

PAUL IN CONTINUAL SORROW... WHY?

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GREETINGS: It is a blessing for me to come to you and serve you, again, the Good News of Jesus Christ. Today we are going to be teaching from Romans chapter 9. We are going through Romans, paragraph by paragraph, explaining different concepts. Romans chapter 9 talks about the election. It talks about concepts that are difficult to understand and difficult to explain. We have a bit of a big task ahead of us to get to Romans 9. Obviously, it will take several weeks to get through it, but today we are going to start by talking about the passion that Paul has for people, the fact that Christ is living in him to the point that who and what Christ is manifests in him in a great way. Then we are going to look at what is called the righteousness of God in the sense of the promise that God has brought forth.

Let us just pray together...

Father, I want to thank You for Your kindness and Your goodness. Thank You for the love that You have towards us and thank You that You empower me to preach this message in a clear manner so that people can know that Your purpose stands by election and not by anything we do, but by You that has chosen to make us a promise and to keep Your promise. Thank You that the only way that we can have access into eternal life is by You bringing it forth in us and no other way.

Thank You, Father, that the only way we can have holiness is by You bringing it forth in us and no other way. In the very same way, the only way by where I can preach an effective message today is by You and no other and thank You that it will be just like that. Amen and amen...

TODAY'S MESSAGE

Romans chapter 9

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

I want to start off by just explaining verses 1 and 2 because we quickly read over that when we read it.

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

Now, just by that, think of the Apostle Paul. We think of the Apostle Paul as somebody who is happy all the time... somebody that might be laughing and be happy and just this “good Christian” always soft spoken, always kind, always on top of things, never having a sad day. But here he says, **I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost...** What he is actually saying there is that his inner man, born from Christ, is carrying heaviness. He says, **“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.”**

So, this guy was not just upset for a moment. It was something that he was carrying with him every day. There was an underlying sadness in the heart of Paul as pertaining to his kinsmen, the Jews. I can tell you that he wasn't carrying all of this in his heart because he was a Universalist. If he was a Universalist, he wouldn't have worried so much because he would have said, “Oh, you know all these Israelites are saved anyway. It's no issue if they really believe or not.” He was having continual sadness and heaviness all the time. If you go to chapter 10, and we will get into that in some weeks, we will see that he wishes for the Jewish people to be saved. So, Paul was walking with a sorrow in his heart because he knew that his kinsmen were not saved. They need salvation.

He was worried to the point... now listen to this in verse **3: For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:**

Paul is saying that by the power of the Holy Spirit, the concern of God that he was carrying inside his heart, the experiential knowledge that he has on account of the resurrection power of Christ in him, the compassion of God that was being brought forth inside him, he was so concerned about the Jewish people that he basically showed the characteristics of Christ inside him where he was willing to give his own life to bring forth life in others. This was a difficult way of wording to say this but what Paul was actually saying in verse 3 when he said: **For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh** (the Israelites).

This is what I see he was saying there: he was bearing the very life of God Himself for Jesus Christ was willing to give His life as a sacrifice to bring forth salvation to other people. He was saying, indirectly, was, “I have a great concern. I have a heaviness in our heart. I want my people, the Jewish people, to be saved and what I am carrying is a fruit of God. It is basically how God feels and I feel it so much that I am at the place where Jesus was where He was willing to give His life for the salvation of His people.” Now, I just want to stand still at that a little bit. You know we can quickly jump over that and look at some beautiful things that we are still going to say about it, but there is something beautiful in this as well. At the end of the day, God has come to share His life with us.

Do you know that there is no other eternal life than the life of God and the life of God is a sacrificial life of love. That is the life he has. It is a life where he doesn't want to see death. It is a life where he is willing to give life, to bring life to others. It is a life where generosity as is at the order of the day. It is a life where it is about love and bringing forth what you have in others... where you want to preserve the lives of others. This life is something that you can command somebody to live because if somebody could live it by themselves, that person would be able to be a creator of God.

The only life there is this kind of a life is God's life and to whom God gives it. The people that can share in this life are the people that have the life of God lived towards them to the point that the life of God towards them brings forth the very same in them. So, it is not something that you can command somebody to do. It is not something that can be obeyed as a law. The life where you are willing to lay down your life is where your conscience (Conscience is not the place inside your mind where you either feel guilty or not.) is more what you are conscious of or what you have by experience.

