

Romans 5:6-11 Sermon-Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS

NEXT

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Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

Romans 5:6-11 The Detail of God's Good News, Part 9 by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

There is a hymn I haven't heard in years. But I remember when I heard it chills would just go through me as I would think about the love of God. It says:

The Love of God

The love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,
God gave His Son to win.
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

REFRAIN:

When years of time shall pass away
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,
When men who here refuse to pray
On rocks and hills and mountains call,
God's love so sure shall still endure,
All measureless and strong.

Redeeming grace to Adam's race,
The saints' and angels' song.

REFRAIN:

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry.
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

REFRAIN:

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure;
How measureless and strong.
It shall forevermore endure,
the saints' and angels' song.

The Apostle Paul wants us to know that if we don't understand how He is loving us now, it would be good to go back and see how He loved us when we didn't know Him and when we deserved nothing from Him. Sometimes we forget what it was like to be lost. We forget what this whole thing is all about. The argument, "God doesn't love me!" will not hold up against God's word.

The Apostle Paul wants to make sure the truth of God's love is drilled deep into our minds. He is going to show us three things concerning the condition of man—who was so unbecoming, so undeserving and yet God loved him in spite of it. Have you ever noticed how a jeweler, if he has a pearl or a diamond or some other beautiful gem, will take a black backdrop to put that beautiful gem up against and then put a light on it? It seems like the darker the backdrop, the more it enhances the gem. Usually he uses a piece of black velvet, and he'll put that beautiful stone up against it. Then he'll turn a light on it. It exalts that stone. It just lifts up that stone. You see the brilliance of it. Sometimes you can't understand God's love because you haven't seen it in the light of what scripture teaches.

We're looking at it from man's point of view. Paul wants us to look at it from God's point of view. How do we talk about God's love? The only thing I know to do is let scripture to say what it says. Paul is showing you God's love from His point of view, not from man's point of view. When you see it from His point of view, you will realize how awesome it is. The backdrop Paul gives us contains three things of the blackness of man, the characteristics of man, and yet God loved him. He puts all of the ugly things about man up here, and then he highlights it with God's love. He focuses the light right in on it and you get to see it just as clear as a bell.

First of all, man was ungodly. The first shade of black that we see is that man was ungodly when Christ came to die for him. If you are a believer and you are saying that God does not love you, the Apostle Paul says, "Wait a minute! Go back to when you were not a believer. He has already proven His love for you." Look at verse 6: "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." This describes the helpless, fallen state of all humanity. The word "[helpless](#)" is [asthenes](#). It comes from "a" which means without, plus [sthenoo](#), which means to make strong or strengthen and the combination then means without physical strength, emotional strength, spiritual strength. Paul is depicting a terrible state of despair that man was in. Without Jesus Christ man absolutely has nothing in him that gives him the ability to pursue God or His holiness.

Now when man was in that helpless estate, with nothing in him that would seek after God, nothing in him that could save himself, it says that Christ died for the ungodly. V6, "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." There are two words for "time" in scripture, [kairos](#) and [chronos](#). I wear a chronometer—a watch. That is something that measures time. [Chronos](#) means something that can be measured. But the word [kairos](#), which is the word that is used here, means season or opportunity or due time. When you say, "Boy, that was at just exactly the right minute," that's what you mean. This word means "exactly at the right time." In the Gospel of John, Jesus kept saying, "It is not yet time for the Son of Man to be glorified." God wasn't caught by surprise when Jesus went to the cross. It was all at an appointed time. He came into this world at an appointed time. Look back at Malachi. God was so upset with the people of Israel He withdrew His fire out of the temple. For 400 years, there was a period of darkness. But Hebrews tells us that God broke the silence, and Jesus came into the world. He came into the world at an appropriate time, at the right time, at the proper time. It was not too late, and it was not too early. It was exactly when He needed to come. That is what Paul is saying.

Jesus died once and for all. Hebrews backs that up. They had a sacrificial system going year after year after year. Then Jesus came—THE Lamb. Their system was just a shadow. He was the substance. He didn't come to die more than once. Just once. One time! That is all it took. He died one time "for the ungodly." The word "[ungodly](#)" there is the word [asebes](#). It is the word that means to be

absolutely without any respect or worship for God at all. As a matter of fact, we see a form of that word in [Romans 1:18](#). It talks about the wrath of God being revealed (present tense—has been being revealed) since sin came into the world. Verse 18 reads, "For the [wrath](#) of [God](#) is [revealed](#) from [heaven against all ungodliness](#)." That is the word. Any time you have no respect for God, it is going to breed an unrighteous life style. So therefore, the wrath of God has already been coming forth. This is what man is like. Because of the sin of Adam, because of how we are born into this world, we are born with a heart that is depraved. We are born an ungodly people with no respect for God whatsoever. We're absolutely helpless. There is nothing in us that will even seek after God.

