

The Text

Romans 5:6–11 (CSB)

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die.

⁸ But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath.

¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

¹¹ And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

The Introduction

How did we get here?

This passage does not hang by itself. In other words, is not a standalone passage. Even though I am preaching just this passage, I will need the full council of God which is completely and perfectly contained in this Book concerning all things necessary for God's glory and our salvation.

Why would I be so bold in saying that?

The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession states it this way in Chapter 1, Part 6:

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture

Confession is certainly not Scripture. But our Confessions are simply doctrine. Don't be scared of the word 'doctrine'. It simply means, 'What the Bible teaches'.

We know that the Bible does completely teach what is necessary for the glory of God and what is necessary for our salvation because the authors who were inspired by the Author who is the Holy Spirit say so.

Paul drills this point on anything outside of Scriptures concerning our salvation:

Galatians 1:8–9 (CSB) But even if we or an angel from heaven **should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you**, a curse be on him! As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, a curse be on him!

Paul tells the young Pastor Timothy concerning our faith and life as Timothy shepherds the church in Ephesus :

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (CSB) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and **you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus**. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Finally, out of the mouth of Christ concerning his great glory during his earthly ministry:

John 6:45 (CSB) **It is written in the Prophets: And they will all be taught by God.** Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to me—

When I say I need the full council of God, that is, all of the Bible, to preach to you today, what this particular passage of Scripture means, I mean what I say. And if I need it, so do you.

We learned last week in Bible study in Chad Bird's "The Christ Key" that everything starts with the Torah--the first five books of the Bible--and then Historical, Prophets, and the Writings and finally, the New Testament builds upon that. We don't have the time to walk through the entire Bible but this Romans passage is in the middle of Romans.

So using all Romans, how did we get here? What did Paul say before saying this wonderful thing in chapter 5 verses 6 through 11? How did he build his case?

A Walkthrough of Romans

- **Romans 1:1-17 the Gospel of God** - Paul starts with glorifying God and his affections for the church in Rome. Which let me remind each of us what the city of Rome was like in the first century: a hot bed of depravity and idolatry--which the citizens of Rome were masters at the time of mixing and integrating sin and the worship of other gods. Wickedness, social injustices, political corruption. How does Paul respond in his letter to the church? Justification by faith alone. Incredible.

Romans 1:16–17 (CSB) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.

- **Romans 1:18-32 The Depravity of Man** - Paul blatantly states we need the gospel because of our own depravity. And if you want to a gut puncher, read verses 18 all the way to verse 32.

Romans 1:32 (CSB) Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

- **Romans 2 God gives law**
- **Romans 3 No one is righteous. No not one.**
- **Romans 3:21-26 we are justified freely by his grace-saints of the OT and NT alike**
- **Romans 3:27-31 The law does not save us**
- **Romans 4:1-8 We do not put God into our debt**
- **Romans 4:9-25 We are saved by faith alone**

Then our passage today is in the context of all of that with one more passage:

Romans 5:1–5 (CSB) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, says it this way:

James 1:2-3 (CSB) Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

Boast in our afflictions? Consider it a great joy for trials and tribulations? Who needs tribulations? Isn't life hard enough as is?

Character and endurance? What is God preparing us for?

To answer that question, you got to start again from the beginning. Not necessary the beginning of time but the beginning of our lives.

Our God

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

Future Sin Future Grace: Our Helpless Estate

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come
Let this blest assurance control
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate
And has shed His own blood for my soul

Horatio Spafford. It Is Well With My Soul.

Isaiah 6:1–5 (CSB) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth. The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I said: **Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Armies.**

Psalms 22:6 (CSB) But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by people.

1 Chronicles 29:14 (CSB) But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? For everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your own hand.

Ephesians 2:1 (CSB) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

Titus 3:3 (CSB) For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

The Christian comes upon seeing the glory and beauty and the holiness of God and just becomes undone. Now you and I might not have the Paul's Road to Damascus radical transformation. Some do. Others might have been like C.S. Lewis who just gets on their motorcycle and at the end of a very short drive, just believes and trust in God.

But we are all undone in one way or another at the sight of God and the beauty of his grace and gospel. And once you see it, you are never the same. You can't go back to what you once was.

In that moment when you were saved by God, you felt helpless. Insecure. Fearful. Shaky ground. Like Paul cries out, **"Wretched man that I am! Who is going to save me from this body of sin and death!"** Or like the tax collector, standing in the back of the sanctuary, beating his chest and crying out, **"Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!"**

It was there when God saved you completely unto himself. For good. You and I as sinners in the sight of God are helpless--you wanna say as babies--but even babies breath and live. We were helpless and dead corpses at the bottom of the ocean. Who is going to save us?

⁷ For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die.

Future Sin Future Grace: Far From God

Let me shoot straight: we are not just people. None of us were born good. No, not even one.

And, to that end, I am going on a short limb to say that I don't think anybody here has ever been in a situation where you put yourself in danger in order of someone else to live. If you have, share with us afterwards because that would be an awesome story.