I think what Paul was saying here is, "I'm speaking the truth. I am experiencing this feeling of heaviness and continual sorrow and it is witnessed, or another word for witness there is being brought forth by the Holy Spirit and what I have experientially brought forth by the Holy Spirit, and I'm telling you the truth, is a great heaviness in my heart. And I have a continual sorrow in my heart. It is because of these friends of mine, my kinsmen, the Jewish people, that are not experiencing the life of God. They are at a place where they say that they are the people of God because of their flesh. They are there and saying that we are the people that God has a covenant with and because of our flesh and because we are of the physical descent, descendants of Abraham, we are the blessed." The focus became much more on who they are than being placed on God and His ability to fulfill His promise.

As an introduction, I want to say two things:

It is possible for Christians to be sorrowful, by the Holy Spirit, on account of the condition that other people are in when they are lost. It is possible. It is possible for people to be highly upset when you see people are lost or when you see people are abused or when you see people are deceived.

I had an experience like that this week. I was listening to somebody preach. (If you are reading this some years from now, we, and a lot of countries in the world, are now in a lockdown time with a coronavirus. We are not allowed to leave our property except for maybe going to the shop to buy some food or to the pharmacy and also for some essential services like farming. In South Africa we have to stay at our homes for 21 days. In this time, and this is basically true for many nations in the world, I found preachers preach about how you should financially support their ministries and by doing that, you will be protected against the coronavirus. I've even heard that there are preachers saying that God brought the corona virus to correct the American nation because a lot of people are standing against Donald Trump! That is absolutely absurd!

I want to tell you that when I just say those words, I feel a powerful sorrow in my heart to think that the Church has come to such a low place that they would think that God, because of a man called Donald Trump, would bring forth the disease in China and kill a lot of people in China and then feel sorry for a lot of people in Europe. God is now on His way to America to kill some folk and whosoever is in Europe, the Italians, and so they are just going to die off because God has 'something with the Americans'!

Let me tell you this, and I want to say this in all the love that there is in my heart towards the American nation: America, the world is not about you. The world is all about God loving all people, bringing life to all people. To the American preachers who are now preaching that God is bringing the coronavirus over America and killing people because they are not following a certain political view and supporting a certain president, I want to say to you: Repent! In the name of Jesus, stop preaching that! You are not speaking the word of God! I'm not saying this in anger towards you! I am saying this with and the Holy Spirit bearing witness in me, with great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart because of the damage that it is bringing to you, your children, your families and to those who follow you, for you are doing this in the name of Jesus and bringing harm to people.

I have a very good friend and he was unjustly accused of doing something and he spent two weeks, unnecessarily, in jail. He spoke to me yesterday and said to me that he liked to watch the American news a lot. (I don't want to nail America now. I 'm just using this as an example.) He liked to watch Fox News. I mean, it could be CNN or whatever. He said but when he went into jail and sat there, the News couldn't help him. He couldn't find any life of all the knowledge he had about American politics, European politics, South African politics. None of it could help him but the only thing that could help him was to be reminded of some Good News Grace messages that he heard and thinking of the goodness and the kindness of God. That's the only thing that could help.

Church, I want to say to you, that by the Holy Spirit there can be sadness in our hearts. It is not the 'anger of a man' but it is the sorrow that is inside the heart of God that people can bear, by the Holy Spirit inside them when they see the lostness of people. The only way this world will ever experience salvation is by people believing in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As they believe upon that and God bringing them salvation, as a free gift, they shall be saved. There's no other way!

Also, in this week, I saw people, like I mentioned, people doing telethons. For those of you who do not know what that is, it is a week of money begging from the poor and the gullible, getting money from them to advance yourself to do what you say is the work of God. When I look at that, I look at the lostness of what is happening in the name of Jesus. I want to just say this: With this in my heart, I am not sitting here with a heart of judgment but I feel a compassion and I want to see God's people free, including the people that are preaching this. May they also be set free but the only way that freedom will come is when we can realize that nothing that comes from God that is authentic of God, can manifest by any principles we are following. It can only manifest by God choosing to give it and then Him promising us that and Him keeping His promise. There is no other way. There is simply no other way!

