, then we who would win souls to Him must expect to have same kind of burden and compassion of heart in order to win them.
SPECIAL STATEMENT:

“The longer I am in the faith, the further removed I seem to become, to those for whom Christ died.”

I must become intentional with sharing my faith and inviting my friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors. (96% come this way!)

‘MELTED SAINTS’

“The crying need today is for believers in Christ to have a burden for people who are on their way to hell. They need someone who will lovingly urge them to flee from the wrath to come. When we read Paul’s words in our text for today, we sense his great compassion for his fellow Israelites who were lost.

George Sweeting, in his book *The No-Guilt Guide to Witnessing*, tells that during a serious shortage of currency in Great Britain, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) selected a group of men to search for silver to meet the need.

Several months later they filed this report: ‘We have searched the empire in vain to find silver. To our dismay, we found none except in the great cathedrals, where the saints are constructed of choice silver.’

When he heard that discouraging report, Cromwell issued this order: ‘Let’s melt down the saints and
‘I told you the truth in Christ’ – speaks of his union with Him, Paul’s position in Christ. Paul had a testimony based on a change in his own life.
“I am telling you the truth as a Christian” – the thought here is that an experience with Christ is inseparably associated with a passion for souls.

What a transition – earlier the Apostle Paul had his confidence and security in his racial heritage from Abraham, in his legalistic performance of ceremony, and in adherence to rabbinical traditions; now his security was in Christ alone.

Philippians 3:4-9
“though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the
righteousness which is from God by faith”

Like the Son of God, Paul knew he had to assure unbelieving Jews of his genuine love for them. He had to convince them that he proclaimed the gospel as a friend who wanted to protect and rescue them, not as an enemy who sought to condemn and destroy. He had to show them his heart before he could give them his theology.

B. THE SELF-CONSCIOUS. 1b

“my conscience also bearing me witness” – inner voice; the consciousness of God coincides with the Spirit of God in man. Our constant prayer to God should be that He would give us such a true expression of Christ that our conscience may be ever sensitive to the needs of the lost.

Acts 23:1
“Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, ‘Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.’”

2 Corinthians 1:12
“For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom...
but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.”

C. THE SPIRIT OF GOD. 1c

“in the Holy Spirit” – a conscience that is subject to the Holy Spirit is a conscience surrendered to God’s Word.

“My conscience is captive to the Word of God.”

Martin Luther

The Spirit’s prompting will either commend or condemn what we are doing, or are planning to do.

Paul is saying, “If you could examine the motives of my heart, as my own conscience gives testimony to my heart, and as the Holy Spirit Himself bears His witness to the concern of my heart, you would recognize that I have a vibrant, live burden that people come to know Christ as their Savior.”

Paul’s sincerity of passion could stand in the light of scrutiny. If only we could stand in the holy presence of God, Who knows the hearts of men, and have the Holy Spirit say of us, “That individual is actually and literally concerned that people be saved.”
II. THE SORROW OF PAUL’S PASSION FOR THE LOST. 2

A. SPEAKS OF PAIN. 2a

“It that I have great sorrow” – pain or grief; his heart was hurting for souls; broken-hearted as though they were dead; mourning. This text indicates that every day the weight (burden) grows heavier and heavier. Which of us dares to face the testimony of Paul without a sense of guilt? Often our experience is just the opposite. In the glow of our first love we were eager to win the lost; we prayed; we watched; we sought. But as the days have passed, so the weight of that early passion has lifted, until now we are careless and sometimes light-hearted about the whole matter. We become absorbed with things, instead of being concerned for men and women. We find it much easier to escape into the administrative and organizational aspects of the Word of God.

Paul’s statement and suffering came from being “in Christ.” His sorrow was merely an expression of His Lord’s grief.
EXAMPLE OF SORROW OF PASSION

John Knox prayed, “Oh, God, give me Scotland or I die.” When he was old he was led to the pulpit and placed there. Knox would stand there and begin to pray for the lost in Scotland and almost shook the pulpit to pieces as he interceded for them.

David Brainerd wrote, “I was making my way through the snow to my place of study and God burdened my heart for the Indians. I prayed for them until sweat poured from my body.”

It was like a fire burning inside for souls.

1 Corinthians 9:16
“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”

III. THE SACRIFICAL HEART OF PAUL’S PASSION FOR THE LOST. 3

A. SEEN IN HIS CHRIST-LIKE LIFE. 3a

“I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ” – it is as though Christ is feeling through Paul. To be “accursed” (anathema) means to be

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damned. Paul felt this way because he was “in Christ” and Christ felt this way.

Doomed and separated; Paul confesses that he is willing to be severed and separated from Christ and spend eternity in hell if that is what it would require to get people saved. Some of you argue that’s impossible. I know the promises of Romans 8.

B. SPEAKS OF PERSISTENCE. 2b

“continual grief in my heart” – unceasing; consuming; it is as though Paul cannot find words to convey his feelings.

To say that unconverted people around us do not concern us is to reveal that our Christianity is nothing more than head knowledge, which “puffs up” into proud orthodoxy.

Don’t try to analyze this statement for it was not spoken under the coolness and calmness of logic. Here is the eruption of a man who is so in love with lost people that he loses all sense of reason and logic, and his heart bursts out into compassionate and substitutionary flames and says, “I would be willing to go to hell to reach them”
Exodus 32:32
“Yet now, if You will forgive their sin —
but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your
book which You have written.”

B. SEEN IN HIS CHRIST-LIKE LOVE.
3b

“my brethren, my countrymen
(relatives) according to the flesh”

Mom
Dad
Buddy
Barbara
Mary
Norman
Freddy

CONCLUSION: William Booth, the powerful
soul-winner and founder of the Salvation Army,
was once asked, “Do you think you have the best
witnessing school in the world?” Booth replied,
“No, I don’t think my methods are the best. I think
the best method of giving people a burden for lost
souls would be to take them to the devil’s hell and
allow them to experience what it is to be lost in hell,
separated from God for an eternity in the fire that
could never be quenched. Then, I believe that men
would truly have a burden.”