How He Loves Us

Romans 5:6-8 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Intro

- The cross stands as the centerpiece of the Bible.
- Everything in the Old Testament directs our gaze towards the cross and everything else is dramatically influenced by what happened on that hill called Golgotha on an old rugged cross.
- The cross, in all of its beauty and all of its tragedy, represents the single greatest act of God in all of time and eternity.
- It was the culmination of a plan that was in the mind of God from the very foundations of the earth.
- It casts its shadow across all of human history.
- When God said, in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image..." he had the cross in view, he had the incarnation in mind.
- As he reached into the dust of a newly formed earth and began to make a man in his own image, God – who is a spirit – had a vision of the incarnation in His mind.
- At the very beginning, he looked through time and saw the cross.
- He envisioned the broken body that he would make for himself and, in the supreme act of love, the creator – even as he was making his creation – purposed in his heart to give his life for us.
- There is no greater truth, this morning, than the supreme revelation of God’s love that is fully demonstrated at the cross.

A Love Story

- I’ve come to this pulpit today to share with you a love story.
- It is a compelling story of a man who would lay down his life for no other reason than that he was in love.
- I have no doubt, this morning that you are very familiar with the story of a man named Adam and a woman named Eve.
- You will remember, from the Sunday School stories that you probably heard at a very young age, how that God created a perfect paradise in the garden of Eden and how he reached into the dust of the earth and formed a man, breathing life into that man and making him the ruler, the keeper, over all that God had created.
- It was absolute paradise.
- Adam had everything that he could ever want, every need was met from the wonderful garden that God had so lovingly crafted,
- his every desire was fulfilled – with one remarkable exception.
• Adam longed for companionship.
• Somewhere inside of him was a deep-seated desire for more than just the fellowship that he had with God, he longed for an intimate relationship with someone on his own level.
• He longed to sit and talk with someone who felt the same things he felt, who experienced the same things he experienced, someone who would understand him like only a coequal could.
• God observed in Adam a condition that He, in his infinite wisdom must have anticipated, loneliness for someone, after his own kind that he could share his life with.
• So God caused a deep sleep to come over Adam and he took from his side a rib and fashioned from that rib a helpmate, a companion in this life.
• Adam, when he looked into the eyes of that lovely woman that God had made him, knew that she was what was missing in his life.
• With conviction he declared: Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.
• In Eve, Adam found the companionship that he had desired.
• She became his wife, his best friend, his soul mate, and his confidant.
• She was everything that he could have ever dreamed that she would be.
• Together, by God’s divine design, they became as one flesh – one in spirit, one in mind, one in body – so completely joined together that where one of them left off the other began.
• They were the absolute perfect couple and, along with their very close relationship with their creator, they had a wonderful, flawless, love for each other.

• There was a single caveat in the midst of their magnificent existence.
• God put a particular tree in the middle of the garden, The Tree Of Knowledge Of Good And Evil, and He gave Adam very explicit instructions,
• you can eat from every other tree in the garden but if you ever eat of that tree you will surely die.
• God did this because He desired the fellowship of the creation that was made in His image.
• But there is no such thing as true fellowship if it occurs through compulsion.
• It is not fellowship if one party has no choice.
• Fellowship must be freely given.
• This was the purpose of the tree in the garden.
• God gave humans the responsibility of choice, in order to remain in fellowship with him they must choose him over the mysterious knowledge concealed in the fruit of the tree.

• Without rehearsing the whole story, you know how that the serpent was craftier than any other beast that God had made
• and how that, on a particular day, Eve allowed herself to pause and linger over that forbidden tree.
• In a moment of weakness, as the serpent spun his deceitful lies, Eve made an incredibly bad decision.
• Acting upon the compulsion of her flesh, deceived by visions of grandeur that the serpent planted in her mind, and enticed by the attractive appearance of the fruit, Eve took a bite of that forbidden fruit.
• Then, perhaps realizing what a terrible thing she had done, she brought the fruit to Adam.
• Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, makes an incredible statement about that fateful day.
• First Timothy 2:14 tells us that Eve was deceived when she ate the fruit.
• The serpent beguiled Eve and she fell under the suggestive influence of his deception.
• The language used is that Eve was “faked out,” when she took of the fruit and ate it, she didn’t really realize what she was doing.
• She was under the influence of Satan.
• Please understand that this doesn’t excuse her, but an important distinction is made in the scripture.

