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*"Much More"*

ROMANS 5:6-11

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## AT A GLANCE

In Christ we have much more to be grateful for than we could ever have to be worried about. The death of Jesus is all the evidence we need to know that God's disposition toward us is that of love. When the circumstances of our lives cause us to doubt that, we can remind ourselves that we have been made right with God and it's all an act of His grace. Sometimes we need to rehearse the Gospel in our own minds instead of our woes.

## INTRODUCTION

On Monday morning Pastor Andy called to tell me that if I thought I needed to go over Romans 5:6-8 again, it wouldn't hurt his feelings. I listened live to the sermon as I drove home from Ft. Leonard Wood. (By the way, I must say I'm stinkin' proud of our tech team! We've come a long way in three years.)

But it's also important to me that you know how much confidence I have in the pastors and elders of this church. When I ask another elder to preach, I trust them to handle the passage carefully. I don't worry about what the passage is. I trust our elders to handle the Word of God rightly. That's what you get with biblical eldership.

Back to Pastor Andy, I think he did a great job last week! I was blessed by the testimony of God's grace and goodness by those who travelled to Haiti last month. I was blessed to hear of Jordani, the witch doctor who came to Christ and Andy helped him burn down his voodoo shack. I was blessed by the 60 individuals who have signed up to go on mission trips this year. I was blessed to be part of a church that looks out at the lost world with love and compassion and has a sense of urgency.

I was blessed to know that the Lord has given us a strong vision, every member a missionary - taking the Gospel across the street and around the world! It's a vision that if He doesn't move, we will never achieve it. I was blessed to know that our pastors and elders are committed to this vision and desire to shepherd the body to see it come to fruition.

Pastor Andy, I was blessed by your sermon last week. I think you handled the text well in context of the missionary testimonials. I'm also thankful for your humility and recognition that the text is dense and full of goodness and it could be squeezed again today, and we'd gain much from it. So, I'd like to do that this morning. Let's read Romans 5:6-11.

**<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

**For while we were still weak...** While we were still broken. Still far from God. Still unable to add any value to Him. Still at enmity with God. Still in our sin. Wallowing. Lost. Dead.

**at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.** The **right time** is the time that God foreordained before the beginning of time. He is the sovereign One. What is right is determined to be right by Him.

At the right time, **Christ died** for whom? For the **ungodly**. The ungodly are those who live without reference to God. They are those who live their lives according to their own moral compass. They set their own course and they live how they want to. They do not submit to God. They are calloused in their thinking. Whatever they plan they think they will do. In their minds it is ultimately they who control their destiny.

Our Connect Group is studying *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges and the first acceptable sin the author deals with is that of ungodliness. We do not speak much about the sin of ungodliness, but the reality is that ungodliness is the essence of what it means to be a sinner.

People think of pride as the root of all sin. Granted, it was pride that caused Satan to fall. But pride was the byproduct of refusing to live under the authority of, and without respect to, God. Bridges calls pride the trunk of the tree from which all sin branches out, but ungodliness is the root system that feeds it.

The ungodly are those who pay no mind to things of God. Their hearts are not pricked by conviction. Their minds are not attuned to the Holy Spirit. They do not care what God thinks about their attitudes, their words, or their actions.

It's not just pagans who are ungodly. Religious people going all the way back have lived ungodly lives. Jesus had something to say to the ungodly Jew, *"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* Matthew 15:8-9

Ungodly people, religious or not, have no interest in developing a personal, meaningful relationship with God. That is the essence of ungodliness - living life as if God is irrelevant. It's a sin and it's the nature of those for whom **Christ died**.

Our life belongs to Christ because He died for us; He ransomed us. Every decision, every desire, every plan, every purpose, every word, every work. It all belongs to Him.

I invite you to dwell on that for just a moment. This is biblical faith. I think if I were to approach any of you men and ask you how you're doing with pornography, you'd at least agree it's a fair question. By the way, how are you doing with porn? We've got a men's rally August 18 – You are not alone! I want all of you men there as we behold the glory of God and ask Him to fight for us. But most of you would acknowledge that's fair game.

What about your financial faithfulness? How are you doing there? I think that just about sucked the oxygen out of the room. That's not a fair question. That's nobody's business. I get to decide how I spend my money and I don't owe anyone any explanations. That's what I think some of you would say to me. How you handle money is not fair game. It's an area you live without reference to God. You don't seek God or ask God nor do you want to obey God.

The ungodly deserve God's wrath, but Christ died for the ungodly. In what ways do you continue to live ungodly, or without reference to God, knowing that Christ died for you?

Speaking of Christ's death, **verse 7** says **For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—**

Paul is highlighting the unlikelihood that a person would give his life for another person. It's almost unthinkable. It's the highest order of heroism. That's what makes it **scarce**. It's unlikely anyone would give their life for you or that you would give your life for anyone else. But it could happen, and Paul admits that for a **good person** someone might **dare even to die**.

In other words, Paul has likely heard stories of this happening. We all have. The hero in the grocery store who steps into harm's way to protect victims from a crazed gunman. The firefighter who darts into a burning home and retrieves an unconscious resident only to collapse once outside. The police officer who runs toward the shots. The servicemember who dies defending our freedom.

We often credit these sacrifices as noble because they are! But to Paul's point, these heroes are not laying down their lives for the low-life, they're laying down their lives for the virtuous, the innocent by-stander. It's not the bad guy that the hero dies for, they do it for the victims.

And yet as admirable as their sacrifice is, Jesus' death is even more admirable because it was for the criminal and the low-life and the thug and the hoodlum and the fraud and the thief and the murderer and the abortionist, and the pornographer and the glutton and the self-righteous – in short, the ungodly – for whom Christ died.

