

# Written Copy: Romans 5:6-11 “The Supernatural Work of Reconciliation”

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost, Proper #6

Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Text: Romans 5:6-11

<sup>6</sup> For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> For one will scarcely die for a righteous person---though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die---<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

## Exegetical Statement

Paul lays out clearly who we are in the presence of God, we are sinners who by our choosing to please ourselves have made ourselves enemies of the God who, out of love, created us to have an intimate relationship with Him. And we are helpless to fix that broken relationship. Try as hard as we might we only fall further and further away. We were neither in right standing with Him or even any good to Him. Yet, He has a supernatural, unconditional love for us; one that is more than a heart feeling or disposition. His love moved His Son to give His life on our behalf, to take our sins and our deserving punishment and make them His own, so that we can stand before Him in right standing, with no guilty charge to be leveled, since Jesus was guilty for us and suffered and died for us. With no charges of sin found on our account Jesus death and resurrection has the power to reconcile us back into a love relationship with our Creator God. We are once again the precious children He created us to be, to have a restored relationship with Him now that stretches all the way into eternity. By His gift of grace, through the power of His love, we live in restored favor with Him with the sure and certain knowledge by faith that on judgment day we will be given what we did not earn or deserve, but what Christ earned for us, salvation from eternal punishment and eternity with Him.

## Focus Statement:

In our relationship with God, He is totally in the right and we are totally in the wrong. But Jesus more than met us halfway when He took all the wrongs we had done against God and suffered and died for them. With no sin to charge us with we are in right standing before God. His work of grace in our hearts restores in us the image of God and reconciles us to be in intimate fellowship with our Creator once again, a relationship that is active now and into eternity.

## Function Statement:

### Why it's important to know:

In our culture enemies must be defeated. How can someone who we consider to be our enemy be restored into fellowship with us? They need to admit all the ways they've wronged us and drop their accusations of wrongdoing by us. Reconciliation among men happens when both parties find the middle ground and admit mutual transgressions against each other. But that won't work with God.

### What the hearer should do as a result:

Through the Spirits' work in means of grace remain and grow in our relationship with God. And through our righteous boasting share this reconciliation with those around us.

## Subject Sentence: Reconciled by Christ for now and forever.

## **Introduction Revenge and Reconciliation**

You know what we Dads love? We love movies where the bad guy gets it in the end, where the hero gets revenge against the bad guy who has wronged him unjustly. One such scene that comes to mind is from Superman II. In this movie Superman, who poses as mild-mannered Clark Kent, newspaper reporter, falls in love with Lois Lane and wants to marry her. But this is impossible since he is not human but from the planet Krypton. Still, moved by love, he discovers a way to become human. He builds a chamber where exposes himself to the rays of the red sun of his home planet. This exposure takes away all his superpowers and makes him human. But it also takes away his ability to save the planet, as well as defend himself against the bad guys. This becomes evident when, after he becomes human, he stops at a local diner with Lois and runs into a tough guy who begins to make a move on her. He stands up for her honor only to get punched, knocked down, and knocked out. When he comes to, he sees on the news that three criminals from his home planet of Krypton have come and are raining destruction upon planet Earth, calling all mankind to bow before them.

Clark Kent realizes his mistake and heads back to that chamber to reverse the process and regain his superpowers so he can take on these three criminals. The problem is they are just as strong as he is and outnumber him three to one. They take Lois Lane hostage and threaten to kill her unless he turns himself human again. So, he steps back into that cubicle, but this time something different happens. Instead of the red sunlight shining inside the cubicle, it shines outside on these three evil criminals from Krypton. These criminals don't realize what has happened. The leader calls Superman to come and take his hand and bow before him. Superman bows, takes his hand, and begins to crush it. All three of these criminals have become human, and Superman easily defeats them and sends them to their doom. Revenge!

