

Verse by Verse: Romans 9:1-3

By Lloyd Anderson

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That might be a blessing and a spiritual enrichment to your own heart. Sometime ago, I spent just a little while in the ninth chapter of the New Testament Book of Romans and I was impressed so vividly with that which I found contained and verses 1 to 3. And it may be wise to take our Bibles this morning and share together for just a few moments the truth that comes to us out of Romans Chapter 9. Now, I'm sure that most of us recognize that the ninth chapter of the Book of Romans is a chapter which forms a part of the parenthesis in this wonderful New Testament book on spiritual justification. You remember up until Chapter 9, the Apostle Paul has been speaking to us about salvation in general. But when we come to chapters nine and ten and eleven, he begins to spiritually digress. And now he begins to speak to us about the problem of his own people, the people of Israel. And so out of that wonderful passage we share with you, just this word. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: The apostle Paul has been talking about a difficulty in his heart.

The Apostle Paul had heart trouble, but it was heart trouble of a different kind than many, many people know today. The Apostle Paul had a spiritual heart problem. He longed to see his people, the people of Israel come to know the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And following the great argument as the Apostle Paul presents it in the Roman epistle. It is very, very evident that

when he comes to the end of the eighth chapter, he moves from the glory of the sons of God to the misery of his own countrymen, from the brother in the faith to the brethren in the flesh. As one author has expressed it as anyone who has ever followed the Apostle Paul in the Book of the Acts, or in any of the epistles that bear his wonderful name and his wonderful imprint, realizes that Paul was a constant sufferer. It seems odd that a man so mighty in the plan and purposes of God should ever be called upon to go through what the Apostle Paul had experienced.

Nevertheless, the ambition of this great apostle to the Gentiles was to be, well, pleasing to his own Lord, and to live in the center of God's divine plan and God's divine will. There could be no doubt but that Paul suffered in the flesh. You remember from the New Testament that Paul wrote to the Corinthians believers in the second book of that name how some thorn and the flesh had prodded him constantly and seemed to be a distinct hindrance to his own life. You remember how he cried out to God three distinctive and different times, asking that that thorn in the flesh be removed. And yet it was not the will of God. That such should ever be the case.

God assured the Apostle Paul that he would find his grace to be sufficient. And so Paul accepted it, and proceeded to glory in his infirmities. And then I think we need to remember as well that the Apostle Paul suffered in the spirit. I believe that he is referring to this inward suffering of the scripture that lies before us. You and I will have to admit that it was an uncommon trouble that gripped the heart of the Apostle Paul and one which, as I said a moment ago, very, very few people know anything about in our own generation. And yet, my friend, it is an experience that ought to be found in the heart of every child of God. The fearful lack of unconcern for the salvation of lost men and women is the most pitiful thing about the Church of Jesus Christ today. There is a don't care attitude that is paralyzing evangelistic effort on every hand. But the apostle

Paul afraid that someone might feel that he was exaggerating in this particular matter of continual sorrow in his heart takes a solemn oath. And he says, I say the truth in Christ. I lie, not no he apostle Paul was not indulging in extravagance nor uttering empty words. He was not like the man who is about to preach. And as he arose, he said, now, friends, permit me to say something before I preach to you. Paul meant every word that he wrote. He was motivated and moved upon by the Holy Spirit. He was in desperate earnestness, something we need today. So much so that he was willing even to lose his own salvation if such a thing were even remotely possible, that his own people, the Jewish people, might come to know Jesus Christ as the Messiah unto everlasting life.

You know, the scripture before us in verses one to three of Romans Chapter 9 indicates that Paul had experienced a pain that never, never stopped an unceasing pain. My friend must be a terrible, terrible thing. In the years of my own personal ministry. As a pastor, I have met a good many people who lived in almost constant pain. I remember as my mind goes quickly back over the years and I think of some of the places where I've ministered. I remember vividly a dear, dear woman who had cancer of the stomach, and I used to visit that dear woman, pray with her and talk to her about the things of the Lord and see her own face light up as she thought with me concerning the Lord Jesus Christ once again. But the thing about her life was this she often told me, Pastor, I live in the extremity of a constant, sharp and gnawing pain in my stomach. It must be a terrible thing to be living in constant pain. Some people have said that their constant sufferers then are never out of pain, and I can believe it because the marks of suffering are even indelibly written upon their faces.

