

Extra Sermon Resources

Sunday, September 20, 2026

When in Romans pt 23

Christlike Love Endures Grief with Hope

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

"I am telling the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."

ROMANS 9:1-5

SERMON SUMMARY

As we enter Romans 9–11, Paul addresses deep, complex theological themes surrounding God's sovereignty, predestination, and His covenant promises to Israel. Yet, before diving into high doctrine, Paul begins with profound personal heartbreak. Despite being repeatedly opposed, rejected, and physically attacked by his fellow countrymen throughout his ministry, Paul harbors no bitterness or moral superiority. Instead, his heart is filled with great sorrow and unceasing anguish for those who are far from God.

Paul's willingness to hypothetically be cut off from Christ for the sake of his people mirrors the selfless heart of Jesus—who was actually cut off on the cross so that sinners could be brought near. Loving people who reject Jesus, especially those closest to us, brings real emotional pain. However, when our hearts grow weary, we are called to look to Christ for inspiration, anchor our peace in God, and allow the Holy Spirit to continually refill us with His unrelenting, hope-filled love.

SERMON FOCUS & KEY POINTS

Christlike love endures grief with hope for those near to us but far from God.

KEY POINTS:

1. Gospel Compassion vs. Moral Superiority: True gospel concern never looks like judgment or self-righteousness; it looks like a broken heart that longs for others to know the joy and security of salvation in Jesus.

Extra Sermon Resources

2. Love That Endures Rejection: Despite being persecuted and chased out of cities by his own countrymen, Paul's response was not resentment, but unceasing anguish and earnest desire for their redemption.
3. A Heart Shaped by the Cross: Paul's willingness to be "accursed" for his brothers reflects the supernatural work of the Spirit, pointing directly to Jesus, who truly bore the curse for us.
4. Anchoring Peace in the Sovereign God: When we experience heartbreak over loved ones who resist Christ, we must bring our anxiety to God in prayer, receiving the peace that surpasses understanding (Philippians 4:4–7).
5. Refilled by the Holy Spirit: Human willpower eventually runs dry when facing repeated rejection. To persist in love, we must continually ask the Lord to pour His unconditional love into our hearts fresh every day.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Gospel Heart vs. Moral Superiority: Pastor Chris pointed out that true gospel concern looks like a broken heart, not moral superiority or judgment. How can we guard our hearts against feeling self-righteous toward those who do not follow Jesus?
2. Loving Through Rejection: Knowing that Paul was repeatedly opposed and physically attacked by his fellow countrymen (such as in Acts 14), how does his expression of "unceasing anguish" in Romans 9:2–3 highlight the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in his life?
3. The Pain of Brokenness: Have you ever experienced heartbreak when a friend, family member, or loved one rejected Christ? How did you navigate that grief without closing off your heart?
4. Running Low on Love: It is easy to build emotional walls or "run out of love" when people burn us or resist our efforts to share the gospel. Where do you currently feel weary in loving someone who is far from God, and how can you rely on God's strength rather than your own?
5. Sustaining Hope in God: Read Philippians 4:4–7. How does placing our ultimate hope in God's sovereign character—rather than immediate human responses—give us the peace and endurance we need to keep praying for others?

Extra Sermon Resources

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

DAY 1: A HEART FOR THE LOST

Read: Romans 9:1–3; Luke 19:41–44

Reflect: Before Paul dives into deep theological arguments in Romans 9, he opens his heart. Despite all the pain and opposition he experienced, he carried unceasing sorrow for his people. Jesus expressed this same heart when He wept over Jerusalem. When we look at neighbors, co-workers, or family members who do not know Jesus, our primary reaction should not be frustration or judgment, but deep, Christlike compassion.

Question: How would your daily interactions change if you viewed people far from God with gospel compassion rather than annoyance or judgment?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, break my heart for what breaks Yours. Remove any pride or judgment from my attitude, and fill me with genuine sorrow and love for those in my life who do not yet know Jesus.

DAY 2: ENDURING REJECTION WITH GRACE

Read: Acts 14:19–23; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

Reflect: Paul didn't write Romans 9 from an ivory tower; he wrote it after being repeatedly chased, criticized, and stoned by the very people he grieved for. Humanly speaking, it makes sense to put up walls and walk away when people hurt us. But supernatural love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." When we run out of love in our own strength, God invites us to come to Him to be filled again.

Question: Is there someone who has hurt or rejected you whom God is calling you to keep loving and praying for?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You endured ultimate rejection on the cross for my sake. When I feel weary or hurt by others, give me Your grace to keep the doors of my heart open and to continue showing Your love.

DAY 3: EXCHANGE YOUR ANXIETY FOR PEACE

Read: Philippians 4:4–7; Psalm 34:17–18 **Reflect:** Carrying concern for loved ones who refuse to follow Jesus can weigh heavily on our souls. If we hold onto that burden alone, it turns into crippling anxiety. God does not call us to carry this weight in our own strength. Instead, He invites us to bring every prayer and petition to Him with thanksgiving, trusting that His peace will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Question: What specific anxiety or heartbreak regarding a loved one do you need to hand over to God today?

Extra Sermon Resources

Prayer: Lord God, I bring my broken heart and my worries about my loved ones to You today. Take my anxiety and replace it with Your peace that surpasses all human understanding. Guard my mind as I trust in Your goodness.

DAY 4: FILLED WITH UNFAILING LOVE

Read: Romans 5:1–5; 1 John 4:19

Reflect: We cannot give away what we do not have. If we rely on our own emotional reserves, we will eventually run out of patience and love for difficult people. But Romans 5:5 reminds us that God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We love because He first loved us while we were still sinners. When you feel dry, turn to the source of unconditional love.

Question: In what areas of your life or ministry do you feel like a "dry sponge," needing God to pour His love into you again?

Prayer: Holy Spirit, I am empty in my own strength, but You are limitless. Pour the Father's love fresh into my heart today so that I can reflect His kindness and patience to those around me.

DAY 5: PERSISTING IN THE GREAT COMMISSION

Read: Matthew 28:18–20; Galatians 6:9

Reflect: In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus reminds us that seed falls on many types of soil—some grows quickly and fades, some gets choked out, but some lands on good soil and produces a rich harvest. Our calling is not to guarantee how people respond, but to faithfully plant seeds, show love, and share the truth. Do not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.

Question: What is one practical way you can plant a seed of gospel love or truth in someone's life this week?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for promising to be with me always, even to the end of the age. Give me endurance, courage, and hope as I share Your truth and live out Your love in my community. Amen.