

The Benefits of Justification – Part 6

By David Harrell

Revelation 5:1-11

We come again to the study of the Word of God and I would encourage you to take your Bibles. Turn to Romans chapter five. This is the sixth in what will now appear to be a seven part series on the benefits of our justification. And I would like to prepare our minds here by just reading the text before us beginning chapter five verse one, Romans five verse one.

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.¹

We gather together again around the Word of God to behold the majesty of God, to once again restore him upon the throne of our heart because for the last six days we have lived in a world that has done everything to dethrone him. I hope that you have come this morning starving for the greatness of God. This has been my prayer. It is my prayer that you have come desiring to be swept up into the presence of our holy God and look upon him as he has revealed himself to us in his Word this morning, to taste of the Lord, to taste of his goodness and his grace. And this is certainly the goal of my preaching to you, that you might behold the supremacy, the glory, the majesty of our God and bow before him in humble adoration.

Now we have been examining the wonderful benefits of our justification, the blessings that accompany God's declaration that we as sinners are now clothed in the righteousness of Christ and, therefore, he declares us as being righteous and he treats us in that way. Not only have we had our sins forgiven, not only have we been granted eternal life, but because we have been united in Christ through saving faith, we have been declared righteous. Therefore the justified saint can leave the courtroom of divine justice forever

¹ Romans 5:1-11.

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acquitted. What a magnificent reality. And the reason why is because a perfect, sinless substitute has borne our guilt and now as sinners saved by grace we bear his righteousness. No longer will we ever stand in condemnation for sins past, present and even future, though they will be many. Indeed, they will be many. But because we are in Christ, God sees us as perfected forever in him.

This is, according to Ephesians one and verse six, “he glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”²

Now, I realize that this has been a rather long and tedious study of just a few verses, but it is for good reason. I have known for many years that most Christians have a very, very shallow understanding of this great doctrine. And yet as we are going to see as we move ahead in our study of Romans, it is foundational, this doctrine of justification is foundational to our understanding of the doctrine of sanctification that will begin in chapter six.

One of Satan’s most successful strategies has been over the last especially 100, 150 years and I see it increasing, is to fill pulpits not so much with men that will teach error, but men that will teach very little of the truth. So there has been a great dumbing down of theology to a point where many people, frankly, do not understand these things. And if you do not understand them, you are going to rob yourself of enormous blessing, because the Spirit of God did not put these things in his Word to just fill up space.

When the Word of God is dumbed down, when it is not taught, according to Ephesians four and verse 14 Christians will become like children, the apostle Paul says, “children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.”³

You see, if you do not have Bible doctrine, you will not have biblical discernment. It is as simple as that. And if you do not have biblical discernment, you are going to fall prey to the false teachers that are out there. So, again, according to Ephesians four and verse 15, we must speak the truth in love and we are to grow up in all aspects into him, who is the head, even Christ.

So, beloved, this is not so much a time where we just receive head knowledge. We are not just trying to gain knowledge for knowledge’s sake, but we must gain knowledge that we might better know the God who loves us, that we might better delight in him and enjoy him, especially when trials come our way. And, frankly, if in this study of these magnificent benefits of our justification, if you have learned just one new thing that you can apply to your life, especially when the storms are raging around you, then I will count it as having been worth it all.

My responsibility is to teach. Your responsibility is to hear the Word and to respond to it in faith and obedience, to be doers of the Word, not hearers of the Word only. And there

² Ephesians 1:6.

³ Ephesians 4:14.

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is much that can be applied here to our lives when we consider these astonishing blessings that are ours because of our justification.

Now I would remind you that there are nine of these blessings described in these first 11 verses, eight that we can enjoy presently and one that we will enjoy when we meet the Lord face to face in the future.

Thus far, we have examined seven of these great benefits. We have learned that we have peace with God. We have access to God. Thirdly, we have a permanent standing before God because of his grace. Fourth, we have jubilant hope of glory. Fifthly, we have learned that we can have great joy in tribulation because of this marvelous declaration. Sixthly, we have learned that we can have proof of salvation. And, seven, we have hope through a subjective awareness of God's love. And that is where we left off last week.

