

ROMANS 5:6-11 "In Christ, We Have Been Reconciled Even While We Were His Enemies"

**Romans 5:6-11** <sup>6</sup> For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of *God* through Him. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Our faith in Christ will allow us to exult in God because of the special relationship He has given us through the blood of His Son, whereby we are justified, reconciled and given hope of eternal life with Him.

As we exult in God we find ourselves being able to exult even in our tribulations because God is using them to build us up, to equip us in a way where we find perseverance by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In perseverance God develops in us proven character, and proven character gives hope. The kind of hope that doesn't waver because of the object of our faith; the person in whom we trust, Christ Himself. The kind of hope which knows that God is not only able to deliver us and use tribulation in our lives to strengthen us, but is willing to deliver us.

All tribulation will come to an end. The tribulation we experience lasts but a season. A season may be short or long, but God is in our midst. And the ultimate hope is that there will be a day when all tribulation will cease all together.

Rev 21:4-6 "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."

As Paul said in our text last week. "Hope does not disappoint." Hope can't disappoint because God is our hope and God will never disappoint us.

And the hope we have in Christ has been placed in our very hearts by God Himself. This too Paul tells us in verse 5 .... "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

The Spirit of God resides in us for the express purpose of sealing us for the day of redemption, but also to comfort us and guide us in the meantime and to give us that assurance of the hope we have in Christ.

Paul expresses this same thought in Rom 8:16-18 "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

What God is saying is that there will always be suffering and tribulation in this world. For the Christian God has designed it so that those things will not bury us but will actually be used to make us more effective for His service.

And when we know that God is working all things for our good then we can rest in the hope of His salvation and not be disappointed. And the motivating power of God's love in our lives shines forth as the Holy Spirit works in and through us to give this hope to the world.

With all of that said, Paul then goes into the reality of our sin problem which gave us no hope. And in the midst of no hope and no way out of our sin problem, God gives us the gift we need.

Rom 5:6 "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

I like the idea that it was just at the right time. What this means is that in God's time everything came together. What we consider to be the right time and what God has as His time are often different.

We can become very impatient with God and begin to wonder if He understands that we have an agenda that needs to be kept..... 'Get with the program God'.

No, no. With God everything is done at just the right time even when He doesn't consult with us to see if we can hang with that arrangement.

Listen to what the apostle Peter says in 2Pe 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

In the context here Peter is speaking of the last judgment of God. Many Christians who were experiencing much suffering at the hands of unbelievers longed for Christ's return.

They knew the promise that the Lord would return in the same in which He left when He ascended back to the Father. They wanted that day to come and for the world to be judged so the new heavens and the new earth would be established.

Peter reminds them that what may appear to be a very long wait is not slowness as we understand slowness. The reason for the wait, Peter says, is so that others may come to repentance and faith in Christ.

We're looking for God to end it all and God says, 'if I do that today there will be many who will be lost forever. I will be slow to act until My time is completed and My will accomplished in that all that I desire to come will come.'

The prophet Habakkuk gives us a similar picture of how God's perfect timing is something we need to be willing to wait for because God's plan is without flaw.

Hab 2:3 "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

The prophet then contrasts those who are unwilling to wait and who decide to try to make something happen at the expense of God's perfect will.

Hab 2:4 "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright--but the righteous will live by his faith."

Waiting upon the Lord can only be done as we live by faith not by sight. God's promises will certainly come, His plan will certainly unfold and His plan for our lives will certainly come to pass. But He desires for us to seek Him and live by faith in His faithfulness.

And so when God's plan was ready to bring us the Savior it happened just as it was written. Paul shares this with the Galatian church.

Gal 4:4-5 "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

Also in 1Ti 2:5-6 "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time."

But, back to Romans. Verse 6 ..... "at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

Powerless, without strength, helpless. In ourselves we had no hope. And we didn't have the ability to create hope. We were without the power or the strength to reconcile ourselves back to God.

But, at just the right time, which was around 3 B.C., while we were still helpless, and by that he means while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly, which includes all of His people.

Now, evidently this truth was an amazing thing for Paul to consider because he goes on to explain what it means for Christ to die for the ungodly.

By the way, the word for ungodly in the Greek is *asebes* and it means irreverent; impious; wicked. That word is not reserved for only the Hitler's, Stalin's and Idi Amin's of this world.

It covers all of us. Not that we are all as bad as we could possibly be, but rather that we all have sinful hearts which rebel against our God through unbelief and God views that as ungodly or wicked.

But despite that look what Paul says in Rom 5:7 "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die."

What does Paul mean by these two men; one a righteous man the other a good man? Charles Hodge in his commentary on Romans says that "the difference between the words righteous and good, as

used here, is that which, in common usage, is made between just and kind."

In other words, the one man who is seen as just or righteous is one who tries to conform with all that is required of him. He might be seen in today's society as the "Company-man"; the one who does the right thing at the right time, the one who is always at work 5 minutes early, the one who leaves work 15 minutes later than everyone else.

He might be the one who is seen as the boss' pet and never seems to tire of going the extra mile for the boss. I'm not saying that that is necessarily bad, I'm just saying that the world at large may view it as a self-righteous act of trying to be perfect around his peers.

One would hardly die for such a man because he puts everyone to shame. However, you might die for a good man. The word good means just that. It's the idea of the kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back. He might be a little rough around the edges but he's always there for you. He's the kind of friend who will get up in the middle of the night to watch your dog when your child gets sick and needs to be taken to the emergency room.

He's a good guy and if you were to choose between dying for the company man or this kind and considerate person you would probably choose the latter.

But, even so, as Paul points out..... "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die."

'Yeah, this good man is always there for me. But, to give my life for him?' That's still a tough call because it is such a final sort of act. Death or life? Death or life? I think life.

