

# DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME IX  
HOW MUCH DO YOU CARE?  
JULY 17, 2022

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discussion Starter:** What are some examples of selfless actions you've experienced or witnessed?

**Key Text:** *"I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup>To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."* (Romans 9:1-5)

Canadian Lawrence Lemieux had spent his entire life training and preparing to compete for a gold medal in the Olympics in the event of Sailing. His chance came in the 1988 games in Seoul, South Korea. The sea was rough and stormy as the race started, but Lemieux was in second place and gaining on the leader. Suddenly, his attention was drawn away by a capsized boat and an injured sailor draped over the hull, desperately trying to hang on and calling for help. With no hesitation, Lemieux turned his boat away from the race and navigated through the crashing waves to the man. He held onto the man, keeping him afloat until a rescue patrol boat arrived. Lemieux resumed the race, but he finished in 21<sup>st</sup> place—the delay in helping the man cost him an Olympic medal. Wanting to recognize his heroic, selfless act, the International Olympic Committee awarded Lemieux the "Fair Play Award" of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.

In today's lesson, Paul tells of his great love for Israel and the extent he'd be willing to go to if it meant Israel would be saved. Selfless attitudes and actions like Olympian Lemieux's and Paul's stir us to ask ourselves: "How much do I care about others?"

## 1. Paul affirms the depth of his love for Israel.

*"I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup>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."* (v.1-3)

Paul realizes that everything he wrote in Chapters 1-8 could be perceived as "anti-Jewish" and lacking compassion toward the Jewish people since it completely nullifies the Judaic system of works. So, he seeks to explain himself in an astounding statement in the first three verses of Chapter 9. Paul declares nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (8:39), but *if* it were at all possible, he would endure eternal separation from God in Hell if it meant salvation for the Jews! That's how much Paul loved the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

**Discuss:** Paul was an Israelite, and he carried a special love and burden for the Jewish people (11:1). Has God placed a special love and burden on your heart for a particular people group or place or age or need? If so, who is the people group (or where is the place, or what is the age, or what is the need?), and what is it that makes these particular people unique to you?

## 2. Israel is God's chosen people.

In Deuteronomy 7:6, God said to the Israelites: "You are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession." God specified in Genesis 12 that the Messiah would come through the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in 2 Samuel 7, He specified that the Messiah would come through the line of David.

Some of the responsibilities of Israel include: 1) Being "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex.19:6), 2) Keeping and preserving God's Law (Josh.22:5), and 3) Bringing "renown and praise and honor" to the Lord (Jer.13:11).

**Discuss:** How are a Christian's responsibilities today similar to Israel's?

## 3. The Jewish people were given eight special privileges as God's chosen people.

*"They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup> To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."* (v.4-5)

- 1) **Adoption** (v.4) – This differs from the adoption in Romans 8. Israel was adopted in a national sense. God describes Israel as His firstborn sons (Ex.4:22).
- 2) **Glory** (v.4) – God favored Israel by revealing His glory to them, especially during Moses' time (Ex.16:10; 24:17).
- 3) **Covenants** (v.4) – This would include God's covenant agreements with Abraham (Gen.15:18) and David (1 Sam.7:12-16).
- 4) **Law** (v.4) – This is the giving of the law to Moses (Deut.5:1-22).
- 5) **Worship** (v.4) – God appointed Israel the task of worshiping Him in the temple and through the sacrificial system.
- 6) **Promises** (v.4) – These promises include all the things promised to Israel throughout the Old Testament, including the coming of the Messiah.
- 7) **Patriarchs** (v.5) – This refers to the founding fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God gave many great promises to the patriarchs and to all of their descendants.
- 8) **Christ** (v.5) – The Israelites were the race that the Messiah would come from. Jesus is "God over all, blessed forever" (v.5). Paul says God honored the Israelites by sending His own Son to earth as a Jewish man, but he does not describe Christ as one of the gifts given to Israel since they rejected Him.

**Discuss:** What are some examples of how great blessings lead to great responsibility?

### For Further Study:

Free commentary on the Book of Romans at [www.enduringword.com](http://www.enduringword.com)

Bible-based articles about God's relationship with Israel at [www.zionshope.org](http://www.zionshope.org)

"Should Christians Support the Nation of Israel?" article at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)