And it is this seventh benefit that the apostle will now elaborate on in the rest of these verses up through verse 11. And this was... this is where we will focus our attention this morning.

Now by way of review, if you will notice again in verse five he says that because of this justification we have a hope that does not disappoint. And may I remind you the definite article is there in the original language which means that it is referring to the hope, a specific, unique, one of a kind hope? It is the hope of the glory of God that we saw in verse two. It is that blessed hope of glory that we will one day experience because of our justification. One day we will enjoy an unrestricted personal fellowship with the triune God and we will also enjoy a personal transformation into the glory of Christ.

Why? The apostle goes on to say, because... why does this hope not disappoint? And it is because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Indeed, God has lavishly inundated our inner man with a conscious awareness of his great love for us, a love that permeates our heart through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

And by his power we are able to therefore fully perceive all that God has done for us. But because the apostle Paul is so concerned that we fully understand and, therefore, fully enjoy the assurance that we have in salvation, that we will never lose our salvation because of our own stupidity or sin, he goes on to elaborate upon this love of God in verses six through 10.

And from these passages will emerge three very assuring aspects of God's love for us that has been poured out within our hearts through the Spirit. We are going to see three things here this morning. We are going to see a transcendent love, a saving love and a permanent love.

And, dear Christian, may I say to you yet again that if you grasp these truths, the ... as the Spirit intends for us to do, you will never lack assurance of salvation. Unlike the lady that I talked with probably about a year ago now who said to me, "You know, you teach over

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at your church that you can't lose your salvation. Well, I just don't believe in once saved, always saved."

Ok. And I remember he saying—and this is a bit of a paraphrase—but she said, "I just don't believe in that stuff because we never know when sin might cause us to fall from grace so we will never really know until we die."

Well, my friends, that is not what God has for us. That is not the will of God for us. In fact, by way of reminder in Romans eight and verse 16 Paul tells us that, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."⁴

We know, according to Hebrews six and verse 11 where the writer says there that, "We desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end."⁵

And John tells us in 1 John five and verse 13, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life."⁶

Now having said that, you may well struggle with assurance if you are pandering secret sin in your life. We know that sin is the great poison to hope. As we studied last week, sin will grieve the Spirit of God. It will suppress the Spirit. It will quench him in your life. And that is why Paul tells us, for example, in 2 Corinthians 13 and verse five, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"⁷

So this is very crucial for people to examine themselves. You will recall that Jesus said that in Matthew seven that not everyone who professes him, really possesses him, that a lot of people are self deceived. There are the few and the many, the few that enter through the narrow gate, the many that will follow the crowd in through the wide and, therefore, not every man that calls him Lord will enter the kingdom. And so a person has to examine himself in light of these great truths.

But for the man who has entered through the narrow gate of brokenness, of genuine repentance over sin, acknowledging that he has nothing to contribute to his salvation, to the man who has placed his faith in Christ alone, to that man he can have this hope of salvation. And certainly this is the apostle's passion in this section on his epistle.

So in order to add even more reasons as to why a believer can have assurance that he possesses this salvation and that he will never lose it, he begins by describing what I would call, number one, a transcendent love.

⁴ Romans 8:16.

⁵ Hebrews 6:11.

⁶ 1 John 5:13.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 13:5.

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Now, how so? How is it transcendent? How does it surpass or exceed the limits of certain things? I am going to give you three things that the apostle speaks of here with respect to this transcendent love.

First of all, as we look at verse six we see that it transcends our inability to save ourselves. Notice what he says.

“For while we were still helpless...”⁸

This is referring to being without strength and this speaks of moral, not physical strength. This is a moral inability.

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”⁹

Can there be any greater statement proving that our salvation is entirely of God and because of his love? You see, Scripture teaches and, indeed, that we are helpless. We have no ability in and of ourselves to save ourselves. We learn from Scripture that by reason of depravity, all that we do, all that we are is fundamentally offensive to God.

In Isaiah 64 verse six we learn that even our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. And in Romans three and verse 18 the apostle has reminded us that the unsaved man has no fear of God before his eyes.

So we are unable to save ourselves by reason of depravity, but also by reason of condemnation. Man enters life already under the sentence of divine wrath because of sin committed in Adam as we are going to learn.

