

The Love of Christ – Part II

April 7, 2019

Romans 5:1-11

Reading: Romans 5:1-11

It's Depth

Last week we examined the value of Christ's love by its costliness as the first of four ways you can see Christ's depth love for each believer. One can begin to understand the price God the Father paid by sacrificing his Son and the depth of Christ's love when you examine what it cost him for each believer's salvation. As we explored the cost last week.

This morning we will spend time examining the 2nd type of the depth of Christ's love by how little we deserve it. Jesus wanted those who believed to understand his loving the underserving when he taught, ⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48) So, here our love is not measured in the sacrifice but by whether we will give it to people who do not deserve it or return it. We have all hurt others in our lives. I am amazed and overwhelmed when someone I have hurt loves me in return – the easiest example I can think of is my wife Joyce.

Next week we will spend time on the 3rd example of the depth of Christ's love – the greatness of his love by the benefits we receive. Love is not complete by

sacrifice, but it also makes a positive contribution to a person's life. As John wrote, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that **we should be called children of God**; and so we are. ... ² Beloved, we are God's children now ... we know that when he appears **we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." (1 John 3:1-3) Because of Jesus' sacrifice when one believes in Jesus as their Lord and Savior they become "**children of God**" and this is of great benefit both here during our mortal lives on earth and in heaven. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death, we too will rise from mortal death to heaven and be gloried in a pure state.

On Resurrection Sunday we will finish with the fourth; knowing the depth of Christ's love for us by the freedom with which he loves us. When a person loves in this manner they love not because they are forced to or because they feel guilty or because they demand something in return but simply, they love us. As it is written, ¹⁸ "For I, *Paul*, consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ... ²¹ and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:18 & 21) Jesus gave his life and loves all people whether they return his love or not. However, if they do not return his love, they forfeit the benefits of his love.

Jesus loves in all these ways; his love cost him greatly, he loves completely even though we do not deserve it, by his love we receive benefits beyond anything we could have hoped for and he loves freely without regard. This type of love is beyond our human ability but by Christ's love and the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to grow closer to this type of unconditional love, agape love.

The goal of this message series is to sink the roots of our lives into the fertile ground of God's love, an endless love, so that, we will grow deep roots and be

unshakable in the storms of life and that our heart and soul will be nourished by God's agape love to where our lives will bear good fruit for the kingdom and others will want to eat God's fruit as they see his love worked out in our lives.

Beyond Human Comprehension

I just said that Jesus' ability to love us these four ways is beyond human comprehension. If this statement is true, and I believe it is, then we need to start this morning with the hope given by God and his Word that as his children, he will give us comprehension that is beyond human. It is my heart's desire that as I preach you will gain understanding. Look in your Bible at our passage this morning, Romans 5, beginning in verse 1, *"Therefore, we know that when the word 'therefore' is used it is saying, 'listen up, what is following is important, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by faith in Christ and reconciled to God the Father as his children. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. As we live and make decisions and act upon the decisions of life our primary purpose is to bring glory to God. ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, Why? Listen to this as verse 5 continues - because **God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.**"* God has given us a precious gift that enables us to comprehend what is humanly impossible – his gift of himself – God the Holy Spirit.

It is natural for man, in his fallen state, to go on tangents concerning the mysteries of the gifts of God. The gift of the Holy Spirit and who the Holy Spirit is

has been redefined often by men. This has created many schisms that takes the church away from God's Word. So, let me take a short side-bar – in the first 1500 years of the church, men corrupted it by teaching what was not from God and calling it of God. They did this as the leadership of the church moved from sacrificial leadership to power based and controlling leadership. This is what triggered the Protestant Reformation considered by most to have started in 1517 by Martin Luther's posting of his 95 Theses on the church door. However, there had been attempts prior but they did not gain traction. The protesting reformers and the Roman Catholic Church ended in wars over doctrine that split Europe and cost 100s of thousands of lives. These protesters came to be known as the Protestants, which comes from the word protest. These wars and conflicts lasted about 100 years. The result was movement by the Protestants back to the Scriptures as God gave them. The **Five Solas** was a result of the Protestant Reformation and gives foundational statements of the basics of our faith. Unfortunately, when lessons are not learned and remembered history repeats itself and the Protestant church over the last 500 years has again fractured into many denominations as men have redefined God's Word to meet whatever they determined their needs to be and some teach what is not of God as if it were of God. We at Canyon Bible adhere to the **Five Solas**, which are Latin slogans that give the core beliefs the Protestant Reformers fought for and I think it would be a good time to review them.