In the final scene Superman returns to the diner dressed as Clark Kent and confronts the tough guy who beat him up. Superman tells him that he is sitting in his seat. The tough guy gets up and tries to punch Superman in the stomach. But that doesn't even faze "The Man of Steel". Instead, the tough guy breaks his hand and wrist. Superman spins him around and around on his chair like he is a whirling dervish. Then lifts him up by the collar, sits him down right on his plate of food. He tells the man behind the counter, "This order is to go", and shoves him down the length of the diner counter and on top of a pinball machine that flashes the word "tilt". That's what we want to see, right guys? Revenge! The bad guy gets it.

Of course, that kind of resolution with an enemy is better left to the movies. When we have a disagreement with someone the best thing to do is attempt to reconcile with them. But that is easier said than done. It involves both sides admitting that they are wrong and coming to some middle ground of agreement where each side has to give and take. Now because of who we are, we are all about pointing out how the other person is wrong, but not too keen on admitting the wrongs we've done. We are happy to see them give in to please us, but not too happy to give from our side in order to please them, or even meet them halfway. Sometimes we can come to some kind of reconciliation. But often neither side is entirely happy with the outcome. We live with it in order to get along. Well, that's the sad situation with other human beings. But what about our relationship with God?

### **Enemies of God with No Chance to Reconcile Ourselves**

Paul describes our situation before God this way: we are enemies of Him by our own fault. He created mankind to have a relationship with us. We turn away from Him and seek to please ourselves at the expense of how He created us to live. If we obeyed His law things would go much better for us and we would live at peace with each other. But we are sinners who constantly disobey. We offend Him by doing the opposite of what He tells us to do, and not only once, but over and over again. He didn't turn away from us, we turned away from Him. Because He is the holy God who cannot tolerate sin, we became His enemies who deserve His wrath now and forever.

And it's not like we don't know what He expects of us. We have it all spelled out in His law: how we are to live by loving Him first and loving others as much as we love ourselves. The problem is, as Paul describes in verse 6, we are weak. We may know what is right, but we are utterly powerless to do it. And the more we try to follow the Law, to do what it says in order to earn our place back in His good graces, we only push ourselves farther and farther away. The closer we look at what He commands us to do and try to follow it, the more broken and sinful we see that we really are.

Since it's impossible for us to change, we try reconciliation. Our idea of reconciliation is we ask God to meet us halfway in this problem with our sin. We try to cut a deal where we keep most of the laws while He cuts us some slack on those we struggle with. We might ask Him to grade us on a curve, give us an "A" for effort, focus on our good works and not our sinful ones. That might work in reconciling with other humans, but not with God. There is no middle ground. As the Creator and sustainer of life He has every right to tell us how we should live, and we have no standing to cut any deals with Him. He is holy and without sin. He created us to have a relationship with us, to live in loving obedience before Him. And since He is holy, He cannot tolerate sin. Even if He could just let slide all our past sins (which He can't), we cannot move forward without continuing to offend Him daily.

So as Paul says we are enemies of the creator God. And what do enemies deserve? The bad guy gets what's coming to him. Sinful mankind on Judgement Day must suffer the punishment their evil deeds earned for them. And as Paul reminds us we are powerless on our own to change our status before God or to reconcile ourselves to Him. We are hopelessly lost and deserve nothing but punishment and eternal condemnation.

## **What Jesus Came to Do for us and In Us**

This is the situation Jesus saw as He walked the earth. He saw that mankind were like lost and scattered sheep without a shepherd, sheep that Jesus knew could never find their way back to their Creator God. Yet in Jesus we see that God was not ready to give up on humanity. Jesus came to do what we could never do, restore us to the place of right standing with our Heavenly Father. He came to reconcile us back to a loving intimate relationship with Him, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

He did this out of the love that God has for each of us, the love that He has for you. It's unconditional love. Although we disobey and offend Him, although we do not show Him love by putting Him first place in our lives and obeying what He tells us to do, although we have made ourselves to be His enemies, He still loves us. It's supernatural love, unconditional and sacrificial love. It's a love that is more than just how He feels about us in His heart, it's a love that has legs. It's a love that moved Him to action.