You might say, “But that puts me at a place where I have to fully trust God. If He feels to bring it forth, then I am going to have it and if He feels not to bring it forth then I am not going to have it. What surety will I then have?” Well, outside of God bringing it forth, you are going to have no surety. The only thing you can be sure of is that God promises you the thing and that He will bring it forth. And one thing that God has promised us is that He will give us eternal life. That is the promise of God and we can believe that and that we can rest in and that He shall bring forth. Amen!

Let me just end this first part of this message where I talked a little bit about politics and America and those kinds of things. We have a thing today where I think we have too much information about things. We get caught up in too much information. And the truth about America is the truth of which we see in Europe and South Africa and the other countries. Our lives is about our presidents. Our lives are about political parties and all those kinds of things. A while back I put on Facebook that, in these last days, God has spoken to us through CNN and BBC and Fox and whatever. I didn’t get a lot of likes on that Facebook post because we don’t want to hear that that is not lifegiving.

We have so amalgamated the things of this world, and the politics, with Christianity, that the moment we say that Jesus is Lord, then are you saying we are not supposed to be effective in the world and so forth? What I am saying is if we have Jesus as Lord and we believe in the promises that He brings and it brings forth a life in us, you can be any political party and you will find life around you. You can be at your business and around you, you will find life. You’ll find the attributes of God, the compassion of God. You’ll find a Godly sorrow about the things in the world. You will also find a Godly joy about the things of the world and you’ll find the power of God flow through you as only God can bring it forth in Him bringing it forth by His goodness. Glory to God!

Church, let us not ‘fall out of the bus’ in these days! Let us stay in the Gospel. Let us stay in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Enough of that. Let us continue in **verse 5**: It talks about the Jews and the context of Paul having the Spirit of God basically bringing forth the very life of God wherein he wants to give his life to people. That is exactly what happened to Jesus when He was upon the cross. He was basically at a point where He said, “I’m willing to die. I’m willing to lose My life so that others can have life.” And by believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we find the fruit of Christ Himself being in Paul where he is willing to even die if it could have been possible. It wasn’t possible for Paul to die and bring life to people. It is impossible. It could only happen by Jesus and by His resurrection. But Paul is basically saying, “I am feeling the very fruit and the life of God in me.”

Paul’s life in the beginning of his ministry and the end of his ministry, everything about his ministry, was only in one thing: He saw the Resurrected Jesus and he had the hope of salvation by him also being raised from the dead. From there we find outstanding fruit come forth in this man’s life. So, I want to say to you as well, “As we are in the Good News of Jesus Christ, you can expect the kind of fruit that was in Jesus, to start and manifest in you. We can be open for that. That is what the Gospel will bring forth. By this I am not saying that you better go and bear the fruit that was in Jesus. That would be counter-productive and completely against the Gospel. The Gospel is that He first loved us. And on account of His love for us, we now love. It is a fruit.

This is the will of God that you bear much fruit. But the fruit is not something that we must bear. Fruit bearing has everything to do with being grafted into the vine and that the vine brings forth the fruit in us for, according to John, we of ourselves can do absolutely nothing! We see this in the teachings of Paul, in the teachings of John, and we now see the fruit that is inside the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I've had people ask me several times, "Bertie, why do you just focus on the Resurrection? What good does the Resurrection have for us now? We know that we will be raised one day but how does that pertain to us now?" The way that it pertains to us now is as we behold the glory of the immortal Jesus Christ, we are changed into the very same image as what we are beholding by the Spirit. And we now have the first payment or the first manifestation of the very fruit of God in our lives now, by the doing of God and not of our own doing! Glory to God!

Romans 9:

5 (It talks about the Jews) ***Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.***

6 ***Not as though the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:***

7 ***Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.***

Paul is basically bringing a very radical message here to the Jewish hearer. He is changing the way he sees genealogy. He is standing straight up against what they believe. The kind of things that he is saying in these verses would be seen by the Jews as a twisting of Scripture. It would be seen as a wrong interpretation of what was written. It would be seen as a reinterpretation by which was not in line with how the fathers interpreted and looked at the scriptures. It would be something that would be seen by the Jews as Paul and only the power himself is now rewriting the Bible. That is how radical Paul is here.