Sola Scriptura - "Scripture alone". The Bible alone, inspired by God is our highest authority. *God's Word needs nothing added from man. It does not need to be updated or changed - for God's Word is eternal truth.*

Sola Fide - "faith alone". We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ. *Works cannot save us and if our good works are not based on our faith in Jesus Christ, they are filthy rags.*

Sola Gratia - “grace alone”. We are saved by the grace of God alone. *Grace is the free gift of God. Salvation cannot be earned or deserved.*

Solus Christus - “Christ alone”. Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King. *Jesus is the sole object of our worship – not saints or icons.*

Soli Deo Gloria - “to the glory of God alone”. We live for the glory of God alone.

Canyon Bible’s Statement Faith states our belief concerning a number of doctrinal positions, beginning with the Word of God, the Bible, “We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and are therefore infallible and inerrant, of divine authority, and therefore the only authority, in all things pertaining to faith and practice.” We are interested in what God has to say and not what man would like God or of man’s fancy as to the who and what the Holy Spirit is. So, if understanding the depth of God’s love for believers is beyond human comprehension then how are we to understand? The answer is given in our text, reading verse 5, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” By man’s intellect they Bible does not makes sense because without the Holy Spirit man lack spiritual wisdom.

Role of the Holy Spirit

Here is the basis of my hope this morning that in my preaching about the love of God the Father and Christ the Son that you will actually experience his love and comprehend in some significant life-changing measure the incomprehensible love of Christ. The basis of my hope is that God has given you, who are believers in Christ, the Holy Spirit. As you sit there, the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you.

He is in you and I praise God for this because the Holy Spirit can make sense of my preaching even if it is muddled. As Paul taught, “[your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God.](#)” (1 Corinthians 6:19) If this were not so, my aims in preaching about love given to us as Christ’s church would be futile. I am preaching mostly to people who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of the living God. However, for those who have yet to be indwelt by this Spirit of God and therefore, lack spiritual wisdom, you may receive the gift of God’s Holy Spirit. How? The Apostle Peter gave a clear answer, “[Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.](#)” (Acts 2:38)

Now how does the presence of the Holy Spirit give me confidence that my preaching on the love of God for you will result in a real experience of that love? The answer is because verse 5 says that the work of the Holy Spirit is to be the Agent of God in pouring his love out into your heart. Look again at verse 5, “[God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.](#)” One of the main reasons God has given the Holy Spirit to you is so that he might pour out his love into your heart.

I hope you see what this means. It means that without the supernatural work of Holy Spirit, we cannot experience and comprehend the love of God in Christ and the love of Christ for us. The love of God is a divine and supernatural reality. However, you and I, apart from the Holy Spirit, are merely natural and unspiritual people. We cannot and do not recognize or value the love of God in Christ without the Holy Spirit. When God opens our souls to his truth, he sends himself as the Holy Spirit to indwell our souls and this enables our hearts to come to faith. God the Holy Spirit awakens us to the reality of His love and begins to pour his truth

and love into our hearts and this changes our perspective about life and purpose. We live in a reality that the unsaved world does not understand.

This should greatly encourage some of you who feel that your background makes it difficult, if not impossible, for you to feel loved. The fact is, it is not only difficult, it is impossible and not just for you, but for all of us. I want you to think on this for a minute, it is so important to grasp. Comprehending the love of God has for you; to experiencing it, to be gripped by it, to taste it, is **not** the product of good preaching, teaching or even a good family background. It is not the product of merely natural experiences of life, both good or bad. However, it is the work of God, the Holy Spirit. The love of God is poured out into our souls and hearts must be revealed through the Holy Spirit. Without that, you can have the best family background in the country and you will never truly know the love of God. Or, you can have the worst family background or have experienced abuse and suffering at the hands of others and the Holy Spirit **will** still pour the love of God into your soul and heart. Try not to equate or relate human behavior that has failed you or abused you with the pure love of God, which never fails.

Some may ask, Pastor, where does preaching fit into all this? What does your preaching have to do with the work of the Holy Spirit pouring out the love of God into our souls and hearts? The answer is given in verses 6 to 8 and the connection they have with verse 5. Reading beginning at verse 6, “**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**” Notice the connection. In verse 6 what we have is the recounting of a historical fact; “**Christ died**”. Why did Christ die? He died “**for the ungodly**”. Jesus took the place of the ungodly, he died to save the ungodly. This is different from verse 5. In verse 5 it is about the Christian experience, “**God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.**” Verse 6 gives us history “**Christ died**” and theology

“[Christ died for the ungodly](#)”. The connection I want us to see is between the history and theology on-one-hand in verse 6 and the experience of the history and theology in verse 5.

What is happening is this. Paul has said that the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into our hearts. Then he shows us what that love is and he bases it on history. This means that the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart is **not** to give your heart the content of the love of God. It is **not** the job of the Holy Spirit to describe the love of God to you. That is the job God has assigned to history and to the Word of Scripture that interprets that history and it is preaching which brings history, God’s Word and the experience of the Holy Spirit to bear upon your mind.