When you and I are in pain, we do all we can, of course, to get rid of it, and we rejoice when pain ceases or when relief begins to come. But this man of God, the Apostle Paul in Romans Chapter 9, is speaking of a pain from which there would be absolutely no relief at all. And he refers to it as a continual sorrow, and it actually means a continual pain. You remember it was Rotherham and his translation of the New Testament, who declares the passage as incessant travail and Waymouth in his translation of the New Testament says that it's an unceasing anguish of the human heart. The words continual and incessant and unceasing drive home the truth that this man of God, the apostle Paul, was not on fire for souls of men one day and frozen cold with indifference. The next periodic and sporadic efforts of soul winning will never get you and me anywhere at all. Nearly anyone can be a respectable church member. But the question is, my friend, how many people can be responsible church members with a real passion in their hearts for lost men and women until they're driven to speak to them about Christ?

Now, very often, and I say it because I'm a minister, too, ministers will stand on the pulpit and plead with men and women to accept the gospel and come to the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts, their broken hearts, over the lost condition of men, and yet to see their own people sitting Sunday after Sunday and even coming to prayer meeting on Wednesday night. And yet having no compassion and no burning heart and no passion for the last is almost more than you can stand at all when the doctor is called upon to deal with our aches and pains. He seeks to discover the cause of our affliction, and he prescribes for your relief and mine. Let us ask ourselves what will be the cause of the condition described in the text before us, wherein Paul says that he has a continual sorrow and an unceasing pain down deep in his own heart. And when

we examine the heart of the mighty apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to remember that first of all, the Apostle Paul had deep and wonderful sincerity and his own soul.

You see, Paul's own experience was a very real one to him. Jesus Christ was the living one, and he was the divine person whose face he'd be held on the Damascus road. I'm sure that many of us, my friend, have heard of an individual whose name was Mel Trotter. He was the founder of one of the great union gospel rescue missions in the Middle West. And one day he was holding a revival campaign. And in one of his messages, he was asked how he was saved. He replied by saying something that in many quarters has come to be very trite. But, my friend, it's pertinent. And that's poignant to the thought. He said I was there when that happened. And, you know, salvation was real to Mel Trotter. And it was none the less real to the Apostle Paul. He was there when the transaction took place, now to this man of God. The Apostle Paul. The Bible was very, very real. It was not a collection of old wives fables and nursery rhymes. It was God's word. It was a revelation from heaven. And as he went up and down the highways of the ancient world, he preached its great doctrines and he declared the whole council of the living God, nowhere did Paul ever apologize for his Bible. He accepted the Old Testament as readily as he believed what God had been saying through him as a person. He knew what God said about unsaved men and women and how that they were lost and how they needed a savior. And he knew that if men refused to believe in Jesus Christ, that hell was the only alternative for the human soul. And this became the driving impulse of the life of the Apostle Paul. No one will ever fall. Find Paul questioning the reality of hell. It was Jesus Christ or hell for every human soul. You remember in the book of Second Corinthians 5 and Verse 11, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, said Paul, we persuade men.

He was sure that there was a great gulf fixed, and that there was no hope for men and women outside of Jesus Christ. On the other side of the grave, the Apostle Paul was not a liberal in any sense of the theological word. He believe everything that God had revealed. Yes, there are so many today who believe in a system that takes God out of Christ and the blood out of the cross, and the resurrection life out of the grave, and water out of baptism and authority out of the Bible and fire out of hell. But my friend, the apostle Paul was a man who believed them all. It was said of King Croesus', who had a very definite deaf and mute son that one day the king's life was in imminent danger because an enemy was about to thrust a sword through him and the throne room. But the afflicted son, who could neither here nor speak, happened to come in through the door, and he saw what was about to take place. And he was so overwhelmed by a friend with a sense of danger in which his father was standing that he burst every impediment of speech. And for the first time in his life, he cried out in agony of spirit and soul, and said, Do not kill my father, the king, and oh.

