

April 10, 2022
Palm Sunday

The Love of God

Romans 5:6-11

Part 3

LTS: Matt. 21:1-11

For those who believe, the fear of judgment is eternally nullified by the love of God for us in Christ.

A moment ago, Randy read for us the narrative of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. From the time of his birth, He had been the long-expected King – the Christ. But even from the earliest days of His life, the idea of Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's King was rejected.

Shortly after his birth Herod attempted to kill him. When he came of age and began teaching, the religious leaders hated him. His own brothers rejected his claim to be the promised Christ. And while it was true that his disciples believed he was Christ, their understanding of His purpose and mission in the world was misguided.

To various degrees, everyone was disappointed with Jesus. He never lived up to their ultimate expectations as the promised coming King.

On Palm Sunday, however, all that appeared to change. When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, for the great feast the whole city came out to greet him shouting "Hosanna! Hoasanna! (which means, "Save us! Save us!"). In those few moments God's chosen people treated Him as if He really was their king. But the excitement was short-lived.

As soon as he entered the temple courtyard, Jesus began rebuking the religious authorities for turning the house of the Lord into a market for thieves and robbers. He turned over their tables and sent their money spilling to the ground.

The Pharisees hated him for this. And they plotted together how they might kill Him. And with the help of one of His own disciples, their homicidal plot was set in motion. He would be arrested this very night and crucified the following day.

Unbeknownst to them, however, the entire narrative of the Passion of Christ was playing out exactly as God had planned it from before the creation of the world. While the world was killing Jesus, Jesus was loving the world.

By His atoning death on the cross, Jesus would secure the eternal salvation of a multitude that cannot be numbered.

Some years later, the apostle John would write,

1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The cross of Christ was the ultimate display of the love of God for sinners. And that divine love proved to be the motive the gospel of Jesus Christ

Let's take a few minutes to review the gospel as revealed by the apostle Paul in the book of Romans.

In the gospel Paul preached, the righteousness required by God is the righteousness given by God by grace alone through faith alone. For as it is written...

“The just shall live by faith.”

In the beginning chapters of Romans Paul exposes the reality that all humans are sinners by birth and by choice. By nature, we are hard-wired to resist and reject God. So, God gave man over to what he wanted. He turned us over to the lusts of our flesh. It doesn't matter whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. All of us are worthy of God's righteous wrath.

Furthermore, we learn in God's word that there is a righteousness we desperately need, don't have, and can't earn. You can't achieve it by law-keeping. You can't get it by circumcision or baptism, or even by church attendance.

The righteousness we need is the righteousness that comes from God apart from human works. It is a righteousness that is received by faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (Rom. 3:22).

In chapter 4 of Romans, Paul calls for the witness of Abraham. How was Abraham justified? How was he counted righteous in the eyes of God? “He was justified by faith.” “He believed God and God said it was counted to Him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). Moreover, that imputed righteousness would be His forever. It would carry Him all the way to glory.

Again, this gospel is exemplified in the O.T. after David committed adultery and murder in his affair with Bathsheba. And yet David declared, “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin against him” (Rom. 4:7-8). So, justification in the eyes of God depends on faith. Faith in Jesus Christ apart from meritorious works.

This sounds almost too good to be true.

And yet, it is God's promise. and is guaranteed to all his offspring... that is, all who share the faith that Abraham had (Rom. 4:16-25).

Now, pay attention to the word “Guaranteed (Rom. 4:16).” God has guaranteed the salvation (justification) of all who believe in Jesus as their sufficient and only Savior.

As you know, the people to whom Paul was writing in Rome believed this gospel. They embraced it. They entered into covenant with Jesus by faith. But Paul was concerned that perhaps some might wonder if the promise of justification by faith alone would really last?

How can we be sure that the covenant between God and the sinner who simply believes in Jesus will truly last? How can we be sure that in the end we will not get what we actually deserve; namely, eternal judgment, rejection, and condemnation in hell?

Paul's answer is, you can be sure that God's everlasting covenant with you is made of a fabric that is infinitely stronger and more secure than any human covenant that has ever been made.

Even the best and purest covenant commitments between people can decay and tear apart over time (as is evidenced in the current divorce rate in our country). But God's covenant promise is as secure as the nature of God Himself.

How can we be sure? We can be sure because the origin of our justification is not what we do or have done. Rather, it's source is the infinite, unfettered, sovereign love of love God.

We might think of it like this:

The love of God moved the hand of God to send the son of God to reconcile enemies of God to Himself.

This is divine love. This is amazing love! This is God's covenant promise! And we have learned some things about the Love of God (In. Rom 5) that undergirds God's saving promise. Specifically, we have learned that...

- I. The Nature of God's Love is eternal
- II. The Timing of God's love, is sovereign
- III. The Manner of God's love is sacrificial.

And that's where we left off last week.

Today we pick up with the fourth feature of God's love; namely,

- IV. The Recipients of God's Love.