His death is set apart in a whole different class than any other. And it proves in a whole different way that God really does love us. **Verse 8** reads, **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

We don't need anything else to prove God's love for us. While you were still hopelessly lost in your sin, Christ died for you. Everything you needed to be made right with God took place while you were covered in the filth of your depravity. There was never anything that caused God to look upon you with favor. You were 100%, completely, hopelessly wicked. The bible says simply, you were dead in your sin.

And it was for you that **Christ died**. And for me. **For us**, Paul says, without exception. There is not a single person in this room that can say, "Well, we may all have been dead in sin, but I was less dead than you." You might think that, but that's a sign you may still be dead. The proof of God's **love for us** is even though we were hopelessly lost, Christ died for us.

Jesus said, "*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*" *John 15:13* In other words, there's no greater display of love than laying down one's life for someone else. It's the ultimate display of love. And Paul is telling us we know that God loves us because Christ died for us. If we are in Christ, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God's disposition toward us is that of love. This is more than a platitude. This essential truth!

It serves as the only basis of our confidence and hope. Remember that we have hope that does not put us to shame (Romans 5:4) because "*...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*" *Romans 5:5*

Now watch this **verse 9** says **Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.**

**Justified** is being made right with God – it's such an important doctrinal term. You need to know this. Justification is a legal declaration that a guilty person is not guilty because someone else paid the dues. We are justified, made right with God, by faith alone.

Pastor Andy asked last week, on what basis are we justified? It is on the basis of Christ's death. Or in Paul's words here, **by His blood**. It was the shed blood of Christ. Without the shed blood there is no atoning for sin, says Hebrews 9:22.

And Paul is making an argument here, **since**, or because, **we have now been justified** – past tense, with certainty – **much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God**. In other words, knowing we have been made right with God through the death of His Son and the shed blood of Christ, we also have certainty that we will not be judged according to the wrath of God.

There is a very real judgment awaiting all of humanity and those who have trusted in Christ will be **saved by Him** from it! Brothers and sisters, this ought to cause you to exhale deeply. It should set you free from all fear. Perfect love casts out all fear. God's love is poured into our hearts and is proven by the death of Jesus. Where is there room to be afraid of God now?

If you are afraid of God, if you do not know whether He is for you or against you, you haven't fully experienced the love of God. For the love of God is our assurance that we will never experience His wrath.

**Verse 10** continues **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**.

The argument goes like this, if you and I were made right with God, **reconciled to God** while we were depraved and wicked, if the **death of His Son** achieved for us that which we could never achieve for ourselves, how **much more** will His life save us from God's wrath? If that's the benefit of His death, what do we gain by His life?

Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life..." John 14:6*

He said He came to give *"...life and life abundant."* *John 10:10* whereas our enemy, the devil, comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. That was our lot in life as ungodly sinners. Whatever it is we had, we did not have life. We only had death. But because of the death of Jesus, we now have life and life abundant!

And not just in the life to come. We do not wait for our death to experience His life. We do not have to wait until we die to experience God's blessing, His closeness, His provision, & protection.

We have peace with God now. We have access to God now. We have the status as God's children now. We have the blessings of being reconciled to God right here, right now.

**More than that**, Paul says in **verse 11**, **we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation**. Brother and sister, if you are in Christ, there is no excuse to linger long in despair. There is no excuse to mope and throw a pity party. There is no reason for you to be cast down.

Don't get me wrong, there's plenty to worry about. There's plenty of hardship. Grief is real. Anxiety is real. Despair is real. Even for believers. It's real.

But we don't have to let it control us because there is a *greater* reality. There is something more real than depression and anxiety and despair. It is that **through our Lord Jesus Christ we have received reconciliation to God**.

This is one of those things we just have to drive home. It's a truth that we need to rehearse and remind ourselves of constantly. This is why we need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day! The Gospel reminds us of the highest and greatest reality of all – that sinners have **received reconciliation** to a holy God and have been granted direct access to Him and in fact, have His Holy

Spirit dwelling within them. Do you reflect upon this reality often? It is the key that will deliver your soul from despair!

I'm reading Little Pilgrim's Progress to my kids during our family worship, which we have in our resource center. I'm reading this to my kids during family worship and last Monday we read of the story of the Giant of Despair. The pilgrim's are taken captive by the Giant of Despair and locked in his deep dark dungeon. There they are beaten, kept from food, threatened, and offered poison as their only means of escape – that by death.

After some time, Christian comes to his senses and prays to the King for help. An angel is sent in the form of a mental reminder that along the journey he was given a small key. Perhaps the key would unlock the dungeon door, he thought. Sure enough, the King had provided the Key of Promise that unlocked the doors of despair's dungeons and by it they made their escape.

I asked my children what causes us to be held captive by despair? We listed things like loss of a loved one. Financial hardship. Relational strain. Fear of the unknown...the worst-case scenario. There are lots of things that can cause us to be held captive to despair. And held there long enough, the temptation to turn to poison for escape is quite real.

But there is a key that unlocks those prison doors, the key of promise. The key of promise that we belong to God and not to ourselves, and most definitely not to the enemy!

The promise that God loves us, the proof of which is bound up in the death of His Son. The promise that God is for us and not against us. The promise that though once we were dead, yet now we live. The promise that He is coming back and is going to take us to be with Him in a place He has prepared for us.

The promise that He sent His helper, the Holy Spirit who dwells within and who constantly pours God's love into our hearts, who reminds us we are children of God and intercedes on our behalf with groanings too deep for words.

Whatever you are facing right now little pilgrim, rejoice. Not that you are driven to despair, but that you have been given the key of promise, the hope of your salvation, reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ our Lord...and life in Him. Amen?

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