Listen carefully to what he is saying. Imagine you are now speaking to a person who is a Jew who boasts in the fact that Abraham is his father. He is in the lineage of Abraham. He comes and he says this: ... ***the word of God has taken no effect.*** (What God is saying does have an effect.) ***For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:***

Imagine you say that ... Not all Israelites are Israelites. In the context and the setting of that time, that is absolute blasphemy. That is against God! You are basically saying that God's very nation is an adulterous nation and that you can basically accuse God of sleeping around because God has some good children and some bad children but they are all of the same nation. All are pure Israelites but all there are of Israel are not Israelites. It is a very, very bad thing to say! That's what he says.

Then he goes on and says, that maybe you think the nation has failed in some way but I am still a son of Abraham. He says, ***7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children...*** So, he is saying, "Listen, the fact that you are a descendent of Abraham doesn't mean that you are a child of God!" My goodness! In that time that would have been reason to be killed!

It would be like going to a political party and when your leader comes up, you stand up in front of everybody and you start to shout saying all bad things about that person saying that he is not the right one, or whatever. You would be quickly kicked out by the Security. Now, because a lot of countries are in democracy, they are not going to kill you there but back then you could die. And this is the kind of things that Paul was saying. He was radically saying, "Listen, the Word of God is not without an effect because of these Jews that I am now crying about which I think are lost. The Word of God continues because we thought that all of Israel are Israelites but it is not true. And just for those of you that think that it is okay, maybe the Israelites missed it somewhere but I'm of the physical lineage of Abraham, let me tell you something: All of the children of Abraham aren't children as well!" Man, that is something!

Now he comes and he reinterprets or, I would believe, accurately interprets, what the scripture is saying.

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

So, how is he interpreting this passage? Paul says that when God made a promise to Abraham and his seed, it had nothing to do with physical descent. What he is saying is that you should interpret that passage in a different way. The accurate interpretation of that passage is that the people of God are those to whom He made the promise because... let's read the verse again:

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

What is he saying? He said that being a child of God has nothing to do with being of the physical descendants of Abraham but it has everything to do with God making a promise and God keeping His promise. So how do you know if you are a child of God? It is, "Did God make you a promise and are you believing the promise because in the promise you are defined as a child of God or not. It is all about God making a promise... and God keeping His promise! It **all** started with a promise. Titus says it so clearly. It all started with a promise from the beginning to the end.

Titus 1:

1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Before the world began God had a promise so that whosoever the promise is made to, can be by promise the children of God or by being part of the promise. So, who are the children of God? The children of God are those whom God has made a promise. Who are those? ALL people! Yet, in the midst of the promise being made to all people there is a people among the old people that the promise is not made to. And that is the promise is made to those who want to believe the promise. God has not promised eternal life to those who live by their own works.

So, God makes a promise to all people. He says to everybody: "Listen. I have chosen the whole world to be My children but I want to tell the whole world: Those who want to be children of your own power, you cannot be born from Me. You can only be born from yourself."

Can you see that the promise is towards all but in this all you can separate yourself from it by wanting to be children of God by the flesh... by your own works. So, God is saying, what Paul is saying clearly here, and he started this in Chapter 1. He builds chapter upon chapter repeating himself all the time and he comes to a point where he basically says, "Listen. The promise is to all but it is not by your works. It is by God keeping His promise ... and no other way! You can only have holiness by God fulfilling His promise in you. You can only have righteousness by God being merciful to you. If God had said, "I will have mercy on whosoever I want to have mercy," and He decides to have mercy on the one who does not live by his own works, how is that unrighteous? No! It's righteous if He then blesses those who, by the law do not qualify to be blessed. It's righteous! It is right before the eyes of God for He has chosen that He shall bless us by His doing! So if God has chosen to bless us by His doing, let us therefore say, "We shall be children of God by promise." That means, the promise fulfilled makes me His child.