Because all of our sinfulness stood in the way of our restoring our broken relationship with God, and because God cannot just dismiss it and forget our sin, Jesus came to be the remedy. Jesus had no sin Himself; He lived a perfect life. Instead, He came to claim your sin as His own. Each and every evil thing you have ever done, said, or thought, He took responsibility for. Each and every one of the things you have ever done wrong, each and every sin, Jesus put His name on it and willingly took your punishment for all of them. As Paul wrote earlier in **Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**. You deserve to death, and eternity apart from God. But that is not what you will receive. Jesus came and took your punishment, took your death, took your eternal separation from God, by suffering in your place, shedding His own blood-His life force, to forgive you for all the sins you have committed in the past, the present, and the future. It's not as if God has let your sin slide, He can't do that. Instead, Jesus removed them from your personal record forever. God no longer sees them because Jesus removed them from you forever. With no sin to be accused of, you now stand before the Father innocent of all charges. You are in right standing with Him, declared to be righteous not by your own efforts, but by all the Jesus has done for you and given to you through your faith in Him. All this He did out of love for you, a poor miserable sinner.

So now, with no charges of sin held against you, you have been reconciled by Christ back to God. In Jesus, God Himself crossed the great divide caused by your sin and drew you back to Him. Jesus' suffering and death has changed your status from being His enemy to being His precious child. And you have received from Him a new life lived out in His presence, a life that desires to obey God not out of fear but out of love and thankfulness for all Jesus' work of reconciliation on your behalf. By grace through faith, you receive credit for all the good works that Jesus did when He walked the earth. Through His obedient life, He earned eternal life for you and me, and gives it to us as His free gift of love. Reconciled to God we no longer live as lost sheep on our way to the slaughter, on our way to eternal condemnation. We live in His presence now; with the sure and certain hope we will live in His presence forever in eternal life. All this is God's gift of love to you in Jesus Christ.

### **Living The Reconciled Life with Him**

So how should our lives reconciled to God look? Lives where the Holy Spirit is actively reminding us of who we are in Christ Jesus and how we should live. We are no longer to live as sheep wandering wherever we want to go. We are reconciled sheep of His pasture that seek to follow our shepherd in loving obedience. We are sheep who listen to the shepherd's voice and seek to follow it. We are sheep who hear His call when we head off in the wrong direction and lovingly follow His lead back to His sheepfold. He does this work in our lives through confession and absolution. He moves us to repent of our sins: to see them for what they are as wrong, to turn away from them, and turn back to Him, knowing, confessing, and believing Him to be the loving God that He is, the loving God who graciously and abundantly forgives through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the free gift of grace. And it's not just a gift for you, for us, but for all people. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has opened the door for all people to be reconciled to God by faith. Jesus desires so much that all people might know this that He sent out the Twelve to take this wonderful message of reconciliation to all those they encountered. Then He sent out 72 more to spread the message of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Then at His ascension He sent the Church. It's a wondrous message to proclaim. It's the message of the supernatural and powerful love that God has for you and for all humankind. And you have His Spirit to help you spread it, providing you with the words and means to be His tool. He is building you up to do so right here and right now.

## **Conclusion**

We all love movies where the bad guy, the enemy, gets what he deserves in the end. We all want to see evil punished. Thankfully our God does not like that kind of ending. While many people will suffer His eternal wrath for their sins, that's not what God wants to happen. They choose to reject Him and the work of reconciliation that Jesus did for them. But not you who believe in Him. Out of the greatest love The Holy Spirit brought into your life and your heart all that Jesus did for you in His life, death, and resurrection. He declares you to be in right standing with the Father even though you continue to sin. He brings Jesus' work of reconciliation to bear upon your life now, so that even as you continue to sin, He keeps you reconciled with God through repentant faith. He keeps alive in your heart and mind the sure and certain promise that the Last Day will not bring God's righteous wrath down upon your head, but instead eternal life in the restored paradise that is the New Heaven and New Earth. And His Spirit enables you to bring this wonderful Kingdom message to others, so that He can do in them just as He has done and continues to do in you: bring life now and eternal life to come. Amen.