

“The Demonstration of God’s Love”
(Romans 5:6-11)

The Christian Religion, or faith, has really been around as long as the world has, since the God who made the heavens and the earth is the same God who made us. God made us to know Him, to be in relationship with Him, to worship Him. But, as we know from the Bible, man did not stay in this relationship with God. He rebelled against Him, and when he did, he brought sin into the world and the just sentence of condemnation on all men. God made man to live in paradise, to walk with Him and have fellowship with Him every day, but man gave all this away when he listened to the devil. But you know this wasn’t the end. God is a very merciful and loving God. He knew this was going to happen even before He created man. And so He had planned to make a way for man to return to Him. This is what I want us to see from these few verses this evening: how God showed us His love by sending His Son to die in the place of sinners.

Paul, in this letter, is writing to the Christians who were at Rome to remind them of the wonderful love that God had shown, and continued to show, toward them in His Son, Jesus Christ. And I would like to show you from these verses this evening in the simplest way I can, how God showed them this love, and how you can share in it.

Paul begins by telling them that there was a time when they were absolutely helpless. This doesn’t mean they couldn’t do anything. They could get up in the morning and put on their clothes, eat their breakfasts, and go off to work. They could love their wives and their children, and take care of them as best as they could (although they couldn’t have even done this apart from God’s goodness, since He is the One who provides every good thing that anyone has to enjoy). They could also pray and perform religious rituals, and do the kind of good works that they thought would commend them to their gods. People everywhere have been practicing all kinds of religion from the very beginning. This isn’t what Paul was talking about. What he meant was they were helpless to do anything to get close to God, because they really didn’t want to. Now this might seem confusing, but you need to realize that those who worship false gods are worshipping gods of their own making. It’s not hard to worship something that you already love, something that is just how you want it to be. But it’s impossible for you to worship something you don’t find attractive, something you hate. But this is exactly how all men feel about God when they come into the world: they hate Him. Why do they hate Him? They hate Him because their hearts are full of sin. Sin is that thing inside us that makes us hate anything that has to do with God. It makes us *not* want to go to church. It makes us *not* want to listen to His Word. Sin is the enemy of God, and as long as it’s in our hearts, it makes us the enemy of God. But where did this sin come from? As I said before, it came from the very first man. When God created Adam, He made him perfect. He loved God and loved to fellowship with Him. God even created a beautiful garden to put him in, and he lived there with his wife Eve in perfect bliss. But when God made him and put him in the garden, He also gave him a test, a test to see if he would obey Him perfectly or not. The test was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he passed the test and didn’t eat of the tree, then he and his wife Eve and all his children would have lived forever in paradise. But if he failed, then he and his

wife and all his children would die – they would die spiritually, in that they would no longer love God; they would die physically, in that one day they would return to the ground; and they would die eternally, in that when they returned to the ground, their souls would be forever separated from God. Adam failed, and because he did, everyone comes into this world hating God, and because they do, they are absolutely helpless to do anything to come back to God. They won't come because they don't want to.

But this is where we see the love of God shine so brightly. Even when man was helpless, even when he hated God, God sent Christ to die for him. Now to understand how great an act of love this is, you need to understand who this was that God sent. Christ was no ordinary man. He was both God and man. The Bible says that He is the second person of the Triune God. The God I have been telling you about, the One who is the true God, is three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is God the Son in human flesh. In other words, He is the Son of God who became a man, who took upon Himself the same nature as man, so that He might die for man. This makes Him very special. Because He is God, His personal value is without limits. He is infinitely worthy. But again to understand how great an act of love this was, we also need to remind ourselves what man's condition was. He wasn't righteous. He wasn't even good. He was worse than worthless. He was a rebel against God. There are some who might lay down their lives for someone special, like President Bush, or for someone who had done some great accomplishment, like Albert Einstein, or for someone who had shown some great act of love, like mother Teresa. But who would lay down their lives for a Hitler, or a Charles Manson, or a Jim Jones? No one would. But yet Paul tells us that God's love was so great, that while man was still a sinner and in rebellion against Him, He sent Jesus Christ to die for him. We usually think that to lay down your life for a friend or for a spouse or child is a great sacrifice. But what about someone who lays down his life for an enemy? He's either out of his mind or he has a kind of love that we don't know about. God's love was so great that He willingly gave the One who was more precious to Him than anything else to die for those who hated Him, that He might make them His friends, no, even closer, His own children. The Bible says that those for whom Jesus laid down His life, deserved to suffer an eternity in hell for their sins. They sinned against an infinitely holy God, and therefore their punishment would have gone on forever in a place of intense burning and pain. But God's love was so great, that He not only sent His Son to take their place, He also gave them what His Son deserved – an eternity with Him in a place of perfect love and happiness.

But you know, Jesus didn't stay dead. After He laid down His life for sinners, He rose again from the dead. Then after forty more days, He went up into heaven and sat down on the right hand of God, now to rule over and pray for His people. This is really what the last three verses of this passage are talking about. If God's love was so great for His people that He would send His Son to save them when they were still sinners, how much more will He keep them now that Jesus has died, risen and now prays for them? Paul says that Jesus, by shedding His blood, by dying on the cross, justified His people, or made them just in God's eyes. This means that God now looks at them as though they have never sinned and as though they did everything right. Now they didn't do this personally. But Jesus did. What He did, He did for them. Not only this, but Jesus also prays for them. Whenever one of His children sins, Jesus prays that the Father would forgive them and give them the strength to do what's right. The point is, now that they

have been forgiven, now that they have been reconciled with God, now that Jesus' prayers will keep them reconciled, how can they not be saved? How could they ever be lost? The answer is they couldn't be. Those whom Jesus died for, those whom He lives for, those whom He intercedes for, can never be lost. This show us how great the love of God is, He not only saves His people from the consequences of their sins now, but He will keep them safe from them forever.

But there is one last thing I need to remind you of this evening, and that is that this blessing, this great love which God has shown, is only for those who believe. Paul wrote this letter to the Christians who were at Rome, to those who were beloved of God, to those who were called saints (1:6-7). This letter was not addressed to the world. God didn't love the whole world. Jesus didn't die for the whole world. The whole world will not be saved. The Bible is very clear on this issue. There will be those who will suffer forever in hell, in the lake of fire. Only those who believe will be saved. Now this doesn't mean that God doesn't offer salvation to the whole world. He does. But only those who actually believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved. And this brings us to the last point: if you are to receive this love Paul has told us about this evening, you need to turn from your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? It means for one thing that you need to be willing to stop doing all the things that God's Word says are wrong, and begin doing the things it says are right. It also means that you need to begin to trust in Jesus and His obedience for your acceptance with God, instead of your own. Now when I say that you need to believe in Jesus, you need to understand that this is more than just knowing and believing the facts about Jesus' life. The Bible says that even the devils believe and are afraid. But they're not saved from hell. You do need to believe the facts, but you need more than this: You must actually trust Jesus to save you. You must look to His good works to make up for your failure to keep God's commandments. You must look to His death to take away your guilt. You must look to Him for the strength to love God and your neighbor. You must look to Him as the only reason why God should ever let you into heaven. You must look away from yourself and all of your own merits to Christ and His merits alone. The Bible says that we are all helpless, apart from Jesus. We are all ungodly and under God's wrath. We all deserve to die and spend the rest of eternity in hell. But God loved the world so much, that He sent His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). If you want this eternal life this evening, you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you. Turn from your sins and trust in Him now. If you do, He will save you. If you don't, you will perish. Won't you come to Him now? Let us bow in prayer and ask the Lord to give you the strength to do so.