

XXXII. Romans in Biblical Perspective

The Gospel of God

“The Demonstrated Love of God”

Romans 5:6–11

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May 8, 2022 • Sunday Morning Sermon

Romans 5:1-5 says [1] *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I'm always interested in God's providence but I confess I don't always plan it out. I'm always intrigued when we get to Sundays like Mother's Day or Father's Day as to what texts of Scripture the Lord will have us in. In this study God has us in the text that was foundational to the entire Reformation, which I think is actually the most powerful, other than Pentecost, movement of the Spirit of God in the 2,000 year history of the New Testament church. Out of this text comes all the watch words of the Reformation – we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone.

There is another reason I'm particularly grateful to be in Romans 5:6-11. One of the significant issues in ministry to professing believers is around the issue of assurance of salvation. One of my dear friends, William Mackenzie, from Scotland was here this past Thursday for a conference and he heads up Christian Focus Publications and we had him, his wife and some friends over for dinner. I asked them a series of questions for people to get to know them better and one of the questions I asked them about was how God saved them. William said 'I do not know the date that I would associate with my conversion but I do know the date when God granted me assurance of my salvation.'

As the hymn *Blessed Assurance* says;

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

O what a foretaste of glory divine...

On many occasions I have experienced that as a pastor as I have sat and talked with people and they say 'I know I'm supposed to have a assurance but I just don't feel assurance of my salvation.' I begin to share with them some good news for one of the reasons the Bible was written was so that we could have assurance of our salvation.

I John 5:13 says [13] *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.* One of the reasons is, for those who have confessed Christ by faith and repentance for you to be assured of your salvation in Christ. If you have had to work through this assurance or you are there right now, one, it is understandable because there are warnings in the Bible of people who have false assurance. In fact, Jesus Himself, as He finishes the Sermon on the Mount, warns us that on the last day there will be many who say to Him in Matthew 7:22-23, [22] *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty*

works in Your name?’ [23] And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.’ Their assurance was on what they did but not on Him and what He did and it will be shown on that Day.

Paul says in II Corinthians 13:5, [5] *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!* It is perfectly appropriate for you to examine yourself in terms of your assurance of your saving faith but the assurance of your salvation rests solely on Christ alone. You are joined to Christ by faith and faith has evidences so the Bible calls us to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith, not whether you have done good enough to be saved. What we do are the evidences of our faith and therefore the evidence of our Savior at work within us. They are not contributory to our salvation therefore the assurance of our salvation doesn’t come from what we do, but it comes from the love of God in Christ and what He did – that alone is the assurance of our salvation.

It is appropriate to examine whether you have the evidences of saving faith because saving faith is what connects me to Christ but that doesn’t assure me of my salvation – it assures me of my saving faith. Christ is the assurance of my salvation – the love of God in Christ – who He is and what He did – that alone. I want to now show you this from this text of Scripture in Romans 5. Be on the alert for a couple of words/phrases that Paul uses. Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit is a linear thinker and he builds words, paragraphs and sentences, one upon the other. He uses words like therefore and for which applies to the previous verses.

Let’s go back to Romans 5:1 which says [1] ***Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*** The words in bold give us assurance. It doesn’t say ‘therefore having the possibility of being justified...’ God’s people have been justified by faith. Romans 5:1 goes back to the previous verse because chapter divisions weren’t added until later so the previous verses of Romans 4:24-25 says [24] *It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, [25] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.* We can only be declared innocent before God through Christ who took away our sins at the cross where He said ‘It is finished.’ Three days later the Father says ‘Amen’ when He raised Him from the dead. Therefore, when I am joined to that Christ my confidence is in what He did at the cross and through His resurrection.

Then in Romans 5:1-5 after having been justified by faith Paul labels five glorious legacy blessings for the saved and justified. One, is we have peace with God (Romans 5:1). We have the peace of God and peace with God. We are born at enmity with Christ but in Christ we are justified, innocent and we have peace with God.

A second legacy blessing is we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand (Romans 5:2). We stand before Him and we stand in Him. In this world we stand for Him. We have access to Him at any time, any place and any moment.

The third legacy blessing is we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2). One of the main ways this is evidenced is through the priority and privilege of the Lord’s Day worship and then carrying the hope of God into every arena of life. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Glory, praise and worship to God is the very heartbeat of our life.

The fourth legacy blessing is [3] *Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame ...* (Romans 5:3-5a). We rejoice in our

sufferings. Whenever we suffer for Christ's sake in this world for the providences of God many times are hard but we end up rejoicing because we know God never promised us that all things are good but all things are working together for good. He is doing something in us, on us and through us, through the suffering that is burning out the dross in our life and He is giving us a platform to proclaim Him in the midst of our sufferings.

