

A MAN WITH A BURDENED HEART
Romans 9:1-5

Intro: Have you ever wondered Paul would be like if he were on earth today -- or John or Peter or Moses or David or Elijah or Isaiah or Daniel -- or even the Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you ever wondered what they would be doing?

Have you ever wondered what they would think of us?

One thing which seems to have characterized most of the men of God in Scripture is the fact that they were men with burdened hearts!

Paul gives us insights into his heart in practically all of his epistles, but one that is outstanding, both because of what it says and also because of its place in the book of Romans, is the statement given to us in Romans 9:1-5.

(Read the text.)

I. WHAT WAS IT?

It was real (v. 1). Add "in my heart" from v. 2.

It was "great." It was heavy. It was "continual." It brought him "sorrow."

Those are the characteristics.

The burden itself is in v. 3.

The burden is clarified in ch. 10, vv. 1-3.

How many people in the history of the church do you suppose have had a burden like this? How many people do you know who have been this concerned? What about you? What about me?

Would you like to be this concerned?

We have our movements and our campaigns, but why is it that they can be over so quickly and so completely?

There is only one reason: The burden for people without Christ is not what Paul had!

Let us ask the question:

II. HOW DID HE GET SO BURDENED?

It has to be that this statement in chapter 9 is where it

ought to be in Romans.

And this is a personal word.

The last personal expressions of Paul in Romans before this are in chapter 1 -- and it is there that he gives us three reasons for the burden that is upon his heart according to chapter 9!

They are given as the familiar I am's of Paul. Note them in order:

- A. Because this was his calling -- both as an apostle, and as a believer: "I am debtor . . ."

Cf. Rom. 1:5; 10:15a.

This was more than just an optional debt of gratitude; this was a divine call.

It was expressed by our Lord in Acts 1:8.

But the emphasis in Romans is not on special efforts as such, but upon faithful, godly lives, by which the world will be brought to see the evidence of the work of the Gospel!

- B. Because of his personal devotion to the Lord: "I am ready . . ."

Paul knew what this would mean from what he had experienced in other places. But he loved the Lord so much that none of those things bothered him.

Cf. Acts 20:24, after mentioning that "bonds and afflictions" awaited him in Jerusalem, he said, "But none of these things move me . . ."

And a little later when he got down to Caesarea and even through the prophet Agabus they were trying to keep him from going to Jerusalem, he said,

"What mean ye to weep and to break my heart?
For I am ready, not to be bound only but also
to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord
Jesus."

This is Acts 21:13.

How much do we love the Lord? Paul was "ready" in that he had an urgent desire, a strong resolution, an unchangeable purpose to preach the Gospel to all men wherever they might be.

- C. Because he knew that it was the answer for the needs of men: "For I am not ashamed . . ."

His somewhat negative statement was made because of the ridicule that had been cast upon the Gospel in Rome -- and in many other places.

But Paul knew the power of the Gospel in his own life.

And he had seen the power of the Gospel transforming many others.

But, what is probably the most important here, he had a knowledge of the truth that probably surpassed any other person of his day. And this is what we have from Romans 1 to Romans 8.

How did it affect him? Did it make him smug and complacent and proud? NO! AFTER REACHING THE SUMMIT OF DIVINE REVELATION IN CONCLUDING CHAPTER 8, HE DECLARES WITH CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AS HIS WITNESSES THAT HE WOULD GIVE IT ALL UP IF ONLY HIS BRETHREN, HIS KINSMAN ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, COULD BE SAVED.

And when he was the Apostle to the Gentiles.

And even when he knew all about election as he was about to teach it in Romans 9 through 11!

Concl: We have no reason to say that Paul would be any different if he were to come back today. He might wonder about us!

Paul changed what would have been the course of history in his day. The Lord has done it many times since then. It needs to be done again. There is no other hope for our world but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us follow the example of this devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and pray that we, too, may get the vision and get the burden so that once again we might see a mighty moving of the Spirit of God, transforming sinners, not into professors of religion, but into the saints of God.