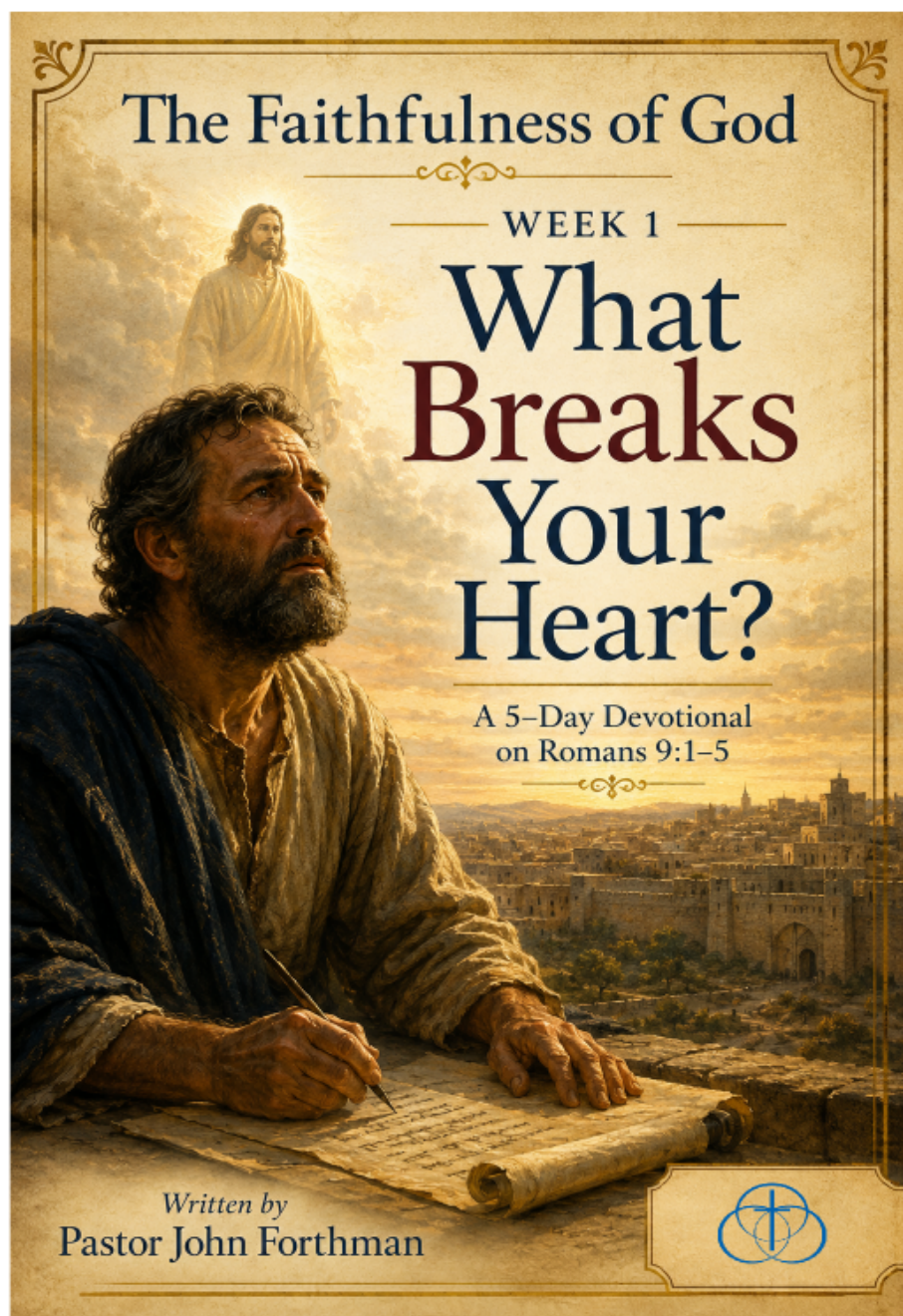




A 5-Day Devotional on Romans 9:1-5 • Pastor John Forthman

Day 1 - What Breaks Your Heart?

Scripture: Romans 9:1-2 - *"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart."*

Reflection

Paul begins Romans 9 in an unexpected way. After celebrating the unshakable love of God at the end of Romans 8, he immediately speaks of "great sorrow and unceasing grief." Why? Because the people he loved most had not embraced the Savior.

Paul's heart teaches us something important: spiritual maturity does not make us emotionally distant. Instead, it makes us more compassionate. Sometimes we assume that growing in faith means becoming stronger, tougher, and less affected by the pain around us. But Scripture paints a different picture. The closer we grow to Christ, the more our hearts begin to reflect His. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Paul wept over Israel. Both grieved because people were living apart from God.