If God is holy and He has promised me that He will give me His life, how will I look like Him outside of God keeping His promise to me? It will be no way! It cannot be! And this is what Paul is now nailing down on the fleshly system and the Jewish system here and he is basically saying, "We have had it wrong! The children of God are not the people that's a physical descent. The children of God are the children of promise for it was said that God made a promise. The promise was that Isaac would be born. That means that it is not even in physical Isaac. It is in God making a promise and God choosing that it would be that way... and it was that way and it continues! It even goes on to Rebekah.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (Isaac was the son of a promise and when Rebekah conceived out of the son of a promise, he didn't now become a physical lineage thing. There, already he also said:

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

Rebekah had twins and God made a promise again and He said, "The elder shall serve the younger." And He chose before they could do any works. ***(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;)***

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

That's also a very good explanation of that verse. The verse, ***As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated***, is not a verse describing hatred toward Esau. It is describing God, who by election, contrary to the system of the world and man's ways, by His doing, He chose to bring forth life in somebody who does not, according to the system, deserve it. So that the only life that Jacob could have, the only right that he could have to being something is by God promising him it, and then God fulfilling it.

So, Paul reads the passage where it says: ***Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated***. He does not say, "Oh, yeah, you see God hated Esau!" No! He says that passage, correctly interpreted, is actually showing forth that the only way that we all can have life is by God making a promise and keeping a promise. The sons who are sons of the promise, they are the sons of God and not the physical lineage of Abraham, neither a certain nation, but those who can be born of the promise. This God is saying, through Paul, to Israelites. So, the very Israelites who are not believing, who are in their physical descent not the children of God, Paul is bearing inside his heart the concern of God about them in the hope that they can now also believe the promise and be born from the promise. So that nobody is excluded, be it Jew or Gentile. I hope you can see the manifold wisdom of the Almighty God, how He is a good God that loves!

Let's end off reading two verses and next week we will continue with this.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Glory to God!

We can end it off this way: Being sons of God's mercy is being true children of God. If you can look at your life and you can say, "This is by the mercy of God and not me following principles, not me manipulating anybody, not me working things in a certain way to get God to do something... but by God simply being merciful, you can truly know your life is born from God. You can call yourself a child of God and that is why Paul says in chapter 8: ***We have the hope of the resurrection***. We believe that we will be bodily raised from the dead and bodily never die. Even if we die, we shall be restored. This earth is the inheritance. We will inherit the earth. The meek shall inherit the earth. Paul believed it with all his heart and he knows that it is impossible to attain by our own works, our own doing, and he says, "It can only be by this hope that I have in Him bringing that forth, being fulfilled by Him. Therefore, from my heart, I can say, "Abba, Father. I am brought forth by the life of God and nothing else!" Glory to God!

Church, we are loved by God! Let us be consumed by the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let us be consumed by the resurrection power of God and not politics... neither viruses... neither conspiracy theories! None of these things! Let our minds be flooded with God! Let our eyes be upon Christ who IS our life! Let us lift our eyes, not to the podiums from where our political leaders speak, but let us lift our eyes higher than that. Let us lift our eyes to Christ, who is our life who, when He will return, we will find that we will look like Him! He is our hope! It doesn't matter how much unrighteousness is going around in the world. My life and your life is born from God keeping His promise. So, let us see what His promise is. It is eternal life. Let us see how we kept it in Jesus and let us see how He's already poured the Spirit of Christ out on us, from where we now have a life where we can co-share in the life that Paul had, where he has compassion on people, where he has love towards people, where generosity breaks forth, where kindness breaks forth, wherein we are sharing in the life of God. Amen

Father, thank You so much for Your goodness! Thank You so much for Your love! Thank You so much for Your life! Thank You that we can speak in the name of Jesus and that we can be unashamed of the Resurrection power of Christ, the Gospel of Jesus Christ that brings forth all life. Thank You that it is not of us who run or of us who will, but of you that shows mercy. Thank You that we can call You righteous should You be merciful and we would be able to call You unrighteous if You are not merciful. For You have said, "You shall have mercy!" And by seeing Your mercy we see Your righteousness. Thank You that we can be born from You! Amen and amen

Thank you so much for allowing me to serve you with this message that might be challenging to some of you. It might be thought-provoking. Thank you for allowing me to serve you with this and I will continue to preach from Romans Chapter 9 next week.

Remember: God always loves you and He is a merciful High Priest, knowing how to give you life! Amen