

The Profile of a Burdened Heart

Romans 9:1-5 – Missions Celebration Sunday - November 13, 2022 - Pastor Jeff

- We are all well acquainted with the burdens of life. Some are the everyday stressors like heavy traffic, physical weakness, financial need, difficult personalities, or meeting tight deadlines. Others are weightier like a death in the family or news of a terminal disease or the pain of a broken relationship. God choose to use these burdens to humble, test, stretch and grow us to be more like His Son Jesus Christ (James 1:2-4; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Pet. 5:10)
- There is another burden that is greater and more significant and needs to be actively pursued. It is a burden for those who do not yet know Christ as the Lord and Savior of their life. It is a burden that needs to be regularly cultivated.
- What Paul expresses in the opening verses of Romans 9 is something so deep and passionate and radical that few voice this kind of burden. He had just communicated the greatest blessing anyone could ever experience (Rom. 3-8: being justified by Christ). God's promises to the Jewish people had not failed even if they were rejecting Christ and God's plan and purpose would keep all Jewish and Gentile believers eternally secure in the love of God (8:39)
- This leads Paul to communicate his deep burden for the salvation of His fellow Jewish people. This passionate communication models four features of a burdened heart that we all should strive to emulate in our gospel ministry.

① Seek to emulate Paul's honest burden (9:1)

- Paul goes out of his way to stress the sincerity of his heart for the salvation of his fellow Jews positively ("*I am telling you the truth*") and negatively ("*I am not lying*").
- Paul knew that he appeared to be a traitor to his fellow Jews being an apostle to the Gentiles, so he wanted to quell their concerns about his heart and ministry.

② Seek to emulate Paul's heart-wrenching burden (9:2)

- Paul unzips his heart to reveal how intense and immense his burden was for them ("*great sorrow and unceasing grief*")
- The only way to explain this kind of burden is to know that God's love is flowing through Paul's life. It fits the context of Paul's word (8:38-39; 5:8), his Christlike mindset (1 Cor. 11:1) and his testimony that "*the love of Christ controls us*" (2 Cor. 5:15).
- Paul's heart gives us a way to process this burden
 - o Be saturated in and driven by the radical love of Christ for us
 - o Be saturated in and driven by the eternal destination of lost people (Rev. 14:11)

③ Seek to emulate Paul's hyperbolic burden (9:3)

- What Paul says is extreme, radical, over-the-top, the ultimate hyperbole. Communicating a willingness to trade out one's salvation is a radical desire, yet only hypothetical since it cannot be done.
- It's radical because Paul displayed an extraordinary heart for his fellow Jews ("*kinsmen according to the flesh*"), an extraordinary love for those who had hated and persecuted him and an extraordinary willingness to trade out his most treasured gift for life's worst nightmare.

④ Seek to imitate Paul's hopeful burden (9:4-5)

- Paul uses the special and amazing privileges God had given one ethnic group (the "*Israelites*") to remind them of His great and generous love toward them (Ezek. 33:11; 18:23)

- The Joshua Project keeps tabs on the people groups in the world for the purpose of knowing what groups need the gospel and to measure progress.
 - There are 17,428 in-country ethno-linguistic people groups representing 7,926,214,000 people.
 - There are 9,800 across country people groups (one ethnic group that lives in many different countries with different languages, culture and customs)
 - There are 7415 people groups unreached (42.5% representing 3,369,917,000 people) and 4,977 of those people groups have no chance of hearing the gospel right now (2,031,577,000)
 - The US has 522 people groups with 98 groups unreached (15,;177,200) and there are 33 people groups in the US that have no evangelical presence (21 of these groups are Muslim and 6 of them are Jewish) see the information here: <https://joshuaproject.net/>
- Paul lists 8 blessings God had given the Jewish people to remind them that God had set His love on them and there is still opportunity to come to Christ.
 - Perhaps you were raised in a Christian home and heard the gospel message, but you have let your spiritual privileges become your liability that will testify against you at the final judgment of God unless you repent and put your trust in Christ alone.
 - Every person is blessed to be created in the image of God with the ability to think, reason, communicate, love, relate and enjoy the common graces of God (like food, clothing, shelter, relationships, accomplishment, etc.), but these common privileges will also become your spiritual liability that will testify against you at the final judgment of God if you don't repent and put your faith in Jesus Christ.