• Adam was not deceived. He sinned willfully.
• Eve was blinded to what she was really doing, but Adam’s eyes were wide open. He knew exactly what he was doing when he ate the fruit.
• In fact, he CHOSE to sin!
• Let me explain it.
• When Eve approached Adam on that fateful day, with the fruit that had been partially eaten in her hands, Adam knew exactly what had happened.
• He knew in an instant what Eve had done and he knew the consequences of her actions.
• He was not deceived.
• He knew that what she had done would result in her death.
• In that moment, he knew that he was about to lose the love of his life and he was faced with an inconceivable choice.
• We don’t think much about this, but the truth is that he had to decide, at that moment, between his relationship with Eve and his relationship with God.
• And Adam, out of his great love for Eve, deliberately chose the fellowship of Eve over that of God.
• When he did, he willingly broke his fellowship with God.
• Adam chose to sin.
• Out of his great love for the bride that God had given him, he chose to stand in solidarity with her in her judgment.
• He chose, willingly and undeceived, to suffer the same fate as his wife, the love of his life.

• Adam suffered God’s judgment with Eve, because of his great love for Eve.
Adam died a mortal death, with Eve, because of his great love for Eve.
And Adam became the source of sin because of the choice that he made.
Adam committed a willful act of disobedience.
He deliberately chose the fellowship of Eve over that of God and broke fellowship with his Creator.
Adam chose death over life.
Because of this, Adam is the one man by which sin entered the world.
“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Romans 5:19 tells us.
Thankfully, that isn’t the end of the story.
The verse goes on to say that, “by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

The Second Adam
Jesus Christ is called the second man Adam for a number of reasons.
On that day in the garden, when Adam was faced with the prospect of losing his Bride, he chose to stand with her – to share her judgment, to help bear the burden of her sin.
He could not stand in her stead,
- he could not remove the judgment that would surely come,
- but he chose, instead, to walk with her
- to share in her sorrow and pain,
- to be there, right beside her, as she dealt with the harsh realities of life and death.
He did this because he couldn’t stand to lose her.
He couldn’t stand the thought of being separated from her.
What he did not understand was that, when he chose to eat the fruit of the tree and to walk the same road that Eve would walk,
God suffered the same caliber of loss that Adam avoided.
God, in a sense, lost his bride that day.
Scripture presents the relationship between God and his church as being the same as the relationship between a bride and a groom.
When humanity fell into sin, it was the same to God as it was to Adam when Eve sinned. God felt the same loss.
But here’s the great and wonderful truth conveyed in this whole tragic story:
God made the same decision as Adam.
The second man Adam was Jesus Christ.
God robed himself in flesh for one purpose.
He chose, just as Adam did, to die with his bride.
He chose to suffer death for every man.

The distinction between Adam and Jesus is that Jesus did so without having first tasted of sin.
• Because of that, the death of Jesus possesses a unique power to free his bride from her sin.
• Adam died in sin and guilt, but Jesus died in innocence, without sin.
• Because of this, the blood of Jesus has the power to remit sins.
• In Adam’s simple human mind, his death was the only way to maintain his relationship with Eve.
• So he yielded to sin and allowed it to have its way.
• However, in the plan of God, it was the death of the second man, Adam, that would have the power to break the hold of sin.
• He was tempted in all points, just like us. But he was without sin.
• When he went to the cross, he carried the weight of the sin of the whole world. His death was the atonement for all sins.
• Heaven’s spotless lamb died one time, that all of humanity might have life and that more abundantly.
• He, through his death restored what Adam, through his death had lost!
• He restored the fellowship between God and man!

