

Secure in the Incomparable Love of God

Series in Romans

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Bible Text: Romans 5:5b-11

Preached on: Sunday, June 13, 2004

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Romans chapter five, reading together, again the first 11 verses of the chapter.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.¹

Or, as I suspect it should be read, “We have now received the at-one-ment,” the reconciliation.

Amen. The Lord will add his own blessing to the reading of his precious Word for his name’s sake.

You recollect, I hope, that I have been pointing out Paul sets before us something of an outline of his course of study in Romans in the third chapter from verse 21 to 31. He gives us a series of pregnant statements that he then takes up and expounds in much greater detail.

¹ Romans 5:1-11.

In Romans chapter five he is expounding that wonderful statement in Romans 3:24, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”²

That is, really, the text, if you will, of all that Paul is saying here in the fifth chapter of Romans.

Now Romans five falls into two very distinct sections, the first 11 verses and then 12 through 21. In verses one to 11 Paul is expounding the words, “Justified freely by his grace through the redemption.”³ And then in verses 12 to 21 he gives very particular notice to this great theme, this redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And when we get to that section in the will of God you will notice that we will then be entering into one of the most profound passages in all of holy writ where Paul is inspired to explore what it means to be first in Adam and then what it means to be in Christ.

Now we are still in the first section. We have already dealt with verses one through 5a, the first four and a half verses of the chapter. Remember what the theme there was, that Paul was dealing with the new secure standing that believers have with God. And he notes that the foundation of that standing is not in themselves or in their works, but in the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the basis of his merit and his mediation, Paul shows we are declared righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that therefore we have peace with God. And I am not going to retrace our steps over that particular statement, but that is one wonderful statement. We have peace with God.

Then he shows that we have the power to prove the effectiveness of the gospel and its grace in the most difficult circumstances of life. We glory, he says, we boast in tribulations also. We boast in tribulations.

Now let me be quite frank with you and say he is occupying ground, therefore, that every Christian should occupy, but honestly compels us to say that most Christians have never yet approached to it. And I don’t want to derail myself before I start, but that is why I shudder every time this congregation sings what they sang tonight, especially after a good laugh.

My soul trembled tonight when I looked out in this church and I saw people smiling and laughing one second and then next singing, praying to almighty God, “Lay any burden on me.” I have been with the parents of grossly disfigured babies. “Lay any burden on me.”

Oh, sure, I believe we can take anything if God will be with us. But this is ground that most Christians should take and haven’t take. We boast in tribulations because there is power for us available to prove that the gospel works even in the most difficult of circumstances.

² Romans 3:24.

³ Ibid.

And then, of course, we have the prospect of certain bliss.

There is this wonderful statement in verse five that our hope maketh not ashamed. It will never let us down. It will never put us to shame. Christians will not be disappointed in their hope of glory.

Now Paul is very much aware of what an amazing statement of absolute certainty he has just made. And I want you to understand it is a statement of absolute certainty. Our hope will never make us ashamed.

And because it is such a statement, Paul goes out of his way to give us a detailed exposition of the very best possible line of argument to show us that however amazing, this statement is nothing but sober truth. In other words, this is not pious talk. This is not whistling in the dark. This is not just expressing some vague wish. Paul, when he uses the word “hope” is speaking not of what he hopes might happen, but of the guarantee of what God has declared must happen. That is his hope.

And so, therefore, he says, “I am going to prove to you that this hope will never make us ashamed.” And that is what the rest of the section from the middle of verse five to the end of verse 11 is all about.

Now in a nutshell, the argument is this. God has given us the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Spirit has poured into our hearts—well, let me rephrase that. It is not into. There is a nuance here. This is the only place in the New Testament where this verb appears with the preposition “in” not the preposition “into.” He has poured in our hearts, speaking of something that has happened in the past, but it is an ongoing experience. He has poured in our hearts the love of God. That love that led God’s dear Son to die for us and then to rise again and live for us. And Paul is arguing here, if we grasp the reality of God’s immeasurable love in Christ, we will realize that there is no room for doubt, that believers have an immovable security and a well grounded assurance.

Once you understand the love of God in Christ, security is a settled matter. Assurance is a settled matter once you grasp the reality and the nature, the actions and the intention of God’s love in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And for anyone in that position of grasping God’s love, there is nothing for him to do but—as verse 11 says—glory or boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have received reconciliation.

