

## Paul's Burden for the Unsaved # 35

Romans 10: 1-4

Today we continue to consider the message Paul sought to share with the Jews. He was surrounded by those who were very zealous in religious practices and tradition, but they had never accepted Jesus as the Christ, believing in Him by faith unto salvation. Paul knew the struggle they faced; he too had been brought up in strict adherence to the Law, being a Pharisee. He also realized that only Jesus could deliver them from the bondage of sin. Simply seeking to keep the demands of the Law and adhering to strict religious practice would never save. Paul possessed a deep and genuine burden for the Jewish people.

As I considered the passion of Paul to reach his fellow man, I was reminded of the great need here in America. According to [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net), the website for the North American Mission Board, there are currently 259 million people in the United States and Canada who have never placed their faith and trust in Christ for salvation. That number is staggering, and it translates to a ratio of 1 Southern Baptist congregation for every 6,828 people. Of the congregations that currently exist, each would have to reach almost 7,000 people for Christ to eliminate lost-ness. The site also revealed statistics gathered through a study in 2012 that dealt with the Southern region of the United States. As we consider these staggering numbers, bear in mind we are talking about the "Bible Belt." The population of the southern region stood at 109,028,137. Of those, 13.7 million were Southern Baptist. At that time there were 39,586 Southern Baptist churches in the south. Of the over 109 million people living in the south, 69 million were lost, without a relationship with Christ. That translates to 64% of the population. Of those, 48.1% had no affiliation with any religious body. It is evident that we are surrounded by people who need Christ. The need is vast, and it is urgent!

With this in mind, I want to consider the [characteristics](#) of Paul's approach as we think on: [Paul's Burden for the Unsaved](#).

**I. An Urgent Prayer** (1) – [Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved](#). Let's consider the aspects of this prayer.

**A. It was Sincere** – Paul was not half-hearted in his burden for Israel. It was not something he thought of on occasion; he was genuinely burdened for them. He continually carried a burden for the lost of Israel and desired that they come to know the Lord.

- He knew the snare they were trapped in. He too had lived the life of a Pharisee, keeping the law to the letter and assuming that would translate into acceptance with God.

- We need to see people as they are and admit their need. We need a burden that is sincere not just superficial. It must be more than something we talk about in Sunday school. We need to be sincere in prayer!

**B. It was Substantial** (1) – Paul was not seeking a small thing. He was burdened for the entire nation of Israel, literally thousands upon thousands of people. He served One who was able and Paul was not in the business of doubting God’s ability. He had the attitude of the Hebrew boys and Daniel. His was not a “little god” mentality, but one of a mighty, big God.

- We need to pray in a substantial way. Somehow we have reached the assumption that America has gone too far, that revival and salvation are unattainable for many. We need a “Big God” mentality!

**C. It was Specific** (1) – I am confident there were physical, social, and even economic needs in that day, but they weren’t the focus of Paul’s prayer. His desire was that Israel might be saved. Paul knew that was the greatest need and he sought the Lord for that need.

- I fear we have grown accustomed to praying in a casual, generic way. We need to learn to be specific when we pray. We need to address individual needs before the Lord, calling out the names of those we are concerned about. We need to pray that God will use us directly in their lives. We need to get beyond the physical and social needs, although they are important, and touch heaven for the needs of lost souls!

**II. An Undeniable Passion** (2) – [For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.](#) Here Paul acknowledges the zeal of Israel. What can we discover about their zeal?

**A. It was Prominent** – Paul bore record of their zeal. He recognized it was very evident in their lives. They may have been guilty of many things, but they were not guilty of a lack of zeal.

- Many among us today are very zealous about certain causes. They live their lives dedicated to the things in which they believe. Commitment is to be admired, but sadly many are committed to the wrong things.
- The Jews present a challenge for the average Christian today. How does our zeal compare to the zeal they possessed? Could it be said that we have a genuine zeal for the things of God?

**B. It was Incompetent** (2b) – [They had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.](#) The word knowledge means “*correct, full, complete; an experiential knowledge of truth.*” The Jews were

zealous about their traditions and adherence to the law, but they lacked fullness in the things of God. They only understood in part. They embraced the Law of Moses, but rejected the Son of God. Their passion was evident, and it was consuming, but it lacked the fullness of God's grace.