You **learn** the nature and content of the love of God from the way that love acted in history in Jesus Christ and you **experience** that love as a present and life-changing reality as the Holy Spirit pours it out into your heart. Both of these are crucial. If we make claims to have experienced the love of God without solid foundations in history and its God-given meaning, we become cultic and base our belief on emotion, even become fanatical; and if we claim to understand the history and the meaning of history but we do not experience the love of God poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we become barren and impotent and intellectual without spiritual wisdom.

So, I want you to understand my message this morning cannot take the place of the Holy Spirit in your life. The Holy Spirit will not do the work assigned to the Word of God. My calling is to describe the love of God to you through his Word. The Holy Spirit’s calling is to pour out the love of God in your hearts. My calling is to point you to what Christ did; the Holy Spirit’s calling is to open your eyes to see it as glorious and personal. My calling is to make it plain; the Holy Spirit’s is

to make it precious. Mine is to make it clear; his is to make it dear. Mine is to take you on a tour around the deep and scenic ocean of the love of God through the Word; the Holy Spirit's job is to plunge you in and saturate your life with the love of God - to baptize you in it.

God's Love Expressed Through Christ

Come with me now as we look at the depth of the love of God in Christ and Christ love for us and the way we see it this morning is in how undeserving we were to receive it. Verses 6–8 give the description of God's love the Holy Spirit pours out into our hearts. Go with me to verse 6, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The central fact of the love of God is that Christ died for us. This is what we focused on last week that Christ sacrificed his life, not just his time and energy and convenience and money and health, but he sacrificed his life; his sinless, holy, wise, loving and divine life. However, that is not Paul's focus in these verses. Here the focus is on the moral condition of those he died for. This is what shows that the love of Christ is so amazing. This is what the Holy Spirit will pour into your hearts afresh this morning.

In verse 7, Paul speaks of human love, “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die.” Paul is saying that human love rarely reaches a high enough level that one would die for someone else, even if that person has been especially good. Where in history do we see someone sacrificing their life for someone else just because that person is a good? So, just because a person is just and honest, kind and generous,

the likelihood that by human love one would freely give their life to save a person is small, very small. Paul follows this idea of human love with the contrasting love of God.

In verse 8, we read the contrast of God's love to human love; "but God shows his love for us..." Let me stop here for a moment and connect this with verse 5, where God demonstrates his love, "in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." What I want you to see is the demonstration of the love of God in history and in his Word; but we experience the application of the love of God by the outpouring work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Continuing in verse 8, where God demonstrates His love in this way, "in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." When God chose to love us, he knew it would be at the cost of himself, the death of God the Son, and we were and are completely undeserving of his love. The truth is what all mankind is deserving of is God's wrath and just punishment for our sins against him. God did not wait for us to evolve spiritually and morally; his love paid the full price for our salvation while we were sinners.

Paul wanted to strengthen the impact of this thought with 3 other words. In verse 6 we find 2 of these words, "while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." So, Christ died for our salvation not only while we were still sinners, but also while we were weak and helpless. We were unable to make any contribution to our salvation and thus we say, "*Sola Gratia* – 'grace alone'. We are saved by the grace of God alone." Paul made plain, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong ...²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom

from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,³¹ so that, as it is written, in Jeremiah (9:23-24) ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’” (1 Corinthians 1:27-31) We should always be humbled by God’s unmerited love.

Before God saved us, we were not only weak but we were by our fallen nature “ungodly”. This means not only we did not believe in God, but we had no respect for God, we the were children wrath and God’s enemies. Paul even gives more clarity about one’s position as being ungodly earlier in Romans, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**” (Romans 1:18) So, this means that for all of you who trust Christ, the love of God overcame his wrath and so he saved you. You were guilty sinners, you were weak and helpless, and you were ungodly, you suppressed the truth of God and deserved the just and holy wrath of God. However, in spite of all that, God loved you and gave his Son to die that you might live.

There is a 3rd word found in verse 10, “For if while we were **enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.**” All people by their sin are enemies of God and deserve his wrath, but in spite of this God calls us by his grace and gives his love to us freely. Our time is running out and this is a good place wrap things up. Hopefully after Resurrections Sunday our minds and hearts will understand the way God’s love works in us and in the world at large and we will hear the words of Jesus with our ears, minds and hearts – ⁴³ “**You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’** ⁴⁴ **But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵ **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.**” (Matthew 5:43-45) The foundation and source of our ability to love in this manner is found in verse 10, “For if while we were enemies

we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” While we were the enemies of God, he loves us so much he sacrificed his Son, so that, we would be reconciled back to him as his children.

My beloved, let each of us send our roots of our heart and soul down into the rich depth of God’s love. Let us drink deeply from his love. Build your life on God’s love and separate yourself from the deceptive love of the world. If you long to experience God’s love more and more - as I surely do - pray with me and fast with me next week and yearn with me, so that, God would pour his love out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This is revival – revival of our souls that will lead to revival of our church and pour out into the world around us.