The subject, then, that is before us tonight—and I will not promise that we will get it finished, though we make the attempt—the subject is: Secure in the incomparable love of God. That is the subject and, really, what Paul is saying here is that the love of God is the Holy Spirit’s surest and best argument for the present assurance and the eternal security of believers in Christ.

Now let's follow the argument step by step and see how everything works in to the security of the believer.

We start in the middle of verse five. Here is how we know our hope maketh not ashamed.

“...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”⁴

We must start at the end of the verse if we are going to put things in chronological order.

First truth here: God has given us his Holy Spirit.

Now, this is a vital component in Paul's argument. The amazing thing is when you read the experts and the commentators on Romans five, not too many of them spend a lot of time in this particular part of the argument. There are other great things in this text and they are rushing on as if the giving of the Holy Spirit were only an afterthought. But this is absolutely essential to everything else. Without this there is nothing.

He has given us his Holy Spirit and the truth that he is getting over is this. That one fact. The fact that God has given his Holy Spirit to believers is an essential part of proving the security of those believers. The argument really is very simple and yet it is profound. If God has given you his Spirit, he is never going to damn you. If God has given you his Spirit, you are his in a unique and wonderful and unchangeable way.

Now in chapter five Paul only mentions this. This is... you will see this in Paul's style again and again, not only in Romans, but in other places. For example, if you go through the first epistle to the Corinthians you will see this where Paul loves to hide something out there and then later he will come and he will pick it up.

I remember when I was lecturing through 1 Corinthians, I pointed out to our students that in many ways that is the structure of that whole book where he deals with something and in dealing with that, he mentions something else. It is only a mention. Then he comes and he starts expounding that. In that exposition he mentions something else and then later he picks it up. He loves to do that.

Here he is mentioning the fact that God has given us the Holy Spirit. In chapter eight he deals with this in much, much fuller detail. And there you will find there are many, many great statements about the spirit. In many ways Romans chapter eight is peculiarly the chapter of the Holy Spirit. Paul speaks of him as the Spirit of life, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, the Spirit that dwelleth in you, the Spirit who enables you to mortify the deeds of the body, the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit who bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, the Spirit who helpeth our infirmities, the Spirit who maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

⁴ Romans 5:5.

Here the apostle is dealing in detail with what it means when he says, “God has given us his Spirit.”

At the moment here in Romans five it is just the bare fact. But that is enough for the moment. It is not the person and work of the Holy Spirit he is really wanting to expound at this point in the argument. All he wants to do is impress upon us: We have the most solid possible ground for believing that there is absolute security for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And one such ground is that God has given us his Spirit.

Notice with me very carefully that the end of the verse reads in our translation “which is given unto us.”⁵ This is just one of those cases where English usage has changed somewhat over the years. What Paul was saying is that he was given unto us. And the tense is deliberately chosen. He is referring to one decisive act of God in the past when he saved us. He gave us his Spirit. And, again, without sometimes you can go too far in what you read into the tense of a Greek verb. I don’t think that is so in this case. But that single decisive act in the past, if I could use the word, it is an encapsulated event. It is a complete event. It is a finished event. And remember what the Bible tells us what God does is done forever. Never forget that. When God does something, he does it forever. And when he gives us his Spirit, he gives us his Spirit forever. That is the force of the tense. He was given, once and for all, to us. When he saved us, that is what God did.

Thus, our security is immovable. Why? Because God has given us his Spirit. Our assurance is well grounded. Why? Because God has given us his Spirit. Our hope of glory can never be disappointed. Why? Because God has given the very Spirit of God and the glory to us.

We are indwelt by the Spirit. As Paul taught the Ephesians and the Corinthians, we are sealed by the Spirit. And in writing that to the Ephesians he adds, “We are sealed unto the day of redemption.”⁶

Many people misquote that text and say, “We are sealed until the day of redemption.” That is not what Paul said. We are not sealed until as if there is coming a day when we will be unsealed. There is no idea of until in the text. We are sealed unto that day. We are sealed with the purpose of bringing us to that day. We are sealed because it is God’s intention that we cannot and must not miss out on that day. And to ensure that, he has sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

As Paul writes to the Ephesians, the Holy Spirit is also the earnest. The earnest is a word that is not used much in English nowadays. It is one of those words that has fallen by the wayside as we have imported other garbage words into our vocabulary. But I can remember in Northern Ireland out in the country parts in North Antrim, that was a word that would have been in use when there was a deal done. And someone gave a pledge. They gave part of a payment. That was sealing the deal. It was called the earnest. It is

⁵ Romans 5:5.