Today I intend to finish this section of Rom. 5, but before we look at it one more time, let's stand together and read this text in its context.

Read Rom 5:1-11

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.

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.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

What Paul is about to say to sinners like you and me is one of the most encouraging words we will hear in this life. After reading about the glory of God's Love; Its substance, its timing, its manner, etc... something inside my heart is compelled to ask, "Who is this for? To whom will God actually bestow such love? Who are the privileged people who are loved like that!

IV. The Recipients of His Love"

- Who are the recipients of God's awesome and eternal love?
 - The Rich?
 - The noble?
 - The Brilliant
 - The religious elite of our time?
 - Those who have believed enough?
 - Those who Repented enough,
 - Those who Were good enough
 - No!
-
- Rather there are four kinds of people that God intends to pour His love upon. They are
 - The Weak
 - The Ungodly
 - Sinners and
 - The Enemies of God

Let me show you in the text.

- (v. 6) The weak. Paul says, "For while we were still weak..."
- The word "weak" means powerless. This speaks of the inability of the sinner to do anything for himself as it regards salvation, justification and reconciliation with God.

- (v. 6) The ungodly. (read v. 6) "At just the right time Christ died for the ungodly. "The ungodly refers to Those who are most unlike God. The godless. It's not that they aren't religious. It's just that they worship things that are not God. They live for money, sex, power, food, pleasure.

- (v. 8) Sinners: Paul writes (8) “ but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The term sinners is the word for those who break God’s law. They hate God’s authority over their lives. They resent His Lordship. They prefer unrighteousness over virtue and holiness
They are “sinners”

Finally, the fourth category of people upon whom God intends to pour His eternal love are called

- (10) Enemies: Paul writes, “For while we were enemies we were reconciled to God”. Here he is speaking of those, like Paul, who hated God and despised His gospel, and blasphemed His Son, and killed His followers.
 - i. This borders the absurd! What kind of promise is this?

- Now this is the best part and the focus of this whole passage. Let me read it for you.

Romans 5:6–8

⁶ For while we were still weak (Powerless), 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 [“Prooves”] his love

- His scandalous love
 - His foolish love
 - His divine love
 - His eternal love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- This is the whole point of the passage, my friends!
 - It’s almost conceivable that someone would die for a good and righteous man. But I am NOT that man! You are NOT that Man!
 - Who are we that the long-awaited Christ should die for us? Well, Paul has already told us who we are.

Romans 3:10–12

as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

- O my Friend, do you see yourself in one of these categories?
 - Are you powerless and helpless having no ability or merit of your own by which to recommend yourself to God?
 - Are you ungodly?

- Are you a sinner?
- Do you sit in this church this morning as an enemy of God?
- If so,\... If So... If so...then the gospel is for you!
- And this brings us to the final feature of the love of God.

V. The Security of God's Love.

1. Look again at vv. 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.

2. What does Paul mean when he speaks of the saving power of Jesus' life? Well, He is speaking of the powerful thing that happened after God the Father caused His only begotten Son to suffer crucifixion; namely, Resurrection. And not only resurrection, but His ascension back to His Father's throne upon which Jesus now sits as the One to whom all authority in heaven and earth is given forever, so that before Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord – to the glory of the Father.

3. Do you want to know for certain that your justification is eternally secure? Do you want confidence that Jesus will never go back on the covenant He made with you? Meditate on the Love of God for sinners.

4. Look back at verse 5 (the verse I couldn't find last week.) In v. 5 Paul tells us that the reason that you will never be disappointed with Jesus' gospel promises is because the love of God is poured into our hearts through the H.S.

5. In other words, the Spirit's ministry to those who are in covenant with Jesus is to remind us of His love. What has His love achieved for us?

(v. 1). We have peace with God.

(v. 2) We have obtained access to God by grace.

(v. 3) We experience joy in our suffering!

And that joyful suffering produces endurance, character, and eternal hope.

(v.5 and that love will never disappoint us. He will never end the relationship!

(v.6-11) And the proof of it is witnessed by the fact that while we were Powerless, Ungodly, sinful, and enemies of God, Christ died for us. He didn't wait for you to improve, or to change, to get more determined or to be good enough. NO! He sought for us and found us when we were the worst we ever would be, he declared his love for you, and then died in your place so that you could be reconciled to God forever.

You see, my friend! The love of God moved the hand of God to send the Son of God to reconcile enemies of God to Himself. For His great glory and our eternal joy.

Rejoice in this! Glory in this! Meditate on this!

More than that (v. 11) we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

I think this is what the apostle John was thinking about when he wrote, "Behold what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1)

Puritan pastor, John Owen wrote, "The greatest sorrow and burden you can lay on the Father; the greatest unkindness you can do to him is not to believe that he loves you."¹

Perhaps the best way to end this series on the love of God is to simply read

Rom.8:35-39

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 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.

Because of His great love for you in Christ, you who are justified are eternally secure.

¹ (from Communion With God, by John Owen; Banner of Truth. p. 13)