The fifth legacy blessing is you have the presence and power of the Spirit of God when it says because of that, God's love has been poured out into our hearts because of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). We are faultless before His throne, we stand redeemed and accepted. He has sealed us with God's love. Now let's go to the text for this study, the next verse.

Romans 5:6-11 says [6] *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— [8] but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. [10] For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. [11] More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

I believe this text sets the nail of Christ's assurance of salvation. First of all, what do we find out about God's love? God's love has been poured out in my heart and it's the love that has been demonstrated by God when He gave His Son to die for us as sinners. There are five things we can learn about God's love from this text.

Number one, God's love is visible. It's active because God demonstrates His love. God shows His love. John 3:16 says [16] *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* God's love is not just esoteric, theoretical, conceptual but it's actual. It has been displayed in time and history. We hear of God's love every time we say the Apostles' Creed;
*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (see the love of God humbling Himself)
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;*
he descended into hades,
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic** church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The love of Christ has been demonstrated in time and space. This is not philosophical wonderings of abstract religion. This is the reality of the love of God that is visible and active.

Secondly, God's love is timely. *At the right time Christ died for the ungodly...* There are two Greek words for time in the Bible – chronos and Kairos. Chronos is the succession of moments – basically your watch. Kairos means the moment, the season, the right time. Have you ever wondered if God is going to show up on time in your life? He always does but many times we don't think it's the right time and that's where you have to trust Him. If you had been living in the days of Jesus you might have questioned if God was on the right time. How are they going to pay taxes and have a Baby? God was right on time. In the days of Caesar Augustus when it was tax season, the Scriptures will be fulfilled for the Savior will be born in Bethlehem. It didn't seem the best time to send Jesus for all were rejecting Him. Look at this power of Rome that will get in the way of everything. God's love is timely and true.

Thirdly, God's love is sacrificial and costly. God so loved...He gave His only Son. All those sacrifices in the Old Testament they were times pointing to what Christ would do on the cross for us.

Fourthly, not only did He die for us (sacrificially) but He died in the place of us. Therefore, He is dying for sinners, enemies, the ungodly, the helpless. In other words, His love is unmerited, undeserved, unsought. Does our great God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – need you? No. Do you need Him? Yes. Did you seek Him? No, but He sought you, the unmerited undeserved love of God came to cleanse us from our sins, guilt and shame and clothe us with His perfect righteousness.

Fifthly, God's love is a vicarious and personal love. He takes our place at the cross. In other words, the death of God's judgment that was due to us He took upon Himself at the cross to drink the cup of the unmixed wrath of God that was due to us, so that we could have the cup of life that is unfathomable.

The best illustration I have of vicarious is a personal one. We were blessed with three children and the first child we had the way God intended for people to have children. My wife came to me and said 'My suitcase is packed and I'm ready to go to the hospital.' I don't remember the ride to the hospital that day but when we got there, I helped her out and got the suitcase and the nurse met me with that knowing little look saying 'Ok sir thank you, you may go to this room' as she sent me to the father's waiting room which is what God intended all along. Our firstborn arrived and went to see our baby girl through the nursery window because back then you were not allowed to hold them then. I went in and saw my wife, kissed her and she said 'I'm going to sleep' so I went home and came back the next day. Those were back in the days of sanity.

A couple of years later we had another child. By this time everyone is talking about how the father ought to participate in the birth of the child as if we are of some use in there. I never was able to attend the classes so when the time came for the delivery of our son, the nurse said to me 'you have to leave because you're not certified' because I had not been to the classes. So, when our third one came along, I was a student pastor and there were a lot of young couples in the church at that time so the pressure was on to go to Lamaze classes.

So, for our third child I went to all six of the Lamaze classes and learned to focus and breathe which was what I was supposed to help my wife with. So, I then stayed in at the birth of our third child. So, there I was telling my wife during the delivery to focus and breathe and she finally said to me 'will you just shut up' so I had to go to a class for my wife to tell me that? I remember this belt like device that was around her that was attached to this graph. Every time a

contraction came that needle on the graph would start moving like crazy but before it did that there was always this ‘blip’ and as soon as the ‘blip’ came the needle would start moving. After about 30 minutes, I started to notice that every time the blip came, I noticed these pains in my stomach and the doctor told me those were vicarious because that is what you are doing to try and take the pain from your wife as I would try and take her place. I guess that’s what it was for I loved her and wanted to take it from her but I couldn’t.

As inadequate as that illustration is your God has loved you and the unendurable, unmixed wrath of God due to us for our cosmic rebellion against the Almighty who is holy, took our place that we might have everlasting life in Him. Do you see where your assurance is going now? What can my works add to that? Nothing. He is mine and I am His. This is what He has done out of His undeniable love for me. Who is it that partakes of this?