On those rare occasions where one would give his life for someone they deem good, the act is final. You can't die twice in this world without some sort of divine intervention; Lazarus comes to mind.

But Paul makes an amazing contrast in the next verse. Rom 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

You probably wouldn't die for the righteous man, you may die for the good man. But what kind of a man did Christ die for? The ungodly, wicked and rebellious man. The man no one would ever exchange his life for.

And not just a wicked man in general. You and I might never consider a wicked man who may never personally have done anything wicked against us; but the wicked man God speaks of here, is the wicked man who has personally rebelled against the God who now desires to save that one. That wicked one is you and me.

That's the amazing thing about God's love. The apostle John writes this in 1Jo 4:10 "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

When Paul says in Rom.5:8 that "Christ died for us", it assumes that it was a sacrificial death which had the power to accomplish what it set out to do.

That is far from being a martyr's death where only the memory of Christ remains; but rather His death was not the end, but the beginning of what was to become the victory over sin and death because of His resurrection.

His death and resurrection actually takes away sin so that our guilt before God can be exchanged for Christ's righteousness through faith in the Messiah, who came to give His life as a ransom for us.

This was an act of love according to our text. God's love being set on sinful, disobedient and rebellious people who deserve nothing from our Creator but wrath.

And yet even in our rebellious state Jesus came in love and died for us to pay for the penalty of our sin and bring us back into a loving relationship with our heavenly Father.

Tit 3:4-7 "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Back to Romans..... Rom 5:9 "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

Two things are mentioned here in this verse..... Being justified by His blood and being saved from God's wrath through Christ.

As we've mentioned before, justification means to be given a new status before God. Once we were guilty and now in Christ we are declared righteous.

That righteousness had to legally be satisfied with someone paying the price for sin which is death. When that satisfaction for sin was dealt with through Christ's death and resurrection we then were able to be given the status of "not guilty" as we place our faith in Christ's righteousness on our behalf.

And so what Paul is saying in verse 9 is that, much more than simply being placed in a new status of not guilty, we have actually been saved from the wrath of God through Christ. This is a very sobering view of how much God hates sin and how He must punish sin because He is holy.

Rom 1:18 "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,"

1Th 1:9-10 "for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath."

Even Jesus tells us in Joh 3:36 "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Jesus gives us both the bad news and the good news in that one verse and it's all dependent upon Himself. 'Rebel and die, trust Me and live at peace with Me.'

This goes back to verse one of Romans 5 where Paul says ....  
"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

This is the thing that excites Paul and should excite us as well. It's not as though we're simply not guilty. Christ's sacrifice for us actually accomplished this reconciliation where we can call our God, Friend; Father; Protector; Provider; our all in all.

In Christ, God accomplished a love relationship with us; not simply some cold and sterile status of legal rightness before God, as important as that is.

The idea is that God loved us to have fellowship with us, not just to create the legal and just means of accomplishing that. When a person marries another person they don't spend their time telling the world the legal status of their marriage, but that they are united together because they love each other.

In our case God took care of the legal status for our justification in Christ, so that He might establish this love relationship with us, even while we were hating Him, as Paul testifies to in the next verse.

Rom 5:10 "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

God's enemies? You mean that I was His enemy outside of Christ? Yes, in the sense that our rebellious hearts chose to reject the Messiah. That's why Jesus could say in Mat 12:30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters."

And yet even while we were His enemies He chose to come into this world and die for the penalty of our sin so that we might be reconciled to Him.

In those times when we're tempted to doubt God's love for us; in those times when we're tempted to wonder if God is really concerned about our particular situation we need only go as far as the cross of Christ.

And if there was ever a moment to wonder if Christ's death was sufficient for our salvation, then we need only look at what He accomplished after His atoning death to secure our eternal life with Himself. He rose bodily from the dead.

That's what Paul is saying here in verse 10 ..... "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

Salvation means nothing unless Christ is risen from the dead. Listen to what Jesus said before His death as He spoke to His disciples in Joh 14:19 "Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live."

1Co 15:22-23 "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him."

Heb 7:25 "Therefore he is able to save completely [Or forever] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."

Our Lord is alive at this moment and He's here with us this morning in our midst as we take the time to speak of His work on our behalf. This moment He's loving us through His word which directs our paths. This moment He's blessing us and encouraging us to trust Him with our present lives because of the hope we have in Him for our eternal life.

And so, Paul continues in Rom 5:11 "Not only is this so, but we also REJOICE in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

The beginning of this chapter began with the words in Rom 5:1-2 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we REJOICE in the hope of the glory of God."

The next verse then goes on to say Rom 5:3 "Not only so, but we also REJOICE in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;"

And now he ends this thought in Rom 5:11 "Not only is this so, but we also REJOICE in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

I don't know if you've noticed, but our ability to rejoice in sufferings is directly related to our ability to rejoice in God Himself. To rejoice in the salvation He's given us.

If we aren't able to rejoice in our sufferings there's a good chance we're not rejoicing in God just for the sake of who He is and what He's given us in Christ.

And if we can't rejoice in God and His goodness then maybe self has gotten in the way and is trying to take center stage. I can guarantee you this, whenever self is on the throne self will never be able to rejoice in self for very long.

But if God is the One in whom we delight totally, then our trust level will increase and we'll look beyond our circumstances and

look to the circumstances which created our relationship with God and that is Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection.

If your faith is weak, if you find yourself doubting, if you don't find yourself rejoicing in God as you would like, don't panic. God already knows. And this moment He's in the process of working it all out for your good. Just trust Him and know, as Paul says, in Phi 2:13 "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

His good purpose for your life is to conform you in Christ's image and equip you so that He may use.

Let me end with a blessing found in from Heb 13:20-21 "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."