

Evergreen Presbyterian Church

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July 12th, 2026

Sermon Title: Paul's Love of the Jewish People

Sermon Text: Romans 9:1-5

Rom. 9:1 ¶ I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—

Rom. 9:2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

Rom. 9:3 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.

Rom. 9:4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

Rom. 9:5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Main Point: Paul carries a love for the Jewish people due to their heritage, the promises given to them, and the fact that Jesus Christ came from them.

Outline:

1. The Testimony of His Love (9:1)
2. The Extent of His Love (9:2-3)
3. The Reasons for His Sorrow (9:4-5)

Introduction

If you were with us for chapter 8, you know that Paul just ended the chapter with that glorious, triumphant shout: “Nothing can separate us from the love of God in

Christ Jesus our Lord!” He gave us this ultimate picture of spiritual security. But as we turn the page to chapter 9, the tone completely fractures. We go from the highest peak of joy to almost this dark, quiet valley of grief. It is almost giving you theological whiplash at first when we go from chapter 8 to chapter 9.

Paul moves from celebrating those who are eternally secure in Christ to weeping over those who are currently cut off from Him. All of those great blessings from chapter 8 do not apply to those who will not come to the Lord Jesus. And Paul is especially devastated that so many of his own Jewish people have not come to believe in their Messiah. Today, Paul lets us see his heart.

And the three things I want us to notice today are the testimony of Paul’s love, the extent of Paul’s love, and the reasons for Paul’s sorrow.

And what I think is really special about this passage is this: that as we look at Paul’s heart for the Jewish people, we are going to be forced to take a hard look at our own hearts as well. And I think that’s very healthy. We need to be challenged in how we love others.

1. The Testimony of His Love (9:1)

First this morning, consider the testimony of Paul’s love.

“I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit” (9:1)

Paul is testifying to something here, which we’ll get to. Paul is explicit in appealing to his own conscience. We use the word “conscience,” but we should think a moment on what it is and what it means. The conscience is the witness of our own heart regarding our own moral behavior. When our conscience approves what we do, then we have a good or pure conscience. So when we do the right thing, or when we abstain from something that God forbids, we have a clean conscience. But when we sin – when our heart disapproves and witnesses against us, we have a bad or guilty conscience.

And our conscience can malfunction. It can malfunction because we may (for instance) have a badly trained conscience (1 Cor. 8:7, 12). Or we can have a seared

conscience where we disobey so much and so regularly that we cease to even care what it testifies about us (1 Tim. 4:1-2). People have a seared conscience when they just learn to sin and never repent. Someone who lives that way on a regular basis will eventually learn to ignore what their conscience testifies completely. This is why when Martin Luther was called to testify, he said it is “neither right nor safe” to testify against your own conscience.

And so let me just exhort you: we need to have a biblically informed conscience, not a worldly informed conscience. Make sure it is God who speaks to your heart so that your conscience will know the truth and testify to you clearly. You’ll notice that Paul’s conscience bears witness “in the Spirit.” The Spirit and our conscience have a mutual relationship with one another. John Murray says it this way:

“It is only as we are indwelt by the Spirit and live in the Spirit, only as our minds are governed by the Spirit [that we may] be assured that the voice of conscience is in conformity with light and truth.”

It’s not enough to just have *a* conscience, we also need to be indwelt by the Spirit. We need a spirit-led conscience.

And I want to give one more exhortation when it comes to the conscience: strive to be like Paul when it comes to your conscience by being responsive to it. Paul says in Acts 24, “I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.” And elsewhere he says, “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” That means that rather than trying to ignore our conscience we should be deeply responsive to it.

And when our conscience does testify against us, we should respond by believing and repenting as we look to Christ. And by the way, when you have a guilty conscience, [and this might seem counterintuitive, but] praise God for it. Because it is a deep blessing to have God show you that you’ve sinned. It’s a sign of God’s Spirit that you do care whether your conscience is clear or not.

Here Paul calls upon his own conscience and saying, “Not only is what I’m saying here the truth, then if it’s not, I’m calling upon my own internal witness to testify against me.” It’s a very powerful argument that Paul is making. He is inviting us to

see that he is at peace with himself before God, which would be impossible if he was deceiving us.

Now, the point of this testimony is that Paul wants us to believe him. Before we talk about what he wants us to believe in the next point, let's ask a bigger question: why is it so important to Paul that we believe him when he says that he loves the Jewish people and wants them to be saved? Why is he going to such pains here?