Now I'm sure there is someone saying, "Now, wait a minute. That is not the way I was. I'm better than that. I was a good person. I've never done some of the bad things that other people do. I'm not as bad as they are." Listen! Sin is not what you do! It's what you are—because of Adam! That heart was inherited from Adam, and because it was inherited from Adam, whether you mask it with religion, that's your fault; whether you mask it with good deeds, that's your fault. The problem is, it's depraved and nothing in it seeks after God. It's ungodly with no respect for Him at all.

Well, Paul says, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." Then to contrast it and to show how this love is so supremely different from any kind of love we have ever known, he says in verse 7, "For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for a good man someone would dare even to die." That's pretty self-explanatory, isn't it? That contrasts God's love with man's love. God loved us when we were ungodly, when we were not seeking after Him at all—no respect for God at all, and yet God came and died in a sin-sick world. So the first shade of black that Paul puts this beautiful gem of God's love up against is that man was ungodly when Christ came to die for him. The second shade gets a little worse. We were not only ungodly, but we were sinners when Christ came to die for us. It says in verse 8, "But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Oh, I love that little phrase, "but God."

Can I help you a little bit? If you want to study scripture, take a concordance and look up the little phrase, "[ButGod](#)" If I counted correctly, it occurs about 82 times in scripture. It talks about the situation of man and then says, "But God." In [Acts 13:28-30](#) Luke records the sermon of Paul in Antioch of Pisidia. It says, "And though they [found no ground](#) for putting Him to death, they [asked Pilate](#) that He be [executed](#). [When](#) they had [carried](#) out [all](#) that was [written concerning](#) Him, they [took](#) Him [down](#) from the [cross](#) and [laid](#) Him in a [tomb](#). But [God raised](#) Him from the [dead](#);" Oh, I'm telling you, it's a powerful little phrase.

In Galatians Paul tells us that God didn't choose to give the promise of a coming Seed, which was Jesus Christ, based on the Law. It was all based on a promise. If it had have been based on the Law, no man could have lived up to it, and we would nullify the promise. But it was a promise that He gave unconditionally. [Galatians 3:18](#) says, "For [if](#) the [inheritance](#) is [based](#) on [law](#), it is [no longer based](#) on a [promise](#); but [God](#) has [granted](#) it to [Abraham](#) by [means](#) of a [promise](#).."

Ephesians 2 spends the first three verses talking about how man is dead in his trespasses and sins, can't do a thing, absolutely controlled by the power of the darkness around him. Then it says in [verse 4](#), " But [God, being rich](#) in [mercy, because](#) of His [great love](#) with [which](#) He [loved](#) us, [even](#) when we were [dead](#) in our [transgressions, made](#) us [alive together](#) with [Christ](#) (by [grace](#) you have [been saved](#))" He quickened us and made man alive.

Paul says in [Romans 5:7](#) that a man down here won't even die for somebody who is deserving. Then verse 8 says, "[ButGod demonstrates](#) His [own love toward](#) us, in that while we were [yet sinners, Christ died](#) for us " What a contrast! The word "[demonstrates](#)" is the word [sunistano](#). "[Sun](#)" means together with, and [histemi](#) means to put or to place together. In other words, if you want to know whether God loves you or not, God has put together a demonstration of how much He loves you and me—when Jesus went to the cross. It was while we were ungodly, while we were helpless, that He came and died for us. That becomes a living, clear demonstration of God's love in our lives

Back in [Romans 3:25](#) we read, "[whom God displayed publicly](#) as a [propitiation](#) in His [blood through faith](#)" Now what does He demonstrate? He demonstrates His own love towards us. That's important. When we were against Him, His love was towards us. He makes it a living, clear demonstration towards those who are helpless and ungodly. Then he goes on to say in verse 8, "in that while we were [yet sinners, Christ died](#) for us." The word "[sinners](#)" there is [hamartolos](#). The word that means devoted to sin, wicked, perverse. While we were in this helpless, ungodly state, we were also devoted to sin, and wicked and perverse. We were devoted to the very things God hates. This is tough to take, isn't it? Most of us think a little bit better of ourselves than we ought to think. We think, "No, I was not that way! I know somebody who was that way, but I wasn't that way. Why, I've always loved God." Have you ever heard that? It's certainly not what God says in His Word. When a person is born and draws breath on this earth, he's not only born ungodly, he is born devoted to the very things God hates! He can't change it! He is helpless.