In Ephesians two and verse three we are told that we are “by nature children of wrath.”¹⁰

Jesus said in John 3:36 that the wrath of God abides upon the unbeliever.

We are unable to save ourselves also by reason of alienation. Man is fully set in rebellion against God. In Ephesians chapter four the apostle Paul tells us in verse 17 that the unsaved man is darkened in his understanding, excluded from the life of God because of ignorance and hardness of heart. He goes on to say that he is calloused. He is given over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

And so man is utterly unable to do anything to save himself by reason of depravity, by condemnation, by reason of alienation. Let me give you a couple of others. By reason of his corrupted will. You see, apart from God’s convicting work, the will of man is fully set in him to do evil. He will always choose not to glorify God, but to glorify himself.

⁸ Romans 5:6.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:3.

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Many passages speak of this. Romans 3:11 Paul says, “THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.”¹¹

Also by reason of his darkened mind. Unsaved man is unable to save himself. You see, the unregenerate mind is utterly incapable of rendering a decision based upon the truths of the gospel. The Spirit of God must step in to do that.

In 1 Corinthians chapter two and verse 14 the apostle tells us that “natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”¹²

“Appraised” in the original language, *anakrinetai* (an-ak-ree’-ne-tai). It is a judicial term. It speaks of a person who is incapable of rendering a decision because they cannot recognize the facts of a case.

You know, we have seen that here in the past week or so with the public outrage of the jury’s verdict that acquitted, I believe her name is Casey Anthony, the mother that many believe killed her child. That is the way the unregenerate mind is with the truths of Scripture. They cannot put it together in a way to truly apply it to their heart apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit of God. Moreover, in 2 Corinthians 4:4 we read that, “he god of this world [referring to Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”¹³

And so when Paul says, “While we were still helpless...”¹⁴ he means helpless, absolutely unable to do anything to contribute to our salvation.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were moral, spiritual cadavers without any life. And yet it is in this condition that God still loves us. We see this picture, for example, in Ezekiel 16. You need not turn there, but may I remind you that there is great description that God gives of Israel’s condition before he set his love upon them. He likened Israel to an unborn... I mean an abandoned new born child that had just been pitched out into a field, thrown out into the field and he describes it in such a way that we see that the placenta is still attached to the child. It is unwashed. It is unclothed. It is unwanted. It is unfed. It is utterly abhorred. It is helpless in every way. And in verse six of Ezekiel 16 God says, “When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, ‘Live!’ I said to you while you were in your blood, ‘Live!’”¹⁵

What a graphic picture, a vivid picture of our inability to live on our own. You see, because of man’s utter inability, no one could be saved unless God saves them, therefore

¹¹ Romans 3:11.

¹² 1 Corinthians 2:14.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 4:4.

¹⁴ Romans 5:6.

¹⁵ Ezekiel 16:6.

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salvation is based upon the decree of God. It is based upon sovereign election. Scripture is so clear. I know that is a horribly offensive concept to people. But Scripture is so clear about this. The Father is the one, according to John 6:44, that irresistibly draws or compels a sinner to come to the Son. And what a joy it is to watch so many of you be drawn by the Father to the Son. We have seen that even recently in the past few weeks.

So the love of God not only transcends our inability to save ourselves, but the apostle goes on, you will notice, and he speaks of how it, as I would put it, transcends time.

Notice in verse six, “...at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”¹⁶

Now this clearly indicates that God had a predetermined plan, doesn’t it? At the right time he sense his Son and he dies for the ungodly. And this is going to further reveal his love. Perhaps I can help you see this.

We know, according to Acts two and verse 23 that Jesus, the text said, was “ delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.”¹⁷

And in Galatians four and verse four we read, “But when the fulness of the time came...”¹⁸ That is, at the precise moment in human history that God had decreed, “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law.”¹⁹

Now it is fair to ask, “Well, when did God really set his love upon us?”

Well, the answer is: Before we were even created. Beloved, according to Ephesians one and verse four we read that he chose to love us before the foundation of the world, in other words, from all eternity. And in Romans eight and verse 29—and I am looking forward to the time when we can look into this more closely.