If we could only see the sword of God's justice as it hangs over the heads of our unsaved loved ones and our friends and our neighbors outside of Jesus Christ, ready to cut them down because God is a God of righteousness and justice, as well as mercy and love. You and I would be led to cry out with every barrier swept away and every impediment of speech gone from us that Jesus Christ is reaching for men and women, that they might be saved. Sometimes people have come to me with the excuse that they're practicing the rest of faith and that they have committed their unsaved loved ones to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's up to him to bring about their salvation. Now, in a sense, that's very, very true. And I think I must agree with a part of it. But it is altogether not true because it is not in keeping with the spirit of the verses in Romans 9 before

us. Paul no doubt prayed many, many times for the salvation of his own people, the Jewish people in the flesh. And yet he possessed this unceasing pain in his own heart for their salvation. There can be no rest of faith, my friend, when it comes to the salvation of men and women. And then again, as we look into the very heart of the soul of the Apostle Paul, you and I will be led to find another thing.

And that is that Paul wanted to be reciprocal as far as his own people were concerned. Paul realized that much had been done for him, and he was profoundly grateful to God for the blessedness of his own salvation. How could he show his gratitude to God for what had been done for him? There was only one way, and my friend that way was by bringing other men and women to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And the best kind of Thanksgiving I know anything about is that of thanks living and thanks doing. And the scripture says in Galatians 6 and 2 that you and I are to bear one another's burdens too often than this matter of Christian service.

We see only the hard hearted and the heedless hearted, and we overlook the heavy hearted and the hungry hearted. But, my friend, where are the heavy and the hungry hearted people? They are right in the midst. You and I are rubbing elbows with them every day of the week in here. They live all around us. They live next door to which they live in our own homes. There are relatives and friends, and sin and sorrow and suffering weigh upon them heavily. Millions of people. And they do not turn to us for help. And why is this? Is it not because. We too often are cold and unsympathetic. One man spoke recently and said how he felt that his own church had been a failure in his own life and the people who loved the Lord had not been interested in him. Yes.

Where it's true, it's so often true. I ask you this morning, my friend. Are you truly grateful for what the Lord has done for you? Do you really rejoice in the salvation which we've found in his own shed blood? Would we surrender any of the truths which we have learned from the word of God? None of us having known the truth, whatever. Be willing, my friend, to live a day without it. And I know I speak for you as well as for my own heart.

This being the case, then, my friend, you and I, like the apostle Paul, need to show our gratitude by God by passing on his word to other people, even as he has commanded us the first recorded utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ. You remember was this whist ye Not that I must be about my father's business. His last recorded utterance on the world before he has sent it back to the father was expressed in the form of a question. Lovest thou me. He himself answered it by saying, Feed my lambs and feed my sheep. You see, our love is to be shown by do something for other people. And this is good and acceptable in the sight of the Lord because we have been redeemed. You and I are to be reciprocal. We are to answer in kind, back to God, for he having loved us. You and I, and turn out to love him. And then I do believe with you that the Apostle Paul had a great deal of respect in his own heart. I mean by this respect for the need of others. A respect that was born out of love, that he had such anguish in his own soul because he truly loved men, and he knew the value of their own hearts. He could write. You remember in Second Corinthians 5:14, the love of Christ constrained us. And then you remember in First Corinthians 9 verses 19 and 22, I have made myself the servant unto all that I might gain the more I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

You see, it is this spirit in the hearts of many of God's children, which is cause them, my friend, to go to the uttermost parts of the world as missionaries of the cross, and to give up every fond desire and treasured freedom for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, Paul was no hysterical, fanatic and abnormal person. He had a genuine spirit, begotten love for all men. It didn't make any difference to him whether they were Jews on the one hand, or Gentiles on the other. He wanted to do the greatest thing possible for them. And what could be greater than to bring them into a saving relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ himself? Someone has reminded us how many church members are sanctified sponges that imbibe all that they possibly can, but they never give forth what they have received, only under pressure. God has saved us, my friend, to the end that we might be used by him to win other men and women to his own son. Truth is not given to be hoarded, but truth is always given to be dispensed. And then, Paul, I do believe with you, felt a great responsibility concerning those with whom he came in contact.