• The greatest love story of all the ages, started in the garden of Eden and culminated at the cross.
• Adam chose Eve, because his love for her was a love that was willing to suffer death with her in order not to be separated from her.
• However, that’s not the end of the story.
• God loved his creation so much that he, like Adam, chose through the incarnation, to die with his bride in order to redeem her from sin.
• The blood that flowed down Calvary’s tree was the product of a pure undefiled love.
• For God so loved the world, John 3:16 declares, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5:6-8
• So Paul, in his letter to the Romans, lifts up the cross as the supreme example of God’s love for us.
• In our text he says that, when we were yet without strength,
  o when we had sinned,
  o when we found ourselves on the threshold of judgment,
  o when we were absolutely powerless to change our course,
  o when we were bound by sin,
  o when we didn’t have the strength to cast it off – Christ died for us!
• He died in our place.
• He tasted our death for us.
• That’s the wonder of the cross, that’s the beauty of what we celebrate this morning.
• Jesus Christ, in due time, gave his life for the ungodly.
• Paul says that, while it is highly unlikely, it is not unheard of for a man to lay down his life for a good man.
• We’ve just seen where Adam, out of his great love for Eve, was willing to lay down his life with her.
• He, essentially, died for her, although his feeble effort had no chance to spare her from the same fate.
• Paul makes a comparison in our text.
• He says, God “commendeth” his love toward us.
• That word, commend means to show or to prove or to establish by comparison.
• We catch a glimpse, in the writing of Paul, of the greatest love that humanity could possess, in that a man would lay down his life for someone he loves or that he perceives is good or innocent.
• But then we see by comparison the extraordinary love of God that greatly exceeds the love of man,
• in that, while we were yet sinners – we were not good, we were not innocent, we didn’t deserve his love or his mercy – but while we were yet sinners,
• God loved us!
• This is the message of Paul: God commends, or presents, His love in its true and unmistakable character in the image of the cross!

• Now here’s the great thing about or text, the active verb here, commendeth, is in the present tense.
• What that means to you and me, this morning, is that God is continuously establishing his love for us in the vision of the cross.
• There is no more striking example of the great love of God than the old rugged cross and the terrible tragic death that purchased our freedom from sin.
• When we were without strength, when we didn’t have the ability to save ourselves, God robed himself in flesh and carried an old rugged cross up a hill called Galgotha.
• They beat him, they mocked him, they spit upon him.
• His robes were torn asunder, his side was pierced with a spear, his hands and his feet were nailed to the cross and a crown of thorns was shoved upon his head – all because he loves us!
• This morning, I come to give you a simple message: God loves you!
• He loves you right where you are!
• He loves you in spite of your flaws and failures.
• He loves you regardless of your weaknesses and inabilities.
• He loves you!
• He loves you so much that he laid down his life for you!
• He loves you so much that he gave all he had to give so that you could experience his love!

Close
• God loves you.
• He loves you so much that he chose to suffer a horrible death in order to make a way that you could know him.
• We all inherited a sin nature from Adam.
• We have all fallen short of the glory of God and none of us is good enough to come into his presence.
• But this morning, God has made a way that you and I can be reconciled to him.
• The blood of Jesus is mighty and powerful to save.
• It covers a multitude of sins.
• The love of God is flowing through this house today.
• Mercy is calling your name.
• We stand, today, in full view of the cross.
• As we celebrate Easter, as we rejoice at the fact that he is risen from the grave,
• we look full upon the old rugged cross and if you would take the time to stop this morning and listen you would hear love calling out to you.
• He loves you!
• He cares about your life.
• He knows about the burdens that you carry,
• he is aware of the burdens that weigh you down
• and this morning, if you would allow it, the love of god would sweep all of those things away.
• This is why he went to the cross.
• This is why he laid down his life.
• This is why he shed his blood.
• This is the wonder of the resurrection: that God could flow into this house this morning and minister to you, right where you are!

• Today, if you know him as your savior, you should celebrate that fact.
• And, if you don’t, you shouldn’t leave this place until you do!