⁶ Ephesians 4:30.

the pledge of the full payment. And this is what the Holy Spirit is called. He is the earnest of our inheritance. We have not yet entered into glory. We have not yet entered into eternal fullness of the inheritance in Christ. But we are as sure of having that eternal fullness as if we were already in glory.

Why? Well, for one reason God has given us the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is God's pledge to his people, his guarantee of the glory that is to come.

So the first thing, the first truth in the argument regarding why our hope cannot ever be put to shame is that God has given us the Holy Spirit. Secondly, of argument, the Holy Spirit witnesses to us of God's great—and I have used the word—incomparable love for us.

Now notice how this is put at the end of verse five.

“...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.”⁷

Literally, the love of God has been poured in our hearts through the Holy Ghost. I want you to get that picture. The love of God has been poured in our hearts through the Holy Ghost. And in that text there are four wonderful truths about God's love that assure believers of their security in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first is the fact of God's love. The love of God.

Now that little phrase may mean our love for God or God's love for us. Many commentators, including the famous Augustine, bishop of Hippo, I like pronouncing that, bishop of Hippo. It always sounds to me rather strange why anyone would want to be a bishop over such brutes. I have no idea, but we will not get into that.

Augustine, he believed it was our love for God. I think he is altogether wrong. Here the whole sense of the passage is that it is God's love for us.

It is an amazing thing the kind of views that people have of some of the writers of Scripture. I have heard Paul described in many ways. You get the impression that Paul was either a cold logician—well, he was very logical—a very learned theologian—he was that—a brilliant linguist—yeah, he was that. Sometimes he was the zealot. You get that impression from people that I have heard it said and, I suppose with some truth that he would have been a very hard man to live with. But the only reason for that is people who are carnal don't like to be too close to a spiritual giant and people who want to be ice cold in their own spiritual walk don't like to get too near the fire. That wouldn't be Paul's fault. That would be ours.

You get the impression that Paul was this kind of person whereas John was the tender, soft hearted apostle of love.

⁷ Romans 5:5.

Now, John was inspired to write many beautiful things about the love of God. But no more so than Paul. Paul had, as one of his most happy themes, the love of God for us. When you get to the end of chapter eight, you will find, again, that mighty bursting forth. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Who will do it?

And then he goes down the list of possibilities and he says, “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”⁸

Writing to the Corinthians he says, “For the love of Christ constraineth us.”⁹

What made Paul tick? He knew that the Lord loved him. That is what made him tick. What set his soul on fire? He lived in the shadow of Calvary and he realized the Lord loved me and gave himself for me. That is what controlled his life.

And, you know, while I am getting off on a big subject that I really shouldn't even get into, I am going to say this because I have been told. Debbie was telling me this the other night. When you say I can't get into it, just go ahead and get into it. Well, I am going to get into it a little bit.

We are dealing with justification, assurance here, not sanctification at this point in time. But, you know, most of our problems with our sanctification, the reason why we are the carnal wretches at times that we despise, the reason why we don't live the way we ought to live, talk the way we ought to talk, walk the way we ought to walk, give the way we ought to give, serve the way we ought to serve, is because we get away from Calvary and we lose the vision and the intimacy and the overwhelming reality. God loved and loves me.

Oh, just understand that. The fact of the love of God it is the key to everything, Paul says. That is what makes me tick. That is what constrains me. That is what gets my aching bones out of bed in the morning, to tramp miles to bring the gospel to those who want to kill me. That is what make me take my stand. That is what makes me willing to live, willing to die, because the love of Christ constraineth me. It is a compulsion within me. It is a fire that burns. I know he loves me.

Oh, he loved to talk about God's love. He wanted every Christian to think about it and to live in it and bask in it.

In Ephesians three you have that wonderful prayer of Paul. I remember in prayer meetings here. We may actually come back to this in the months to come. I don't know. But in prayer meetings here years ago Wednesday evenings I went through the prayers of the apostle Paul.

⁸ Romans 8:38-39.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:14.

And in Ephesians three you have got one of the most majestic prayers in Scripture where Paul says, “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.”¹⁰

And he goes on to say what he is praying for, that he would grant them to be strengthened with mighty God’s spirit in the inner man, that they be rooted and grounded in faith, may be able to do what? Now he comes to it,

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.”¹¹

And he can’t even finish the sentence. He has to put it in.