Talk about love, Jesus came and died for us when we were still sinners. This is the ever-present, clear demonstration of the love that God has for us. What Paul wants us to see is that if He loved us that much when we were nothing and deserved nothing, how much more does He love us now that we have put our faith into the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul wants us to see that God loved us enough to die for us when we were undeserving and how much He wants His love to be seen now.

Look at verse 9: "[Much more then](#), having [now](#) been [justified](#) by His [blood](#), we shall be [saved](#) from the [wrath](#) of God [through](#) Him." Much more than what? The word means far beyond this. Let's look at that phrase "having now been justified by His blood." In verse 1 it says we are justified by our faith. That's looking at it from us. But now, we are looking at it from His side. The blood had to be shed. Over the past several years, that's been a problem to some people. Is the blood just symbolic of His death? Heavens no! The death of Jesus satisfied the love of God. The shedding of His blood satisfied the justice of God. He could have died of a heart attack. He could have fallen off of a donkey and broken His neck. But He didn't. He shed His blood, willingly shed it. No man took His life. Jesus dismissed His own human spirit on the cross. That's the significant difference between Jesus and the first Adam. This is God we're talking about. He had to shed His blood. He says in Hebrews, "Thou hast given Me a body to do Thy will, oh God." Spirit does not bleed, but a body does. The life is in the blood. It was not just divine blood. It was not just human blood, but it was divinely human blood that had to be shed of the perfect man, the God Man! Therefore, His sacrifice could be accepted by the Father. So, we are justified by His blood. Yes, we put our faith into Him, but then it turns around. This is what He had to do. This was an act of His love. He went to the cross. He didn't just die, He died a cruel death! His blood was shed on the cross that you and I might be saved.

Paul then goes on to say, "we shall be [saved](#) from the [wrath](#) of God [through](#) Him." What is the [wrath](#) of God? Well, we know that it's being revealed toward the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, but what is he talking about here? The definite article is used. Paul is looking down the road here, because even though the wrath of God is now being revealed, there is coming a time when that wrath of God is going to become the great wrath of God. The definite article is used specifically, I think, to point to a time. What He is saying is, "Listen. We are now in Christ. We never have to fear the wrath of God."

You may be going through situations now. If you say God is punishing you for something, you don't seem to understand. The wrath fell on the Lamb. He may be disciplining us, chastening us, scourging us, but that's because He loves us. He is not out to get us. He's already gotten us! When we put our faith into Jesus Christ we're not only saved from wrath now, but one day we'll be saved from that great period called the great wrath of God. It's not going to be falling on us. Why? Because it fell on Him, and we're in Him. Therefore, why would it fall on us?

God's word says in [1Thes 5:9](#) that the wrath of God will never fall on us if we have put our faith into Jesus. The wrath fell on the Lamb. We either receive the Lamb or receive the wrath. Therefore, when I'm going through the tribulations of life, God's not out to get me. He's not punishing me. He may be chastening me, disciplining me and scourging me—yes! But it is because He loves me, just like a father would a child. His wrath is not falling upon me because I am in Christ. That to me is what He is saying here, "we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." I don't know how else you can read that.

Alongside the fact that the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, is a parallel truth. The love of God is being demonstrated on the cross. Isn't that amazing? On one highway, it's a highway of judgment. Right beside it is the highway of mercy. The two truths just seem to parallel each other and go right on through scripture. You hear the judgment of God, and then you hear the love of God. God says you can go either way. If you want the judgment, then turn away from the mercy. But if you don't want the judgment, turn into Him, and the grace of God and the mercy of God will be ours.

