

How Heavy Is Your Heart?

Romans 9:1-5

I desire God to place a heavy burden on our hearts for people who reject Christ. Paul says of the Jews who rejected Christ and were foreigners to God's grace, "*I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my kinsman according to the flesh*" (v.2).

I. A heavy heart for those without Christ can be faked.

There is an old saying that goes "*all that glitters is not gold.*" Prospectors would find rocks that looked like gold, but tests revealed that this gold was really "fool's gold." I think there is also such a thing as "fool's evangelism." It is that kind of evangelism that is perpetrated for the benefit of the church or the person doing the evangelizing. Paul must have been aware of this false kind of evangelism because he says clearly: "*I speak the truth in Christ . . . my conscience bears me witness . . . the Spirit knows.*" Our evangelism programs should always be driven by the overflow of heavy hearts.

II. A heavy heart for those without Christ can be found.

I know God's Spirit grants the gifts, but I think He has given to us a map to guide us. "*I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*" (v.3).

(A). This does not mean Paul wishes to take his kinsman's place in hell.

"That would make Paul to love the Jews much better than Christ" **John Gill.**

(B). This does not mean that Paul wishes to be excommunicated from the church.

The word "anathema" is used for excommunication in Galatians 1:8 and I Corinthians 12:12, but it makes no sense for Paul to abandon the church for the sake of the Jews though this argument has more merit than the previous.

(C). This phrase means that Paul and the Jews who rejected Christ were very similar. "I could wish" is in the past tense in the original "*I did wish.*" The word "wish" is often translated "*boast*" (see the 6th book of Homer's *Iliad* 5th Century B.C.). The beginning of verse three is a parenthetical statement. This is Paul's quote: "*I have great heaviness and sorrow in my heart . . . for my brethren, kinsmen according to the flesh (For, I too, did boast about being cut off from Christ).*"
Paul has a heavy heart for his kinsmen because he identifies with them.

III. A heavy heart for those without Christ can be felt.

(A). **Know thy subjects** . . . do you want to see friends saved? How do they think?

Paul lists seven things the Jews knew about themselves. (1). They were the adopted **nation**, (2). They alone had "the glory" (God's presence), (3). They had the covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, etc . . .), (4). They received the Law from God, (5). They had the priesthood (service), (6). They alone had the covenant promises, (7). They had the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Here's what they thought --- "*We are much too superior for this Jesus.*"

(B). **Know thyself.** . . Paul knew he, too, *was* just like them. What sphere of people has God placed you in? Business people, school-teachers, athletes --- know them.

(C). **Know thy Savior** . . . Romans 9:5 is a great statement on the Person of Christ. "*Born of the flesh through the fathers*" --- "*The holy, blessed God forever*" He is the only answer for our sin, and He is the only Savior for our souls.