Paul says, “For whom He foreknew...”²⁰

It is the idea of fore-loving with an intimate knowledge.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.”²¹

And in verse 30 he goes on to say, “And whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”²²

¹⁶ Romans 5:6.

¹⁷ Acts 2:23.

¹⁸ Galatians 4:4.

¹⁹ Galatians 4:4-5.

²⁰ Romans 8:29.

²¹ Ibid.

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And we await that glorification.

In 2 Timothy and chapter one and verse nine we learn that he called us, quote, “according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus [I love this phrase] from all eternity.”²³

It literally means before time began.

And in Titus one we have learned the same thing. In verse one he speaks of how we are chosen of God and then in verse two he goes on to say, “In the hope of eternal life, which god, who cannot lie, promised...”²⁴ When? Long ages ago. In the original language it is the idea, once again, before time began.

Beloved, as we study Scripture, as we look, for example, in Revelation 13:8 and chapter 17 and verse eight we learn that the names of the elect, those elected by his grace were written in the Lamb’s book of life before the foundation of the earth.

So, indeed, God’s love for us transcends time. It is something we cannot imagine in our time, space material universe. Beloved, he knew us. He knew everything about us even before we were even created as we read earlier in Psalm 139. It was God who literally wove together all of our inward parts in our mother’s womb. And in verse 16 of that text he says, “Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.”²⁵

Now, you might ask, “How does all this give me assurance that I will never lose my salvation, but possess it forever?”

And the answer is this. Beloved, there was never some point in time in which God chose to love you having never loved you before. Let me say that again. There was never some point in time in which God chose to love you having never loved you before. Were that so, it would imply some merit on your part as though he didn’t love and kind of... oh, look at there. Yeah. Ok, now I will set my love upon you.

That is not what Scripture teaches. You see, he knew that you would one day be born in sin. He knew that, a rebel by nature. But because he had chosen to set his love upon you in eternity past, he also chose a time to send his Son to pay the penalty for your sin, to die in your stead that you might be justified, that you might be delivered from his wrath. And so, therefore, the apostle says, “At the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

You see, God’s love for you was all part of his predetermined plan.

²² Romans 8:30.

²³ 2 Timothy 1:9.

²⁴ Titus 1:2.

²⁵ Psalm 139:16.

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Now, I would pause for a moment and ask you. Do you really think that such a salvation could be lost because of something you could do? Obviously not. Salvation is God's work, not your work. It is God's work from beginning to end. It is all of grace.

But notice God's love transcends not only our inability to save ourselves in time, but also, thirdly, our ungodliness.

In verse six he says, "...at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."²⁶

Beloved, there is the gospel in a nutshell, is it not? How simple. This puts no constraints on the intellect. A child can understand this, but only a man who humbles himself in utter dependence like a child will ever believe it. He will only believe it because of the Spirit of God drawing him to saving truth.

You see, it is interesting. As you think about it with age comes pride. All of us who are a little bit older know that. You younger people don't realize that yet, but you will.

I was thinking about this. You know, I was quite certain I received full omniscience by about age 16, certainly by 18 I was quite convinced of it. And, you know, with age therefore comes pride. And with pride comes a love for self, not a love for God. As we grow older and we become more proud we have more of a fear of man rather than a fear of God. We look at young people, for example, and as they begin to grow they are increasingly worshippers or peer pressure and of pleasure, not of God. Who else can you explain the utterly idiotic ways our young men wear their hats, their pants, their hair? Some of the things our young women do, how do you explain that? People walking around painting up their bodies and piercing it with all manner of things. How do you explain that? Well, they are worshippers of self. They are worshippers of acceptance. That is what begins to happen.

Now my point with all of this is to help you understand the idea of the ungodly. And we see ungodliness a little bit in our children. But it increases with age. The term is *asebhv* (as-eb-ace') in the original language. And it refers to those who are destitute of a reverential awe of God. They have no fear of God. They are impious. They are wicked.

Paul reminds us in chapter three at verse 23. He says that, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."²⁷

And you will recall that this is in the present tense. So he is saying that all are continuously falling short. And the verb is in the middle voice. It indicates merely that the cause of this dreadful condition is something that is not from outside of us, but from within, this constant continuing falling short of the glory of God. And the glory of God of which we are continually falling short is the glory of God manifested in Christ Jesus, the sinless Son of God. You will recall in John one and verse 14 we learn there that, "the

²⁶ Romans 5:6.