What truly breaks my heart? If we are honest, many things frustrate us that never moved Jesus. At the same time, many things that deeply moved Jesus barely capture our attention. Ask God to shape your heart so that what matters most to Him begins to matter most to you.

Questions for Reflection

- What burdens have I been carrying for someone I love?
- Have I allowed frustration to replace compassion?
- How is God inviting me to reflect His heart today?

Prayer: Father, soften my heart. Help me to love people the way You love them. Replace my frustration with compassion, and teach me to grieve with hope rather than despair. Amen.

Day 2 - Speaking the Truth with Love

Scripture: Romans 9:1 - "I am telling the truth in Christ..."

Reflection

Paul opens this chapter by insisting that he is telling the truth. He speaks "in Christ," with a conscience guided by the Holy Spirit. Truth mattered deeply to Paul.

But notice something equally important. His truth is wrapped in love. In today's world, many people assume they must choose between truth and compassion. Some boldly defend truth but forget kindness. Others emphasize kindness while avoiding difficult truths.

Jesus never separated the two. He came full of grace and truth. As followers of Christ, we are called to do the same. Speaking truth without love often pushes people away. Showing love without truth leaves people without the hope of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit desires to shape us into people whose words are both truthful and gracious.

Before speaking today, ask yourself, "Will my words help this person move closer to Christ?"

Questions for Reflection

- Are my conversations marked by both truth and grace?
- How do people experience Christ through my words?
- What relationship needs more patience and gentleness?

Prayer: Lord, guard my tongue and guide my heart. Help me to speak Your truth with humility, kindness, and love. Amen.

Day 3 - Loving Like Christ

Scripture: Romans 9:3 - *"For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh."*

Reflection

Paul makes an astonishing statement, "I could wish that I myself were accursed...for the sake of my brothers." Paul is not suggesting he could lose his salvation. Instead, he is expressing the depth of his love. His words remind us of Moses, who pleaded for Israel after the golden calf, and ultimately they point us to Jesus.

Unlike Paul, Jesus did not merely wish to bear our judgment. He actually did. He willingly took our place on the cross. Every act of Christian love begins at Calvary.

When we remember what Christ has done for us, it becomes much harder to give up on others. Someone prayed for us. Someone loved us. Someone shared the Gospel with us.

God patiently pursued us long before we ever sought Him. Now He calls us to extend that same patient love to others.

Questions for Reflection

- Who has faithfully prayed for me throughout my life?
- How has Christ demonstrated sacrificial love toward me?
- How can I reflect that love today?

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for taking my place. Teach me to love others with the same patience and sacrifice You have shown me. Amen.

Day 4 - Never Stop Hoping

Scripture: Romans 9:4-5a - "who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promise, whose are the fathers..."

Reflection

Paul lists the incredible blessings God had given Israel: adoption, the covenants, the Law, the promises, and the patriarchs.

Yet despite all these blessings, many still rejected Christ. That reality could have led Paul to despair. Instead, it strengthened his resolve to keep proclaiming the Gospel. Hope is not based on what we can see. Hope is based on who God is.

Many of us have prayed for loved ones for years. Some prayers seem unanswered. Some hearts remain hard. Some relationships remain strained. But God's timing is often different from ours. Never confuse God's silence with God's absence. The God who faithfully kept every promise throughout Israel's history is still at work today.

Keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep hoping.

Questions for Reflection

- Have I become discouraged in praying for someone?
- What promise of God gives me hope today?
- How can I continue trusting God's timing?

Prayer: Faithful God, strengthen my hope. Help me to trust You even when I cannot yet see what You are doing. Amen.

Day 5 - Faithful God, Faithful People

Scripture: *Romans 9:5b - "... from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

Reflection

Paul ends this opening paragraph exactly where every believer should end - with Jesus. The greatest privilege Israel received was not the Law. Not the temple. Not even the covenants. It was Christ. Every promise God made ultimately finds its fulfillment in Him. As we finish this week, remember that our confidence has never rested in our ability to persuade people. It rests in God's faithfulness.

The God who pursued you still pursues the people you love. That means we never stop praying. Never stop loving. Never stop serving. Never stop hoping. This week's passage began with tears, but those tears are not tears of defeat. They are tears filled with hope because they are anchored in the God who never breaks His promises. May that same hope shape your heart this week.

Questions for Reflection

- How has this week's study changed my heart?
- Who will I continue praying for?
- How can I better reflect Christ's compassion each day?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for Your unfailing faithfulness. Make me into a person whose life reflects Your compassion, Your truth, and Your hope. Use me to point others to You. Amen.