You know part of the reason is, if you were following along in Romans so far, there are moments where he *seems* to almost denounce the Jews. In chapter 3 he basically said that Jews and Gentiles stand on level ground before the cross. He spoke of Abraham as being father of the uncircumcised, too. He argued that circumcision is of the heart. And he said things that could have left the impression that he was opposed to the Law of Moses entirely. Talking about our sinful passions being aroused by the law. And if you weren't a careful reader of what Paul has said there it would be pretty easy for someone to think that this comes from animosity. And here he is, begging us and persuading us: "please believe me; that's not what's going on." If you hear him having a problem with the Jews, you're hearing him wrong. And so that's why this is so important to him.

2. The Extent of His Love (9:2-3)

And it takes us to our second point today: the *extent* of Paul's love.

So we just saw: Paul has something important to say. He wants us to believe him when he says it. What is that thing he wants us to believe? Verse 2-3:

"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." (9:2-3)

This is what he's concerned that we won't believe: that he really truly from the heart is full of sorrow that never ends, because the Jewish people, by and large, have not yet come to Christ in the way that a God-fearing person would hope. So

his sorrow is very deep, which we'll see in the next point. But here just consider that his sorrow is deep because his love for them is deep. He says that he would even be willing to be cut off and cursed by God if it would help them.

This is really commendable. Paul is not cutting off the Jews, nor is he filled with rage or hatred of them. He's broken hearted. They are his physical kin, but they've gone really badly astray, largely rejecting the Messiah that God sent.

It's especially common today for people to "cut off" family members that they feel are toxic. It's practically a trend at this point. Paul wants us to know: if there is any estrangement between him and the Jews, it is not on his part, because he loves them! Paul is not cutting off toxic family members here. Instead, he *loves* them to the point, he says, that he is daily suffering intense anguish at the thought that they *don't* have Christ.

He says that the pain of this is something that is unceasing. He never stops thinking about them. They are on his heart and mind all the time. He hasn't written them off. He hasn't stopped praying for them.

Notice this about Paul's attitude toward them: they've persecuted him, but he's still willing to lose everything if it would bless them. He has been attacked, stoned, lied about, and rejected, and even then he says, "I still love them. I don't hate them. I do not want ill for them. Even though they reject the kingship of Christ, my love for them doesn't end. I don't only love those who love me. I love those who reject me and even my Savior."

Why does Paul feel this way? Isn't it because this is the same love Jesus showed him? Think about it: Paul was once the very person he is weeping over. He was a hostile, aggressive enemy of Jesus Christ. But Jesus didn't cut him off; Jesus met Paul with grace instead of giving him what he deserved.

And notice the language Paul uses. He says he wishes he could be "accursed and cut off" to save his brothers. That's the language of the cross. Paul is saying, "I would be willing to take *their* hell if it would give *them* heaven." He can only say that because he knows a Savior who did that for him. Jesus stepped into our place, took our curse, and was cut off so that his enemies could become family. When your heart has been shattered and remade by that kind of love, you cannot harbor

hatred for the lost. Your heart breaks for them. And as we will see in our final point, Paul's heartbreak is especially deep because of just how close his people were to the truth.

3. The Reason for His Sorrow (9:4-5)

Our third point today is the Reason for Paul's Sorrow.

The thing that feeds Paul's sorrow is his deep love of the Jewish people. And what Paul does is, he gives his reason for this love. In this passage his reasons have to do with their history. And we're going to see that. But as we do, I want to also shoot down a pernicious form of reasoning that I'm also going to address a little more fully in a few weeks when I'm back in the pulpit, Lord-willing.

There is something about the Jewish people that Paul loves which is bigger than just the fact that Paul is *himself* from the Jewish people. This is not *really* about blood and loyalty to family, you'll notice.

Some modern forms of racism and what is sometimes called "Kinism" that can sometimes metastasize within otherwise theologically conservative circles. These groups will argue for racial supremacy (or at least that Christians should have preference for those who are the same race as them) and they will argue for segregation of the races, and they will argue against racial intermarriage, for example. And they make an argument like this; they'll say:

"See, Paul is loyal to his family. To his people here. Therefore, [so they say] when we say that people shouldn't intermarry with other races... we're just recognizing something that Paul recognizes: that we should care about our own people more than we care about other people."

That's the argument they make, which they then take to give *themselves* permission to hate the Jews or to hate others who reject Christ, or who are of different ethnicities.

Which if you think about it, that's pretty inventive and daring: to take Paul's argument for why he loves the Jews as an argument for why Christians should feel fine *hating* the Jews. That's an amazing judo move there. It's like hearing Jesus say

to love your enemies and turning it into an argument for hating your enemies. If you can make that argument, then you can truly do anything that you put your mind to! You can see that I'm not very sympathetic with someone who will try to misuse this passage to turn Paul or the rest of us into antisemites.

So the argument made from this passage defending racism is, that Paul here in Romans 9 is saying, the Jews are my family and they're more important to me than everyone else is. Here's the problem with that argument: it has nothing to do with the text.