“And to know...”¹²

What does he mean?

Comprehend, ah, but he says, “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”¹³

Paul, I believe, is saying, “I want you to be able to go to your Bibles and I want you to be able to trace through Scripture the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love. I want you to be able to take the text of Scripture, comprehend what the Bible is saying, but don’t think you know anything yet.”

Do with that great theme what J Kyle Paisley my old English Bible professor told me and I will repeat this story when we get into Romans six. As he looked at the table at me as his only student and I couldn’t miss the point. It was definitely for me. He said, “Young man, get on your knees with this open before you and stay there until God burns it into your heart.”

Ah, that’s it. Paul says, “I want you to know God’s love. I want it to be burned into your heart as it is burned into my heart. I want it to motivate your being. I want it to be your first thought in the morning, your last thought in the evening, your constant thought though the day. I want this to embrace you and to hold you in the arms of the eternal God. I want this to be that all enveloping truth. Know the love of God.”

Oh, men and women, let me tell you. This is a wonderful, wonderful fact and the fact is if the Holy Spirit witnesses to me of the fact of this immeasurable, incomparable love, then my eternity is absolutely secure.

¹⁰ Ephesians 3:14-15.

¹¹ Ephesians 3:18.

¹² Ephesians 3:19.

¹³ Ibid.

C H Spurgeon spoke of this word, this love, this term in our text and he said, “It is not compassion nor tenderness nor pity. But it is love which is something more than all these. You pity the beggar whom you could not love. You have compassion on the villain in whom you have no complacency. You look with tenderness upon sufferers who have nothing in their character or in their persons to attract your affection. But,” he says, “this text speaks of love.” Listen to his words. “Direct attachment and affection.”

That is the meaning of God’s love for us. Oh, yes, he has compassion, tender pity, loving kindness. He has all those things. But this is much more. This is divine attachment to us and our cause. This is divine affection for us. This is divine complacency in us, delight in us.

Someone has defined love as a full identification with the interests of another and a commitment to those interests. That is what we have here. This is the love of God for us. But listen. What he is saying is the Holy Spirit is witnessing to you of God’s love that God is attached to you. How can I let you go? God has affection for you. He has delight in you. How then can you perish?

Oh, here is the argument. God has given us his Spirit. His Spirit witnesses to us of the fact of God’s love. But then he witnesses to us of the fulness of God’s love. He has poured this love in our hearts.

And I said it is not just into us. If you have got a receptacle and something filling some part of that receptacle. No, no. That is not the idea. It is speaking now of something that happened when you were saved and it continues to be the abiding state of the soul. The witness of the fulness of God’s love. This pouring speaks of abundance. There is the idea of the lavishness of God’s love. That is a wonderful theme in Scripture, the idea of shedding abroad this love is that the Holy Spirit defuses within us every kindness that the love of God can possibly provide.

Do you remember what the psalmist said in the 68th psalm verse 19 when he spoke of the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits? That is it. That is a lavish hand.

What Paul wrote to the Ephesians in chapter one and verse three. He said he had blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, all spiritual blessings.

What Peter wrote in 2 Peter one verse three. He “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”¹⁴

Paul says, “All things are yours.”¹⁵

He said to even the apostles are yours. These mighty men of God, these mighty ministers. Peter and Paul and James and John and all the rest of them, they are yours. What are they? They are ministers. What are ministers? They are servants. They are

¹⁴ 2 Peter 1:3.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 3:21.

God's gifts to the Church of Christ to serve that Church. They are part of the lavish provision of the Lord in Jesus Christ.

Now God has given us everything that is necessary for life and godliness. If he has given us everything that Christ has purchased in the covenant of redemption, tell me, shall we yet perish despite what God's love can do for us? Surely not.

The Holy Spirit witnesses of the firmness of God's love. Everything in this text is to convey the message that the love of God is steady. It is unfluctuating. It is unchangeable and it is immovable. Not only in this text, but everywhere where the apostle expounds on the theme of the love of God in Christ, he speaks of it in terms that speak of its firmness. It has its source in God's nature. For God is love.

I can quote that text. I have preached on it. But I have to tell you I have never adequately expounded it and neither has anybody else. God is love.

This love, therefore, has its source in God's nature. But it also is in God's good pleasure, sovereign will. It has its strength in God's eternal perfection.