²⁷ Romans 3:23.

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Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of....”²⁸ What? He was full of grace and full of truth.

And, see, the point is, because of sin, man is not full of grace and truth. He is full of rebellion and deception. This is what it means to be ungodly. Sinful man has defaced the image of God in which he was made.

I noticed on the news this week—and perhaps you saw it—a very disturbing picture. There was a large raid on members of the Mexican mafia in Los Angeles and having lived there, I kind of know the area. There were dozens of men that were drug out into the streets and they were literally covered with tattoos and all of the piercings and things that go along with that vile lifestyle. And, of course, they had the, you know, the pants hanging down and the underwear showing and all of the stuff that speaks of that kind of wickedness. And I learned how they were charged with all manner of just unbelievable crimes.

And, you know, as I looked at that I thought, “My, my sin was far more wicked than that picture and it was in that context that God loved me and loved you.” To think that the inimitable, matchless love of God for us transcends our ungodliness is staggering. If you understand your wretchedness, which most do not.

Verse 20 of chapter five we see that “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”²⁹

But I want you to notice what the inspired apostle does next. In this argument for assurance of eternal life, eternal security of salvation, on top of all that he has just said with respect to God’s transcendent love for us, he gives this profound illustration, demonstrating God’s love.

Verse seven.

“For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.”³⁰

Now I believe righteous and good are being synonymously here. I think Paul is simply saying that it would be extremely rare to find anyone who would die, who would sacrifice his life for a person of high moral character. But, he says:

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”³¹

²⁸ John 1:14.

²⁹ Romans 5:20.

³⁰ Romans 5:7.

³¹ Romans 5:8.

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Yes, you may see somebody die for a good man, but the point is, who are you going to see die for a wicked man, a sinner? You see, Christ died for his enemy.

Sin in Scripture is likened to the poison of snakes. It is likened to the rocking of a corpse. It destroys, it disfigures, it defiles, it leads to death. And yet Christ loved us in such a state.

So what he is describing here is a love that is both unprecedented and unparalleled. Can there be any greater proof, my friends, of God's love for us, a love that will remain for eternity? That is where Paul is going with all of this.

I want you to notice, too, he says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us."³²

It is in the present tense, demonstrates. Though Christ's death happened 2000 years ago, isn't it fascinating that every believer still experiences within the core of his being a very present sense of the love of God because of what Christ has done in this glorious act?

Again, think of it. He is saying here that he loved you when you were utterly helpless to save yourself. By reason of your depravity you were condemned. You were alienated from God. You were corrupt. Your mind was darkened. He even loved you before you were ever created and yet he purposed in himself to come to this earth and to die for you despite your ungodliness. You see, this is absolutely foreign to the way we tend to love, isn't it?

Our love tends to be selfish and self serving rather than selfless and self sacrificing.

Think about it. The objects of our love tend to be those people who love us in return, those people who meet our needs, who make us feel good. I think of it is as a tick on a dog relationship. The only reason a tick ever attaches itself to the dog is not for the betterment of the dog, but the betterment of the tick. And the tick, therefore, uses that dog for its own ends. And, sadly, many marriages end this way. Only what happens is eventually the parasite spouse no longer is getting its, his or her needs met from the host spouse, if I can put it that way. And eventually decides, you know what? The love is over. I have got to find someplace else to get my needs met. That is typically how we love. Love is just an emotion based on, oh, wow, this is great. I am getting my needs met here.

But as soon as you are not getting your needs met, well, I have got to go somewhere else, because ultimately my love is selfish. My love is not a choice. It is not a selfless choice to love someone regardless of their sin, but it is based upon my selfish desire for my own needs to be met. So if my needs are met, I am happy. I am in love. If my needs aren't met, oh, I am unhappy. I just don't love her anymore. I just don't love him anymore.

³² Ibid.

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Worse yet, we tend to view God's love this way, don't we? We tend to see God's love this way towards us.