- Many today are sincere, but they are sincerely wrong. They see God as One who loves, but they lack the understanding of accountability to the righteous demands of a holy God. Few ever grasp the fullness of God. They assume that their good deeds will secure a place in heaven, but lack the knowledge of salvation through the shed blood of Christ. Many believe in an eternal heaven, but refuse to accept that Christ is the only way to achieve it.

**III. An Unknown Peril (3)** – [For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.](#) Here Paul deals with the peril the Jews faced unknowingly. Consider:

**A. Their Ignorance (3a)** – [For they being ignorant of God's righteousness.](#) This is tied directly to their lack of knowledge. They had embraced the law and sought to carry it out to the fullest. They even imposed other man made laws and rituals in an effort to achieve the righteousness God demanded. They assumed that living according to the law was good enough. They did not fully understand God's holiness.

- A lot of people are in the same condition today. We are surrounded by people who believe a good, moral life is all that is required. They think if their good deeds outweigh the bad, then they will be accepted of God. These clearly are ignorant of the righteousness of God.
- God's righteousness standard stands as the measure of our merit. In ourselves we can never achieve a level of righteousness that is acceptable. That is only obtained through the righteousness of Christ being imputed to our account. We are only worthy through Him!

**B. Their Diligence (3b)** – [and going about to establish their own righteousness.](#) They continually strove to establish their own righteousness. They were convinced that righteousness could be achieved through keeping the law and they were persistent in that pursuit. They were literally seeking to work their way to heaven.

- That is likely the biggest misconception among men even today. As we've already established, many feel they will be judged based on their works. They assume as long as they are busy doing good deeds, they will be accepted of God.
- Salvation is not something we do; it has already been done. Christ provided for our redemption upon the cross. We can't work for it, earn it, or even deserve it. It is a free gift, trusting in Christ and Christ alone!

**C. Their Arrogance (3c)** – [have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God](#). The religious Jews refused to submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. They were descendants of Abraham, the chosen people. They were adhering to the law. They kept the holy ordinances. They saw no need or benefit for Christ. They refused to submit to the doctrine of salvation through the cross. They refused to believe they needed anything other than keeping the law.

- Really all disobedience is a result of arrogance. Those who refuse to accept Christ as the only means of salvation are in essence declaring they don't need Him. They somehow believe they can make it on their own.
- The Bible clearly reveals that submitting to the authority and provision of Christ is essential to salvation. There is no other way. It isn't achieved through good works, church membership, baptism, or even knowledge of Scripture. Salvation is of the Lord. We must submit to Him in salvation.

**IV. An Unequaled Provision (4)** – [For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth](#). Paul shares the provision available to all, Jew and Gentile alike. We discover:

**A. It is Final (4)** – [For Christ is the end of the law](#). The Jews continued to seek righteousness through adherence to the law, but Christ is the fulfillment of the law. He accomplished what the law never could. The law could not save. It could only point toward Christ and condemn our sin. Christ fully satisfied the righteous demands of God. Where the law was insufficient, Christ was sufficient. There will never need to be another sacrifice. Salvation was provided fully and completely at Calvary!

**B. It is Universal (4)** – [Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to everyone that believes!](#) This glorious salvation is available for all men, Jew and Greek alike. It is not based on our works or merit, but freely offered to all who will receive it.

- Aren't you glad salvation wasn't reserved for the Jews only? I am glad it is a "whosoever will" salvation. All who have ever lived have the opportunity of knowing the fullness of God's grace in salvation through His Son!

**C. It is Conditional (4)** – [Salvation is available to everyone that believes](#). That is the key Paul emphasized to the Jews and all who would read these precious words. Salvation requires faith. We must believe upon Christ and His finished work upon the cross.

- Many remain in their sin because they refuse to believe. It is so simple that a child can receive it and yet many will not believe. I can't explain it all. I certainly don't understand it all, but praise the Lord I believe it all.
- If you have never been saved, you just need to believe. Come to Christ by faith, believing He died for your sin. Trust Him to do what you cannot and He will save your soul.

**Conclusion:** Like Paul we need a burden for the lost around us. Many are deceived by the doctrines of men. Many are seeking to work out their salvation in hopes that good deeds are all that is required. Let us pray that God will touch their hearts and reveal their need! May we seek the Lord in prayer for their salvation? Let us be willing to be used of God to share our faith with those who do not know Christ!

If you stand in need of salvation, Jesus is ready to save. You just need to come to Him by faith and believe.