

## WHEN YOUR FAMILY IS LOST

**SCRIPTURE:** Romans 9:1-18

**TEXT:** Romans 9:3 "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers..."

**PURPOSE:** To challenge us to witness to our families.

### INTRODUCTION:

# In my family five of us children are in the church and serving the Lord. Another sister chose to interrupt her college years with a jaunt into the hippie culture from which she has yet to escape. She has given birth to six illegitimate children by four separate men. She served a year in prison for child neglect. She fades in and out of reality. Our hearts ache for her. We long for her to return to the Savior she once knew.

1. Paul felt this way for the Jewish nation.
  - a. He sorrows because his family is lost (2).
  - b. The anguish is immense (2).
2. Paul wishes he could go to hell and by so doing save his family (3).

# One man said to his friend: "I hear you voted out your pastor. What was wrong?"

"Well, he kept telling us we were going to hell."

"What does the new pastor say?"

"He says we are going to hell, too."

"So what's the difference?"

"The first pastor sounded as though he were glad. The new pastor tells us with a breaking heart."

3. With heavy and broken hearts Christians pray for their families to honor and to serve God.
4. How can we understand the continued unbelief of our family members?
  - I. What can we count on to bring them to Christ?
    - A. God wants to adopt them (4).
      1. God specially selected Israel.
      2. God longs to include your loved one in His family.
      3. What if they already know that?
    - B. They have previously experienced God's presence (4).
      1. Israel had known the glory of God upon them.
      2. Your loved one may once have been saved.
      3. He may have walked with God in the glory of His presence.
      4. What if they have already experienced that?
    - C. They have received God's law (4).
      1. Israel knew God's covenant, His agreement with them.
      2. Your family member may have studied the Bible and may know God's principles.
      3. What if they already know God's law?
    - D. They have worshiped God (4).
      1. Israel worshiped in the temple.

2. Your unsaved brother or sister may have attended church most of his growing up years.

3. What if they refuse to worship now?

E. They have been influenced by Christian upbringing (5).

1. Israel referred to their patriarchs, their spiritual leaders in the family.

2. You may have parents and grandparents who have been Christians.

3. But your unsaved loved one is not moved by his heritage.

II. Have we failed? (10)

# I've heard parents say, "Where did we go wrong? What could we have done differently? Looking back we see some things we could have changed, but we did not notice then."

A. We cannot count on family, heritage, or upbringing (8).

# Jacob and Esau were twins. They received the same religious training. Before they were born, God knew Jacob would choose to follow Him. Esau did not.

B. What should I have done differently? (12)

1. Puzzled, a child's history is rehearsed.

2. Incidents are interpreted.

3. Temperaments are examined.

4. The efforts of parents are not the only factor.

C. The shape of circumstances is not the primary influence.

D. God's call makes the difference.

1. Some hear and answer.

2. Some do not hear or they refuse to respond.

III. Has God failed?

A. Can I count on God's word? (6).

1. Those who claim the word of God to be true will be saved.

2. Spiritual failure is due to unwillingness to trust God to keep His promises.

# Not all of the descendants of Israel are of Israel; only those who accept the promise of God

B. Is God unjust? (14)

1. No, He is merciful.

2. When the issue is salvation. He deals invitingly with us all.

C. God chooses to work through you (17).

1. He wants to display His power.

2. He wants His name to be proclaimed.

3. You may feel you are inadequate.

a. "I've tried before."

b. "I'm not the one to reach my family."

4. God has always worked through people.

## CONCLUSION:

1. We must overcome evangelism apathy.

a. We lose our concern for the unsaved by backing away from our responsibility to witness.

b. We permit tolerance toward sinners to become tolerance of sin.

c. We allow pluralism to siphon off evangelistic fervor.

2. Develop godly sorrow for the lost.

3. Decide to be used by God.
4. Remind sinners of what they know to be true.
5. Pray for God to work.
6. Relax and trust Him to reach your unsaved family.