So we are constantly trying to earn his love. Oh, I hope I am good enough for God to love me. And now that I think he loves me and I have been granted my salvation, I have got to make sure that I keep myself in his good graces through all of the things that I need to do.

But, you see, God is not going to abandon you because of what you do or don't do, because he now sees you in Christ, his beloved Son. Again, God loved you when you were utterly reprehensible. And because of your justification he now loves you because you are united to Christ. So here he reveals to us this transcendent love, to give us assurance that the same love that he gave to us before time began, the same love that he used to love us even in our depravity and our ungodliness, is the love that he has for us now, the same love that motivated Jesus to die for us is the same love that will never abandon us.

I might ask you to pause for a moment. Do you really love God? Do you really love God? Is he your heart's desire or do you just give lip service to that? You see, Christians who love most will be those who see their sin the greatest, because they understand the depths from which they have been rescued.

You will never truly be able to sing *Amazing Grace* until you have first been amazed by your sin. You see, our love for God will be proportionate to our understanding of his love for us.

But look at verse eight. Read it this way.

“God demonstrates His own love toward [me]...”³³

Insert yourself there.

“... in that while [I was] yet [a sinner] Christ died for [me].”³⁴

Christ died for me. He died for me personally.

Beloved, what grips your heart when you think of Christ upon that cross when he died for you the ungodly? I hope that what grips your heart is the fact that this is an undeserved love. This is an unmerited love, an unmatched love, one that has been poured out, now, within your heart through the Holy Spirit.

Isaac Watts summarized this perfectly when he looked upon the cross and he put it this.

When I survey the wondrous cross,

³³ Romans 5:8.

³⁴ Ibid.

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On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

And in that great hymn he says:

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,

And then he went on to give the proper response to this.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Well, not only does he speak here of a transcendent love, but, secondly, of a saving love, verse nine.

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”³⁵

There is a footnote. This is actually the eight and the future benefit of our justification that emerges out of this text. This is a saving love from the wrath of God.

You see, it was Christ who bore the wrath of God for all that the Father had given him that we might never experience the wrath of an eternal hell.

You know, I can never think of Christ upon the cross without realizing that when he was there he was thinking of me personally as well as you. He knew my name. He knew the sound of my voice. He knew the color of my eyes. He knew my besetting sins. And he suffered untold agony for me specifically and for every person who has placed their faith in Christ.

Let me digress for a moment. If you are unsaved and you are hearing what I have to say to you this morning, I warn you in all love and kindness that you will one day endure the wrath of God unless you repent, unless you believe the Lord Jesus Christ. Hell is a place of unimaginable agony. And because of that, Jesus had to suffer unimaginable agony to save us from it. Now I would ask you. If God was not willing to spare his own Son who is most holy, on what basis would you think that he would spare you who are least holy? Moreover, you are one who, at least right now, rejects this wonderful gift of grace purchased at so high a price. You know, your sin is vile enough to sentence you to an eternal hell. But then for you to look upon the suffering Savior and to say, “Huh, that is

³⁵ Romans 5:9.

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not for me. I am good enough. I... I can make the cut. I... I... I... I know I can be acceptable to God, whoever he or she is if he or she exists."

Oh, such blasphemy. Dear friend, please hear me. There can be no more fierce a flame in hell than the one fanned by a person who rejects the love of God through the Son that he sent to die.

You are presently under the wrath of God and one day you will die in your sin. You will be lost forever unless you repent and believe. So I encourage you to look upon the crucified one who died for you.

And as the apostle explains, the man who is justified here experiences not only this transcendent love and a saving love, but thirdly and finally, a permanent love. Here he is bolstering even more of his argument for eternal security and the love of God. Notice verse 10.

He said, "For if while we were enemies..."³⁶ *εχθροί* (ech-thros') in the original language, the hated, those that hate, that which is odious. It would be translated an adversary. It is used of men who are at enmity with God because of their sin, those who oppose God in their mind, oppose God in their will. They are hostile to God.

"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more..."³⁷

In other words, even beyond all that I have been saying, "...much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."³⁸

You see, what Paul is saying here is if he loved us when we were his enemies and sent his Son to die for us now that Christ has purchased our redemption and reconciled us unto himself, how much more will he now love us since we are his children?

That is the argument. It is so simple, so profound.