Well, not only were we **ungodly** and **helpless**, but we were **sinners** of the worse sort because we were given over to the things God hates. Christ died for us in that. Much more now, being justified by His blood, one day we are going to be saved from the wrath of God because we have put our faith into Jesus. What kind of loving God would leave the body, His church, His bride, on this earth to suffer the wrath that the Lamb has already taken upon Himself? Why would He do that? Paul is saying, "Hey, if He loved you when you weren't deserving, what do you think He is going to do now?" You have to see the loving character of God that he is trying to contrast. The first shade of black was ungodliness, and the second was we were sinners. The third shade comes up in verses 10 and 11. He says in fact, all mankind was an enemy of God when Christ came to die for them. To me, this is the worst one. Paul says in verse 10, "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." The word "by" there should read "in His life."

You see, we were in Adam. Because of that, we were condemned. It's not because of what you did. Oh, yes, what you do is a result of what you are. The Law exposes that, but when we put our faith into Jesus Christ now we are in Him. There's a difference. As a matter of fact, we are in Him. We always talk about Jesus being in us. That's true, He is. But He also said you will be where? In Me! That's the saving life of Christ. His death satisfied the fact, and the shedding of His blood freed us now from the penalty of sin. Certainly He had to resurrect. But the fact that He is living and living in us, and we are in Him, saves us because of that life that is within us. It's the eternal promise of His eternal salvation in our life.

Notice the way Paul presents Him. He says, "For [if](#) while we were [enemies](#) ." The word "[enemies](#)" is the word [echthros](#). It means to be hated, odious, hateful, hostile, opposing someone. In other words, we actually hated God. We opposed Him by everything that we did when Jesus came to die for mankind on this earth. How in the world could we say He doesn't love us? When we were nothing, before He ever knew us, when mankind was as sinful as it's ever been, Christ came and demonstrated God's love by dying

on the cross. Great enmity existed between God and man.

While in that state, it says, we were reconciled. The word ["reconciled"](#) has the idea of when two can now come back into fellowship. You ought to remember something. When man and man are reconciled, that's one thing. But when God and man are reconciled, it takes a little bit different situation. Man has to be changed from within, or man can never fellowship with God. The reconciliation of man involved not just man saying, " I'm sorry." Oh, no! Man had to be completely changed. The Spirit must be in our lives so that now we can fellowship with God and we can walk hand in hand with Him. We've been reconciled to God. God and man can now have peace and be reconciled because of what Christ did for us. But when He did it, we were totally enemies of God, devoted to sin and with no respect for Him whatsoever.

Paul says, "[much more](#), having been [reconciled](#), we shall be [saved](#) by His [life](#)" We were in Adam, and now we are in Christ. It commences at justification, but it is consummated over here when the wrath of God comes. Because we are in Him, all the way through, every valley we walk through, it's in His life, it's in Him that we are saved. One day we shall be taken up because we are in Him.

We are in Christ when we put our faith into Him. We are placed into His body, baptized into His body with the Holy Spirit, and it's Him pouring out His love into us that we have been looking at in verse 5. So, having loved us back here, you think He doesn't love us now? He has already guaranteed your future and has given you the ability in Himself to bear up under whatever comes your way. You're not under His wrath because things are going bad in your life. You may be under His chastisement, His discipline or His scourging. But because we're in Christ, that wrath won't fall on us. It fell on Him when He was on the cross.

Verse 11 says, "And not [only](#) this, but we [also exult](#) in [God through](#) our [Lord Jesus Christ, through whom](#) we have [now received](#) the [reconciliation](#)" I'm going to end there. We are going to come back and overlap a little bit to make sure we understand some of these verses. I want you to see the three shades of black of man's sin that God takes and uses to put the gem of the love of Christ up against. Then in scripture He turns a spotlight on it so that you can see how much God really does love us. If we would go back and remember what it was like to be lost, we would rejoice every day of our walk to realize He died for us before we ever knew Him. He knew about me, but I didn't know about Him. He died. So do you think He doesn't love us now? If He never did anything else, He has taken away anybody's excuse for saying, "God does not love me." The key is, do you love Him? Do you love His word? Do you love His ways? That seems to be the problem. He's clearly demonstrated His love.

So when we go through a valley, it's not His wrath. When we go through a valley, it may be His chastening hand, but whatever it is, He gives us the ability to bear up under it. That's a picture of His loving us. You think that doesn't give you hope for a glorious future? One day when the wrath comes, we'll be in the Lamb! We'll go out of here. When judgment falls, we're in the Lamb. We're in Christ. Well, God loves you. I don't know how else to say it. My words are inadequate, but the scripture is pretty clear, isn't it?