I was a kid of the 80s where I was constantly exposed to the greatest movie genre ever to be invented: The Action Movie! And man, as fan of the genre, you got to see so many movies where someone gives their own life so someone else would live, that you grew up thinking, "Man, this is just life for now on. Just psych yourself to take one for the team."

And I am a US Air Force vet, I didn't see action like that.

And in these action movies, it was someone being saved was if not a good person, at least someone redeemable.

But life is not an action movie. As awesome as it might sound, we do not live in constant danger with bullets whizzing by our heads every second of the day.

But this life is certainly not an action movie because the ones needing to be saved--you and I--were not good in the sight of God and by own strength, could not redeem ourselves.

You see what Christ did here?

^{6b} at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

Let me give it to you in another the way--the good news...

The Gospel

⁸ But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

But God

Let us start off here. Who is God?

Is God like us? No. He is far from us. For his good and worthy and holy and righteous and perfect. If you ever wanted a clearer picture of who God is and how far we are from him, I

encourage you all to read John Stott's Cross of Christ. Starting on page 107, Stott lists out 5 ways, because just the reason of sin, how we are not God:

- He is high above our sin and idolatry
- He is far from our wickedness and depravity
- He is glorious - He shines the brightest

Revelation 22:5 (CSB) Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever.

I am in sweet communion with Christ as a poor sinner can be; and am only pained that he hath much beauty and fairness, and I little love; he great power and mercy, and I little faith; he much light and I bleared eyes.

Samuel Rutherford. The Loveliness of Christ.

- He is all-consuming - he will perfectly eradicate all sin from everywhere
- He rejects all sin from his presence - no toleration, does not have to live with it; he vomits it out of his being

Does God have good and bad days and whatever life circumstances give him, he deals with accordingly? No. In actuality, he is completely sovereign over all circumstances. Things don't happen to him unless he allows it. That makes him omnipotent--which is a fancy way of calling him, the Almighty God.

Of all the things that he is and we are not, do you know what is the one chief thing that God is and we get to do? We do get to love one another.

proves his own love

I am not going to sugar coat this: the world has try to taken the word 'love' by God's definition and twist it like their father Satan does. But I want you to see how God defines love.

For here is love:

Genesis 3:15 (CSB) I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

And here is love:

Deuteronomy 7:6–8 (CSB) For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. “The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But because

the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

And here is love:

Psalms 103:15–18 (CSB) As for man, his days are like grass—he blooms like a flower of the field; when the wind passes over it, it vanishes, and its place is no longer known. But from eternity to eternity the LORD's faithful love is toward those who fear him, and his righteousness toward the grandchildren of those who keep his covenant, who remember to observe his precepts.

And here is love:

Lamentations 3:22–23 (CSB) Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!

And here is love:

Ezekiel 36:25–28 (CSB) I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

And here is love:

Matthew 1:21 (CSB) She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

And here is love:

John 1:16–18 (CSB) Indeed, we have all received grace upon grace from his fullness, for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him.

And here is love:

John 3:16–17 (CSB) For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

And here is love:

Romans 9:25–26 (CSB) As it also says in Hosea, I will call Not my People, My People, and she who is Unloved, Beloved. And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

And here is love:

Galatians 2:20 (CSB) I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

And here is love:

Romans 8:1 (CSB) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus,

And here is love:

Romans 8:38–39 (CSB) For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And...

1 John 4:10 (ESV) 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.

God has all day to open your eyes and see what is actual love and how much He loves you.

I could take the book of Leviticus and prove to you that is the love of God. And you might think, "How is the law of God is the love of God for us." Because in delivering the law to us, he shown us how far we are from him. If you read the law correctly, you are going to shout out, "I can't do this! It is impossible!" God is saying, "I know. I know. That is why I sent my Son."

for us

And here is love:

2 Corinthians 5:21 (CSB) He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The ESV reads starts this verse as, "For our sake." That is the most amazing part. That God doesn't have a generic all encompassing love generic for all things. No. This love, this saving love, this perfect love, this sanctifying love, this glorifying love, this satisfying love, this maxed out joy love is specifically directly targeting you, the children of God, the people of God, the sheep of his flock and the joy of his heart.

No other created being. Not the puppy dogs. Not the kitty cats or the cute things of this world--although adorable, he does not target his love on them because he is already their Lord. He does not have this love for the angels because they are His already and they worship him perfectly. He has a specific love for his people because He made us in his image from the start. Not anything else ever created holds that distinction. Made in his image.

And you might be asking, "But what about unbelievers who don't love and trust God." Let me reply by asking you how God replied to the prophet Isaiah: "Is the saving Almighty arm of God too short?" Does our God have T-Rex arms? No! He is mighty to save. And let me submit to you because in eternity before the foundation of world God the Father and God the Son set out to save His people from their sins and we know this in full because God proved his love for us already.

in that while we were still sinners

I had to avoid the temptation of making this the main point "while we were still sinners." You can already see the main point of this sermon is God and His great love for us. But don't miss this point. Don't gloss over it. Don't speed read over this:

But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners

I know we are in Romans 5, but let me give you a spoiler alert:

Romans 8:28–30 (CSB) We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. **For those he foreknew he also predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

You might want to say that "God looked down the corridors of time and look to see when we accepted him as our Savior and God picked that timeline."

