

The Love of God for Mankind

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I am sincerely thankful to God this morning for this opportunity to stand before you as a minister of Christ to proclaim the gospel of His Son. While thinking about this morning's lesson, I was captured by the idea of God's unsurpassing love for mankind. It struck me so seriously that I was bound to make it this morning's sermon. Please turn your attention to John 3:16-21, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only Begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*

One theory that some have advanced (even myself) is that God was so angry at mankind that His hand was ready to strike a deadening blow to it, but Jesus intercepted it. On the one hand God's anger is seen while on the other the love of Christ is seen. God, in this theory, is not seen as a God of love. I can no longer believe in this idea for it strikes against what the scriptures so clearly teach, and that is that God loves mankind.

In I John 4:7-10, the scriptures read, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It is with these scriptures that I believe with all my heart that God loves and has always loved mankind.

Though the reading came from John 3:16-21 as a primary source, I will use Romans 5:6-10 to interpret John. Please turn with me to that passage, and I will give you the points of the lesson following the reading. The apostle Paul says, *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His Life."*

I will set before you three points for your earnest consideration this morning. Those points are as follows:

- (1) The incredible scope of the love of God. (Romans 5:6-8).
- (2) The unsurpassable accomplishments made by the death of Christ (Romans 5:9, 10).
- (3) The astounding realities made possible by His resurrection and ascension. (Romans 5:10).

The incredible scope of the love of God (Romans 5:6-8)

Nothing we possess in our arsenal of man-made inventions can measure the love of God. All we can do is to sit in wonderment, scratching our heads while shaking them from left to right, as we consider this thing called salvation. Paul was right, so right in declaring this eternal truth—*“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33).* The apostle in writing to the Romans alluded to the feelings of man for man in the early part of the fifth chapter (verse 7). It is here where we are made to consider certain realities. The scriptures read, *“For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.”* In these twenty-one words lies a truth that could only come from the pen of a man moved by the Holy Spirit. The term “righteous” according to Oxford’s dictionary relates to a just man, one who is honest, ethical, and justified. This is the kind of man whose presence in the world would make it a better place to want to live. And yet, the scriptures teach that in the place of such a man one would scarcely die. It would be a rarity indeed for such a sacrifice to take place.

The “good man” of whom Paul speaks is an amiable fellow, one whose personality would win friends easily. Yet, the word “peradventure” is used in his case. Perhaps, a sacrifice might be made for this man; maybe a sacrifice would be made for this man—but the idea of “let me think about it” looms large. This seems to be the extent of the love of man for his fellow man. In the case of the latter, there have been times in war that sacrifices have been made to save the life of a comrade.

While Romans 5:7 addresses a righteous man and a good man, it says nothing about a sinner. If such would be the case of the “righteous” man and the “good” man, what might be said of the sinner? There would be no man who would be willing to die for a sinner. If it is perceived that a sinner is one who would do you evil, how can a man die for this individual when scarcely for a righteous man one would even dare to die? The salvation of mankind could not be left in the hands of ordinary men!

The love that God demonstrates for man explodes out of Romans 5:8 spreading divine fragmentation upon every soul that will ever live, both the good and the evil. For murderers, rapists, thieves, liars, perverse souls, extortionists, kidnappers, fornicators, adulterers and adulteresses, deceivers, and all such, Christ died. The scripture states, “But God, commendeth (demonstrating—PNM) His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died.” The death of Christ was to bring about the reconciliation of man to God. This point is made clear in 2 Corinthians 5:19, where we read, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” The “them” of the passage are those who have availed themselves of obeying the gospel of Christ; as it is written, *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Romans 6:17).”*

That there is no doubt about the scope of God’s love, consider 2 Peter 3:9. *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* God wants to save mankind!

The unsurpassable accomplishments made by the death of Christ (Romans 5:9, 10.)

After His resurrection, the Lord said, *“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:44, 46, 47).”* The Lord in this case addresses the fact that all that was written in the scriptures concerning him had to be fulfilled. The apostle Peter in his first letter gave the prophetic side of this when he said, *“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1:9-11).”*

The apostle Paul, in his writings to the Romans stated that *“we are justified by His blood (5:8).”* The implication here is that a “debt of great enormity had to be paid in order for God to be thoroughly satisfied.” The eighteenth verse of Romans 5, says, *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* This verse is critical to our spiritual growth in that it sets before us the notion that the coming of Christ (the first time) represented a free gift from God (grace, if you will) for the purpose of our salvation. Our state prior to obeying the gospel was one of condemnation; we stood in opposition to heaven, an enemy of God, and all He stood for. But because of the death of Jesus, we are no more enemies of God. Look at Romans 5:10, where it says, *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”* The death of the Son of God fully removed all of the barriers that stood in the way to friendship with God. There was now clear access to God. It is written in Romans 5:1, 2, *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (New International Version).”* So when we take communion, and we hear the words, “do this in remembrance of me,” a light should shine in our minds resting on the fact that **we remember Him because He saved us!**

The astounding realities made possible by His resurrection and ascension (Romans 5:10).

“For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!” In logic, this is called an “if...then” proposition. The result (then) rests upon a conditional (if). What makes it beneficial to us is that what this verse is saying is that if the death of Christ could reunite us to God, could make us friends again, could make us Father and children—if the death of Jesus could do all of this, then what could His life do? His resurrection and ascension has guaranteed salvation if we are faithful. The bible says, *“We shall be saved through His life.”* Put another way, the author of the Hebrew epistle, stated, *“Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented those from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because he always lives to intercede for them (Hebrews 7:23-25, New International Version).”* The

same writer says, *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:12-16, New International Version).”*

What more do we need? What more could we want of God? What we need to do is stop wondering what God can do for us (we already know), and start, in a most energetic fashion, doing for Him!