Who are the ‘us’? The ‘us’ are His people. The Bible tells us that Jesus came to save His people from their sins. In the text we are described with five words. Romans 5:6 says [6] *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.* The first two come from this verse. One, we are the helpless, the weak, those who are spiritually impotent.

Two, we are the ungodly. Romans 1:18 says [18] *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.* We don’t get the wrath, why? It is because Jesus took our place, the place we should have been in.

We see the next two descriptions of us in Romans 5:8-10 which says [8] *but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* [9] *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.* [10] *For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.*

Thirdly, we are sinners and fourthly we are His enemies. Fifthly, though which is amazing, we are His people, for because of what He has done we are justified, saved and reconciled. Matthew 1:21 says [21] *She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.* We are His people and what a glorious truth that is ours for we who are undeserving.

Paul found a way to emphasize something – five times in this Romans 5:6-11 text. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ **died**. *For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* This is the glorious death of Christ out of love for His people – not a model death, not a martyr’s death – an atoning death so that we know we have everlasting life in Him. The cross is where the love of God met the holiness of God to save sinners by the grace of God through the love of God and the Son of God to the glory of God and that’s why we look back there to the love of God in Christ for our assurance.

Here are three questions this answers. Who saves us? It is the Triune God. The Father out of His love sent His Son to save us from our sins. The Son gave Himself and demonstrated that love for you and the Spirit was sent from the Son to bring us to Christ. We have a Gospel of Triune glory in God. There is coming a judgment Day and on that Day we want to be in the book of life where we hear the verdict ‘justified’ so do you understand why the Gospel is Good News? That word that you want to hear on that Day you can hear today if you come to Christ. Jesus said in John 6:47, [47] *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.* What you do is the evidence of your faith, your assurance comes from Christ and the love of God displayed in Christ.

What has He saved us from? He saved me from hell and my sins, Amen! But the Bible brings us to one focus. Romans 5:8 says [8] **but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** He has justified us by His blood, much more, we are saved from the wrath of God.

This is probably the biggest burden of my heart because I know that Day is coming and it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a living God (Hebrews 10:31) and you're only hope in that Day is the love of God that was displayed in Christ – on redeeming day at the cross. This day have you come to Him, have you placed your hope in Him?

My objective is not to get through life unscathed, but my desire in life other than giving glory to God is that you will be saved from the wrath to come for it is inevitable and God will not be mocked. He is holy but He has also loved you. He loved you before you ever existed to give you the glorious blessing of eternal life in Christ. Please don't leave reading this with a resolution that you're going to get better, but leave here with Christ who came here for you because God's love has been demonstrated for you.

For those who know Him and things in life aren't going well, do not measure God's love by reading the tea leaves of life – measure the height, the depth, the length, and the width of God's love when you look to the cross for there is the love of God demonstrated for you.

Romans 8:31-39 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?*** [32] *He who did not spare his own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?* [33] *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* [35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* [36] *As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

[37] *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* [38] *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

God will not and cannot cease loving you because He never started loving you. The eternal God has eternally loved you. He started a work in you but before you ever existed, He loved you. This is why I love the benediction in Revelation 1:5b which says [5b] *To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood.* The cross does not initiate the eternal love of God, it demonstrates the love of God and there is your assurance.

The song *In Christ Alone* by the Gettys has two lines that say this;
*Til on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied...*

They were offered a great sum of money to change those line to read;
*Til on that cross as Jesus died,
The love of God was magnified...*

Even though it is still true, it is true because the wrath of God was satisfied for you by God Himself because He has loved you and praise the Lord they didn't change the line. God looses you from eternity for He doesn't cease His love because we don't do good enough for what we do evidences His love, not causes it. I know that because He loved you through His

Son when you weren't doing good enough because we were sinners, undeserved. We do good not for God to love us but because He has loved us.

This brings me to where we started this worship service when we sang *Amazing Love* which says;

*Amazing love! How can it be,
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me!
Amazing love! How can it be,
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me!*

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to read, study, sing and preach Your Word. I pray now for Your people that through the Word of God they would come to the God of the Word and receive the Savior if they haven't. If they have, Father, may they root their assurance in Christ, certainly we will examine ourselves to see if we have saving faith, but our assurance comes from the Object of our faith – the love of God in Christ at the cross. Father, fill us up, not with a confidence in religion, but a confidence in the love of God in Christ and then send us to proclaim to the world, 'Jesus loves not sin, but sinners to bring us to salvation in Christ!' Praise Your Name Jesus, Amen.