It is very apparent that the apostle wanted to do his duty as a Christian servant. He often called himself a bond servant of the Lord, and as such, his business was to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. Why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not? The things which I say unto you was the heart searching question of the Lord Jesus Christ. God forbid that our profession should ever be one of mockery, my friend, just to obey the Lord Jesus Christ seemed to be the one consuming passion of the life of this man, who once was Saul of Tarsus. They came ringing into his ears, the words of the saviour, who said, Go you, and to all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and ye shall be witnesses unto me until the uttermost part of the earth did not the Lord Jesus teach that one soul was of more value than all the world, and he must have felt that one soul was

worth all of heaven, for he turned his back upon the glories above, in order that he might come down and redeem mankind. In referring, you remember to his own conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul said he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. You will recall how he cried out in that great passage in the Book of the Acts when standing courageously and fearlessly in the presence of King Agrippa with Festus looking and listening, he cries out. Lord, what will Thou have me to do? And then he lifts his hand in the presence of this king and that part of the world. And he says, I o king Agrippa was not this obedient under the heavenly vision. I would to God that that my friend was true of you and true of me. And when he found out the answer to this question, he immediately did what Christ wanted him to do. And then he said, Woe is me if I preach, not the gospel.

You can't help but feel that Paul was a man of tremendous resolution. You see, it's a blessed thing to have a spirit, born determination. And Paul had that very thing. He was determined to reproduce Christ in his own life and service. And we need to listen to Paul as he cries out in Philippians 3 and in verse 10, for I could wish that myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren and my kinsman, according to the flesh, as we have it here in Romans, Chapter 9 and verses one. The three here indeed is a spark from the flame of Christ's own substitutionary death. He expressed that in a little differently in his message. You remember to the Philippians, he said that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death, and also in these words, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. oh did not the Son of God have much anguish in his own heart, did he not,

my friend, weep over the city of Jerusalem? They did not go to the cross for all the world. And so this blessed apostle Paul had a great desire to be like his lord, who suffered for all men.

When Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a young man, he wrote to his own fathers something like this. Whether nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has, at any rate, given me a strong predilection for literary pursuits. And I am almost confident and belief that if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the field of literature.

Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul, for I need to be imminent and pre-eminent in something.

Now, Paul was like this man only on a spiritual level. He indeed was imminent in his desire to be like the Lord Jesus Christ here in as a field where every child of God, my friend, is able to excel. If we know enough gospel to be saved ourselves, we know enough to tell other people we may not be in a position to preach, or we may find doors close to the mission field. But my friend oh listened to me today. You right there beside your radio, in your own home, riding in your own car, wherever you are. You, my friend, can be a personal evangelist contacting your neighbors and your loved ones and friends in this God appointed task of winning men and women to Jesus Christ. Now, here is one thing that every Christian can do. I think that most of us this morning, even though we've been in the faith for a good many years, we'll have to confess that there has not been very much of this kind of pain in our own hearts about the only pain the average church member feels is the region of his own pocketbook when he's asked to give something for missions or for the work of the Lord. We have never learned the joy of hilarious giving.

Yes, sometimes we worry much more over financial problems and over the monetary problems of the spiritual work than we do over the winning of the lost to Jesus Christ. We come together to figure out how we can meet the re-occurring bills of the congregation, but we seldom come together to study how we might reach men and women for the Lord. Yes. Oh, we must not be obsessed with many, many minor issues, which sometimes are magnified out of all proportion. For my friend, the only God given reason for which your church ought ever to have its doors open and a minister in the pulpit is that the Gospel of Christ might go out to the hearts of lost men and women.

Church does not exist primarily to be a center of social activity or a fellowship. It should be the center of evangelism and Bible study and anything less, my friend makes it. No church at all.

Yes. How often it is that we have no pain in our hearts, like we ought to have many, many things take the place of that which aren't to take first place in our lives.

Oh, that God would give us a real heartache for the lost men and women. And surely the gospel of the broken heart of the son of God calls for the bleeding hearts of the sons of God. Yes. Hear the apostle Paul again, as he cries out, I say the truth, and Christ, I lie, not my conscience. Also bearing me witness and the Holy Ghost, for I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren and my kinsman, according to the flesh. God give us the reality of a spiritual pain down deep in the human heart. We praise thee are father. This morning for the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, how we praise you for its ministry, its wide reaching effect upon the hearts of men and women and o God, as

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we fellowship together with them, we pray that thou too will give us a burden of heart. For Jesus sake, amen.

Announcer:

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