Friends, may I remind you once again as I have done several times in the past, because I truly want you to get the grand scheme of redemption here that God has revealed in his Word. I take you back to the thoughts of our Lord in his high priestly prayer in John 17. Remember he is getting ready to go to the cross and in verse one we read how he lifts up his eyes into heaven and he says, "'Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.'"³⁹

And in verse 24 he says, "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me..."⁴⁰

³⁶ Romans 5:10.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ John 17:1.

⁴⁰ John 17:24.

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There is the elect.

“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.”⁴¹

So what is happening there in that context, if you can bear with me for a moment to get this grand picture, once again. The Lord is getting ready to go to the cross. It is a predetermined hour of mutual glorification of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, a plan that is now going to redeem a specific people that the Father had given to the Son? And as we learn in Scripture in eternity past, God the Father ordained a plan to demonstrate his infinite love to his Son whereby he chose for him a bride made up of undeserving sinners that he would one day transform by his grace and through his uninfluenced will he chose by name and recorded these names, this bridal church and he put it in a book of life. These names make up the son’s bride, an elect group of redeemed humanity, pledged to him as a gift of the Father’s love, a pledge that is sealed by the Spirit of promise. And then at the right time in the lives of the elect the Father would then irresistibly compel this great company of sinners to come to his Son in repentant faith though the convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. And, of course, central to this whole plan is the death of the Son to be the substitute for those sinners in order that they might be reconciled to a holy God that he might have a pure, a chaste, a spotless bride. These are the ones to which Jesus referred as to those whom thou hast given me.

And so the Lord then bore the sins of every individual person who was chosen before the foundation of the world. This was his plan all along and these are the ones who would then be, as Paul says in Romans three and verse 24, “justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”⁴²

And here in verse one of chapter five, “Therefore having been justified,”⁴³ having been declared righteous as a part of this glorious predetermined plan of inner trinitarian love, these who are justified by faith are going to have peace with God, access to God, a permanent standing before God, jubilant hope of glory, joy in tribulation, proof of salvation, hope through a subjective awareness of God’s love. And they will be saved from the wrath of God.

Talk about assurance. What more do you want? Do you really think you could forfeit all of this now being reconciled to him, being clothed in the righteousness of Christ, part of this magnificent love gift from the Father to the Son? Do you really believe that it is up to you to preserve that which was granted by grace?

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Romans 3:24.

⁴³ Romans 5:1.

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Obviously not. That would not only be absurd, based upon the theology of this text and so many others, but it would also impugn the character of God by implying that somehow he is capricious and he would love one moment... no, I don't love anymore.

That is not the God of the Bible, dear friends. And, of course, this is Paul's great argument.

Dear Christian, be humbled. Be comforted in these great truths. May I remind you of what Paul said in Ephesians one beginning in verse four, a marvelous summary?

He says:

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.⁴⁴

Verse 11.

"...we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."⁴⁵

See, salvation is according to his will, not ours. What exhilarating truths contained in these precious verses and what an encouragement this must have been to those early saints in Rome even as they are to us today. This love of God that has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit, this transcendent love, this saving love, this permanent love, a love that tells us that salvation in no way depends upon us. It solely depends upon the love of God, a love that does not change. And for this reason we can exult in hope of the glory of God as Paul says here in verse two, a hope that does not disappoint.

I challenge you, dear Christian, to look often upon the face of Christ as he hung upon the cross. And when you contemplate such love as we are commanded to do and certainly that is the reason why the Lord instituted the time of his communion at the Lord's Supper to remember him, but when you contemplate love like that, you will be moved to love the one who first loved you, even with all of your sin and all of your shame.

And, finally, I would invite you, dear friend without Christ, I would just plead with you as a minister of the gospel that you would see the love of God and may the love of God through Christ's great sacrifice soften your heart because it is because Christ suffered for your sin that you might be acquitted. So I plead with you today to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Today you will experience the miracle of the new

⁴⁴ Ephesians 1:4-6.

⁴⁵ Ephesians 1:11.

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birth and you will be testifying even as all of the rest of us sinners have been. Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these glorious truths. Cause them to go forth and accomplish your sovereign purposes. And we relax in that. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

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