That is a nice theory but there is one glitch. The Bible says "God foreknew us". It never says, "God foresaw us." In other words, he didn't see us changing our minds and hearts and choosing him to be our God. No! He knew us in our sin and depravity and wickedness and evil and he knew that we were always going to run away from him unto death because He alone knows the depths of our hearts. And you know what the Almighty God, creator of the heavens, earth, and hell, you know what he said, "That's who I want in my family. That person I want in my family forever. And I am going to live and die for that person so we can be together forever."

He knows our hearts. And still he loves us.

Christ died for us

As many of you know, God saved my oldest son, Yusef, not that long ago. And I have shared this story tons of times and I am going to share it again. I don't care. I love worshiping the Lord because He is so good.

I get to talk to Yusef twice a week. And I thought this particular Tuesday in August was going to be like any other small talk phone conversation. But this call started out different. He wanted to know, "How does one start to believe in God?" That was a loaded question that deserved a loaded answer. Towards the end of the call, Yusef tells me, "Dad, I hav always told you I could not be a Christian because false preachers and hypocrite Christians. But to be honest, that is the not the reason at all. What if I go 'all-in' into this faith and it doesn't work out. There are no guarantees in life. What if this doesn't work out."

And I simply responded, "You are right. In this life and in this world, there are no guarantees. But out of all the faiths, cults, religions, and philosophy, we Christians have a guarantee--the guarantee is in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. And you know what makes it even more amazing? All of what Christ did happened 2000 years ago. Our guarantee is an historical fact."

A few days later, Yusef was saved by God. And a few weeks ago, I got to baptize him.

Jesus Christ, the son of God who is God, the Alpha and the Omega, and the Beginning and the End, who was and is and is to come, came into our existence and timeline, stepped into our world, by the sovereign decree of God the Father, conceived by the power of the Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, live perfectly under the law of God, then was arrested, tried, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was tortured, beaten, hung and crucified on that cross, unto to death, buried in a rich man's tomb and he descended into Hell to snatch up the keys to Hades and Death, and on the third day, he was raise back to life and then ascended to the right hand of the Father forever.

Christ's life was given for me. His death was meant for me. He resurrection is that I might be born again and now live to him. His ascension to glory means that since he justified me, he also glorified me.

My salvation is secure and set. Your salvation is secure and set. Because our God is perfect, Christ is perfect, the Holy Spirit is perfect and what they promised to do is perfectly done. The Almighty Holy God lacks the sin and wickedness and deceit to break any of his promises.

Our Response

What? So you struggle with sinful desires and thoughts and your heart sometimes flee?

¹⁰ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

Future Sin Future Grace: Christ has already saved you

Listen to the words:

reconciled...
the death of his Son...
reconciled...
saved by his life...

Hear the past tense. Hear the already done. Hear that God is our Perfect Father in Heaven who doesn't lose his kids. Hear that Christ is the Good Shepherd who has never lost one of his sheep because the sheep hears his voice because Christ knows us and we will follow him. The Holy Spirit has put a seal upon our heart and marked us as and bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

God foreknew our wicked hearts. He remembered that we are made from dust. That is why he sent his Son to live and die so that we might live and never die.

¹¹ And not only that, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Future Sin Future Grace: God is ours

What is the reconciliation? To appease, harmonize, to rectify, to resolve... to reunite.

To reconcile with someone in this life is one thing. In my experience, when I hear of a reconciliation between two people, I think that is magnanimous! In the times of divorce, relationships ended on a whim, our jerkiness and the lack of tact and wisdom and grace on social media, we are so easily offended and often quick to dismiss and block. When people can sit in front of each other, and give grace and understanding to one another, I think that is a miracle. I don't see it happening as often as I would like to. But that is what it is like to live in a post-Genesis 3 world.

If I am calling that a miracle, then how would you define the sons of Adam now belonging to God because of Christ. (If you want to see the details of this real miracle, keep reading Romans 5 starting at first 12. That is another sermon.)

How would you explain how Paul quotes the prophet Hosea in Romans 9:

Not my People, My People, and she who is Unloved, Beloved. And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.

Because we were all born sons and daughters of Adam and therefore away and separated from God, we are now reunited with God by power of the Holy Spirit through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to me: Christ didn't die so that you were just saved from hell. And now you are on neutral ground with God. No! Reconciliation to God means you and I get it all. We get the whole kit and caboodle! The whole enchilada! Reconciliation to God means:

- we are saved to God
- predestined by God
- called by God
- justified in the sight of God
- adopted by God
- co-heirs with Christ who has inherited everything
- glorified by God
- alive by God
- maxed out joy by God
- pleasures evermore by God
- completely satisfied by God
- beautifully and preciousely loved by God
- forevermore

We are truly love by God. Nothing is going to separate us from the love of God who "rejoices over you with gladness, who is quiet in his love, and delights in you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Rest in that absolute truth, beloved. And give thanks to Him. Amen.