How can you trust the love of God for your security? Because he says, "I am [Jehovah,] I change not; therefore..."¹⁶

Always mark the "therefores" of Scripture. Mark the logic of Scripture. Christians are supposed to think on the basis of great truth. And here is great truth, Malachi three verse six

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."¹⁷

Sons of Jacob, sons of the twister, sons of that self centered, time serving fraud? For that is how he started out.

Yes, you sons of Jacob are secure. Why? Because the love of God has its strength in God's eternal perfections and it has its success in his immutable purpose. The love of God must succeed because the purpose of God will stand. He has said it, Isaiah 46 and verse 10.

"My counsel shall stand."¹⁸

Now the devil doesn't like that. All the cronies of the devil in the world, they don't like that. The rulers of this earth have got together to try to overthrow the counsel of the Lord. But they can't do it.

So the old tempter comes and he does the next best thing. He can't overthrow God's

¹⁶ Malachi 3:6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Isaiah 46:10.

eternal counsel, so he tries to destroy your enjoyment in that counsel and my enjoyment in it. And so he in some way or other—and he has a vast array of methods—he will bamboozle us. He will direct our thoughts in a foolish direction. He will overcome us with feelings of grief or sadness or disappointment or disillusionment or frustration or whatever. He will do whatever he can to take our mind off this, that God has an eternal, immovable, absolutely certain purpose that guarantees the success of his love, that having loved us, he'll love us to the very end.

Oh, I tell you, here is an argument that the Spirit witnesses for our complete assurance. And then, of course, there is the fruit of God's love. I want you to notice this. It is poured in our heart, poured in the heart.

What does that mean? It means that the Holy Ghost is not talking theory. You see, if there is one thing wrong with most of our religion nowadays, it is theory. People get great reputations because of their intellect, how they can enunciate this truth and that truth, how they can argue and how they can give you the theology and the philosophy of this, that and the other thing. Big deal. I am saying that as somebody who has spent most of his life studying theology. I love Protestant theology, reformed theology as long as it stays true to the Word of God.

I have read theologians that I have read parts of them. I will be quite honest. I get so mad with them I throw them away and I very rarely look at them again. And in the end of the day when you have read all they have got to say, well, I know they know Hebrew. I know they know Greek. I know they know philosophy. I know they know theology. I know they know this and they know that. But they are like blocks of ice.

I could name you some of the leading theologians of the 20th century and in all that I have ever read in them, they have not written a word that would ever warm my heart to Christ.

Now I want to tell you. That is plain, downright wrong.

Who was a greater theologian than Paul? And yet the fire that burns in his writing.

In the Reformation period God gave in John Calvin, he gave the Church the gift of the man I believe the greatest theologian since the days of the apostles. But when you read John Calvin, rather than his commentators, there is a fire. There is a passion. There is a love. There is a zeal. There is something that takes truth and applies it to the heart. And that is what Paul is talking about here. The Holy Ghost causes us not just to have a head knowledge, but to have a heart experience of God's love. And there is a world of difference.

You see, this is not just some sort of logical syllogism that Paul is giving. God loves sinners. I am a sinner. Therefore God loves me. Paul is not dealing in logical syllogisms. He is dealing here with the witness of the Spirit and that is something, again, that he is going to take up on fuller detail in Romans chapter eight in one of the most profound statements about the work of the Holy Spirit that he witnesses with our spirit. He is

introducing it here. He is saying he pours the love of God in our hearts. That is how he witnesses.

When the Holy Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God, is not that he writes across heaven, “There is your name. You are a child of God.” It is not some spine tingling charismatic experience. It is not even just—although this is a big part of it—it is not simply directing you to a verse of Scripture. But it is taking that truth and witnessing in your heart so that he pours into your heart this wonderful reality that you experience God’s love. You lie back in the every lasting arms. You can relax in the eternal purpose. You trust yourself to who God is, what he has said and what he has accomplished in the Lord Jesus Christ. He floods your soul with the evidences of God’s love.

Everywhere we go the Holy Spirit witnesses another evidence, another proof, another indication of God’s love for us.

Remember, this is the man who has just said, “We glory in tribulations.”¹⁹ That is afflictions. That is real pain. That is agonizing suffering. That is facing death.

So he is not talking pie in the sky sort of a soft way through life. He said, “No, no, no. This is real life. I am the man who has been shipwrecked. I am the man who has been stoned and left for dead. I am the man who has been cursed. I am the man who has been betrayed by his best friends. I know what real life, with all of its bumps and hurts, is all about.”

