

God's Agent, and His Humiliating Task (Vers. 1.0)

Reading: Romans 5:1-11

Text: Romans 5:6-8

How have you in your life, expressed your love to the ones you loved? In this chapter, Paul has shown that God has *justified us through Jesus Christ*. His disposition 规定 has changed toward us, from that of anger to favour, and from hostility to love. Paul says *we rejoice then, in hope of the glory of God*. Throughout all our lives we have reason to rejoice because *God's love has been poured out in hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us* (5).

Give gives evidence of His loved. There was a great outpouring of God's love in history 历史 that we must never forget. How has God expressed His great love for His people?

1. Our Great Misery

(6) *For when we were still without strength...*

What does Paul mean by this phrase? He is speaking of a spiritual weakness.

1. Being without strength describes who we are apart from Jesus Christ and God's grace. It is who everyone is because of Adam, who sinned against God in the garden of Eden. He is our father, and we are children of sin because he sinned.

2. This means that we are too weak to perform any spiritual good. We were lost in our sins. Our text says that *Christ died for the ungodly*--that is how we are described. It means we are wicked, immoral.

In vs. 8, it says that *we were still sinners*. That is who we are apart from Christ dying for us, apart from God demonstrating 展示 His love for us. We were sinful in heart, mind, mouth, hands and feet. Col. 2:13 *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision 未受洗礼 of your flesh...* Tit. 3:3 *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*

3. Being without strength means that we were not unable to deliver ourselves. We were caught in the bondage of sin and so were not willing nor able to release ourselves 自我释放. We *were dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. We lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind* (Eph. 2:1).

2. God's Great Love

1. God's Love is a Triune Love 三一性的爱 - The verse says that God loved and that Christ died. Christ's death is the evidence of God's love. But then, should it not say, God loved us and so He died for us? No, because God is Triune (three persons in one being 三位格在一个存有里). Jesus is God. God loved and so Jesus died. Therefore, this salvation is a work of God loving sinners and manifesting that love in His Triune nature.

2. God's Love is a Great Love - First Paul says (6) *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*. Then he draws up a contrast 对比 between the love of man compare to the love of God. (7) *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die 为义人死 是少有的 yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die*. In other

words, among mankind, its hard to find anyone who will die for a good or righteous person. God's love is greater than people's.

3. God's Love is a Gracious Love - (8) *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* God's love was **before** and while we were sinners. He knew the facts of who we are but *yet Christ still died for the ungodly.* We cannot appreciate 领会 how great God's love is without understanding how great our sin is.

1 John 4:9-10 *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 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. 神差遣他的独生子到世上来, 要使我们藉着他而活, 神的爱就在我们中间显明了。不是我们爱神, 而是神爱我们, 差遣他的儿子为我们的罪作了赎罪祭, 这就是爱了。

3. Christ's Great Sacrifice

1. It was an Arranged Sacrifice - *Christ died for the ungodly* (6), and *Christ died for us* (8). These phrases tell us that Christ was our substitute before God.

This can only mean that the entire death of Christ was arranged by God before Christ came. His mission of death was discussed and agreed upon by the persons of the Trinity long before. In fact, Peter in Acts 2 says it was in *God's determined purpose and foreknowledge.* Peter also says *Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world.* God determined then that Christ would be the the One who would die as substitute 替代 for us.

Christ died for us means that He died in our place. Us--we should have been there! Justice 公义 alone, justice without grace, would dictate that we should have been there, we should have suffered everlastingly. We were the ungodly, and Christ the spotless Lamb. But instead *the just for the unjust.*

2. It was a Sacrifice of Love - His justice and righteousness are seen in the sacrifice, but His love is the primary attribute that we are to see in this great historical fact 伟大的历史事实 of Christ's death.

We see that God's love is not established in our minds by subjective 主观 things--by what we do toward Him, or by our acts of service. Then we would never know for certain if He really loved us. But God gives to us an unshakable, irrefutable 无可辩驳 display of His love--*Christ died for us while we were sinners.*

Application

To you who do not know God or His Son, Jesus Christ, you see how God has demonstrated His love to sinners? Confess your sins, and turn to Jesus Christ. If now if He graciously offers salvation 救恩 now, how great will His anger be to those who reject His offer?

To you who are struggling in faith, go back to this. If you are tempted to doubt God's grace--look at what Christ did at Calvary. Could there be a greater display of love?

To you who are discouraged by troubles--look at how great God's love is for you. Will He desert you? If you are tempted to sin, go back to Christ's love and sacrifice at Calvary! Will you return such love by wretched sin?