Because look at the reasons Paul gives for his heartbreak and his love for them. You'll notice that Paul doesn't argue that the Jews are more important to him because they are his physical family. [He does identify them as his family but that's not the reason why he says loves them or why he'd be willing to be cut off for their sake.]

Instead, look at *why* Paul says that he loves and weeps for the Jewish people. Follow Paul's reasoning. Let's not read our own ideas or agendas onto what Paul's doing. Here it is:

“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.” (9:4-5)

Why does he love them? Why does he weep for them? Because God has shown incredible love to them. He's given and given to them. Wouldn't it be weird if we acted with more wrath and fury toward the Jews than God did? They sinned over and over, but he rescued them, redeemed them, covenanted with them, and gave his very self to them. So the reason he loves them isn't something about them in themselves. It's something about God. God has decided to be gracious to them. God has loved them. It's God who makes the difference, not genetics or flesh and blood!

What Paul is giving us here is actually *two* things. One is, as I mentioned, he's outlining why he cares about the Jews. And as we saw, they are worthy of his care not because of the flesh and blood of who they are, but because of Who *God* has

been to them for millennia, and the promises he has made all the way back to Abraham.

But he's also saying a second thing. Because verses 4-5 explain *why* this is all so tragic that they don't believe. The promises God made to the Jews are only actualized in Jesus Christ. And this is something for all people to hear: the instrumental cause of our salvation is not our own actions or ability or the family we came from or anything we can do. It is faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Think of it: the Jews had these incredible blessings from God. He was gracious to them. He gave them covenants with Abraham and Moses and David. He made them his children. He gave them the law and his worship and his promises. Those things all point to Jesus Christ! Christ is there in the law. He is the substance of the law. Christ is the fulfillment of God's covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David.

The blessings God gave them actually deepens the tragedy of their rejection of Christ. They had it all, and rejected it. In a sense, they are the prodigal son who had everything and walked away.

Now, because they rejected the Messiah, does that mean God's promise to Abraham failed? No, because Paul reminds us in Romans 4 what it means to be a true son of Abraham. That's why he calls Abraham "The Father of all who believe." Since Abraham was righteous before he was circumcised, he is really the father of any and all who have faith in Christ, regardless of circumcision.

We need to have Paul's perspective: God's promise remains true because all who place their faith in Christ are united to him, saved in him, and have peace with God through him.

We're going to see this in a few weeks when we look at verse 6-8. But for now, just know: the Jews are not cut off from this promise. Even today anyone who hears the gospel – whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female – all who hear the gospel can believe and experience peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, here's the question: if someone rejects Jesus, does that mean all bets are off? If they say, "I don't believe in Jesus, and I won't believe in Jesus," does that mean that *now* we can mock them, hate them, mistreat them, spread rumors and

lies about them, despise them, or otherwise mistreat them? Does unbelief change our duty to be truthful and loving? Absolutely not.

I want to save that question for three weeks from now, because I want to tackle the larger question of what the Bible says our attitude toward unbelievers ought to be.

Conclusion

Here is what I want to challenge you with as we conclude: what is your heart toward [specifically] the Jewish people?

Christianity owes an incredible debt to Judaism. It was through the Jewish people that God gave the Scriptures, the covenants, and ultimately, the Messiah Himself. Jesus himself is a Jew. The church was birthed from this line of people. Because of this, there is zero space for antisemitism in a Christianity that actually knows where it came from.

Following Paul's lead here, we cannot despise the people God used to bring us the Savior. Instead, our hearts should break like Paul's. We ought to pray fervently for the Jewish people today, that they would see Jesus as their true Messiah, and we should be generous and eager to share the gospel with them.

But let's do this a moment. Let's broaden the lens to the rest of the people in your life. Are you marked by this kind of love for the lost? Paul was willing to lose his life—he even said he'd be willing to lose his own soul, if it were possible—for the sake of the lost. Are we even willing to lose the respect of our neighbors? Evangelism is ultimately a measure of our love. Are there unsaved neighbors or coworkers in your life who, if they were being honest, would say, “They don't really love me. They don't even try to talk to me, let alone share the gospel with me”? [Are there people like that in your life?] Let Paul's unceasing anguish provoke you to love the lost people who are right in front of you.

Finally, [I want to say this] if you are here this morning and you are not a Christian, I want you to see what is motivating the anguish in Paul's heart. He is weeping because he knows the future that awaits those who refuse to come to Jesus the Messiah. He knows that all the religious heritage in the world cannot save you. He

knows that firsthand. My prayer is that you would never have to face the reality of being cut off from God. Instead, do what the people in this passage refused to do: believe in the Savior you have heard preached today, repent of your sins, and find peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.