But instead of groaning, “Lord, why me?” I am glorying even in those things. Why? Because in the midst of the worst circumstances and the greatest calamities in life, I have the evidences of the love of God in Christ for me. That’s it.

Now here is the message. The Holy Ghost has poured God’s love in our hearts, the fact of it, the fulness and lavishness of it, the firmness and the unchangeability of it, the fruit of it in producing an experience of God in our hearts. He has poured this love in our heart giving us, thereby a wonderful ground of assurance and our hope maketh not ashamed.

As a young fellow I used to get terribly worried that I would go through life thinking I was saved and then stand before God on the judgment day to hear those dreadful words, “I never knew you: depart from me.”²⁰

I want to tell you. There are people who go through life blithely saying, “Oh, I am all right. I am saved.” And all the time they are victims of delusion, trusting in works religion and they are going to be lost.

Matthew seven is a scary passage.

¹⁹ Romans 5:3.

²⁰ Matthew 7:23.

I remember years ago in Sharon Drive when I was preaching through some of the parables of Christ and I came to the parable of the tares and the wheat. One of the men of the church came to me and he said, "You know, I always dreaded that passage being preached. I tremble at that passage being preached, being in the church among the wheat and be ripped put at the last to be among the tares."

But here is the answer to such worries. The Holy Ghost witnesses of God's love to our hearts. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. He cannot lie. And so when the Holy Spirit of truth witnesses to our heart God loves you, it is because it is true.

But if this is true, I want you to understand this. This is not a general benevolence or a pity of the Creator for his creatures. This is the special, particular saving love of God in Christ for his people, his believing people. If this is true, we can't perish. There is on greater security than to be held in the embrace of God's everlasting love.

Do you remember the words of Moses?

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."²¹

What we have been talking about tonight are the everlasting arms. Can you, as a believer, fall into hell? Only if God drops you, only if the everlasting arm grows weak, only if God's purpose is overthrown, only if God's Spirit is made a liar, only if the work of God's Son is negated. Ah, no.

How do we know our hope maketh not ashamed? The love of God has been poured in our heart by the Holy Spirit who was given unto us.

And there we will leave it. We didn't get to verse 11. But we are on our way. God willing three weeks from tonight we will take it up in verse six and hopefully make it through verse 11.

May the Lord bless his Word to our hearts.

I hadn't actually worked it out or intended it this way that the message this morning would be on Luke 15, the love that he Lord Jesus has for sinners and tonight, Romans five, the love of God has the Holy Spirit's best argument for the security and the assurance of believers. But the Lord knows what is happening and he has worked these things out where I could not see that far enough ahead to work them out. He works them out. I can only conclude that there are souls with us today and I am happy to say I am at the top of the line, not in importance, but in need. There are souls with us today, hurting souls, maybe doubting souls, maybe embittered souls, souls let down by others, souls who have begun to wonder. Is there any reality left in religion? Is there nothing better than this? And God has for them a message and I hope you got it, of the glory, the mystery, the majesty of the incomparable love of our great God and Savior. May he, indeed, by his Spirit seal that Word to our hearts.

²¹ Deuteronomy 33:27.

Let's bow our hearts in prayer. Let us all pray.

Our gracious God and our Father in heaven, we thank thee that thou hast ever loved us. That God should love a wretch such as I is a miracle, explicable only to thee. Oh, God our Father, we stand amazed that God should ever love us and we praise thee that thy Holy Spirit witnesses to thy people, gives them evidences, pours in their heart the reality and the assurance of God's love and, oh, Lord, tonight we thank thee that with such a love we can never perish. What security there is. Little babe lies secure in the arms of its mother, but those arms may fail. We lie secure in the everlasting arms of our Father in heaven and, bless God, those arms can never fail. Bless thy Word, now, to our hearts. Write it indelibly on the fleshy tables of the heart and grant that we will, every one of us, actually know, not just comprehend scriptural truths as far as statements go, but, Lord, that we may know the love of Christ which actually surpasses all human knowledge. Hear our prayer and let us go out of this place tonight encouraged and set ablaze with the love of Christ, motivated and, most of all, triumphantly rejoicing that our hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Part us now with thy blessing and keep us in thy fear. Be the portion of all thy blood bought Church both tonight and evermore. Amen.