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Throwing Open the Gates of Glory

Romans 5:6-11

I. Introduction

1. A boy asked the father: How Big is God?

Then the father looked up to the sky and seeing an airplane asked the son: "What's the size of that airplane?"

The boy answered: "It's very small. I can barely see it."

So the father took him to the airport and as they approached an airplane he asked: "And now, what is the size of this one?"

The boy answered: "Wow daddy, this is huge!"

Then the father told him: "God, is like this, His size depends on the distance between you and Him. The closer you are to Him, the greater He will be in your life!"

How close are you to Him?

What a sweet little illustration for helping a child begin to grasp God's greatness in our lives is a matter of choosing to follow Him or not. **Child of God...how close are you to Him?**

2. Having just looked at a series of powerful blessings as children of God in the opening verses of chapter 5 here in Romans; **blessings that literally transform us from broken to whole...Paul reminds us of the impossibility of our starting point resulting with the monumental joy of being reconciled to Christ.**
3. So, as we travel through today's verses, please join me in being reminded that God is the I AM. **He is so big, so amazing, so full of grandeur that we cannot fully comprehend His glory.** It is this God of Paul's, and I pray of you and me, that is reaching out His loving

and welcoming hand to you and you and you. For God, this is personal.

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II. Romans 5:6-8: Amazing Unconditional Love

1. “For When”...when you and I were at war with God...when you and I were the walking dead in our sins w/o hope and w/o any spiritual strength...it was then that Christ died for us.

We, quite literally, have/had NOTHING to offer Christ. We warred against His goodness, holiness, and will. At times we ignore Him. At times we deny Him. At times we challenge Him. In too many times we placed ourselves ahead of our Lord and Master.

2. The Garden of Eden was perfect! Yet, one sin lead to many sins. One sin led to a world full of fear, worry, anger, demons, disease, and death. One sin led to hatred and war. One sin led to racism, bigotry, and justifying of repayment of sin by more sin. One sin led to child sacrifice, the debasement of women, the evisceration of biblical manhood, and idolatry on a grand scale.
3. Yet, as the bible tells us repeatedly, God (the I AM) did not abandon nor destroy mankind. Instead, He loves us so very much that in Matthew 9:13 we see one of many places in the bible where He called we sinners (all of us) to repentance.

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...‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”
— Matthew 9:13

In His love and through His grace, He said “Come” and be in an eternal relationship with Me.

4. Christ did these things in perfect timing...while we often don’t understand (much less agree with) God’s timing, His timing is perfect.

Do you, deep down, believe this? I think Paul places this in here to challenge us to not treat “God’s-timing-is-perfect” as some kind of platitude, but to “own” it in our hearts.

5. Here in Vs7-8, Paul is revealing the amazing, unconditional love of Jesus Christ.

A. Humankind warred (and wars) against Him. Many reject Him outright. Even some Christians reject that His word is inspired, inerrant, and infallible with many self-proclaimed Christians denying the authority of the word of God and therefore God Himself. Yet, He joyfully went to the cross of Calvary and in so doing invited us to reconcile to Him.

In this, we can clearly see that God’s love is not based on our actions, inactions, faith, gifts, talents, looks, socio-economic status, or anything external to Himself. He loves us because it is of Him. It is not dependent on anything outside of Him. Love is an expression of Himself! Jesus Himself said it this way in John 3:16-17:

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For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. – John 3:16-17

B. How many songs have been sung about love? How many sermons have been preached about love? How many wars have been started in the name of love? How many times have the words “I love you” crossed our lips? Love must be one of the most talked about things in the history of planet earth. Love, that thing that makes us feel special, important, wanted, and even “complete” in some sense.

There are many types of love...some say 4, others say 7, 8, or even more. What Paul has in mind here is *agape*; a holy and purposeful love involving faithfulness, commitment, goodwill,

benevolence, and a willful joy in the object of love. It is the love of God manifest in, upon, and through our lives.

- C. While Christ-like love is, arguably, the highest ethic (the way in which we handle everyday living), love is not the only ethic. Understanding biblical love means seeing it and understanding it from God's vantage point since He is the author of love. It means that we need to step back from what we think love is and what we think the fruit of that love should be to see what God says and values.

Paul's writing here in chapter 5 of Romans does just that as he reminds us that in appreciating and rightly valuing *agape* love, means we must also speak about evil and justice and wrath and grace and mercy and compassion and, the list goes on. We must not only see God for whom He is, but we must see ourselves as He does – broken w/o Him and righteous in Him.

- D. This passage is nothing short of a clarion call to Christ's transforming love. We are reminded that His *agape* led Him, as said in Colossians 1:20, to make peace with us through the blood of the cross.
- E. Before moving on to our next verses today, let's use this opportunity to reflect upon the assurance of our salvation is through Him and Him alone. As one commentator put it:

If we think we deserve God's love, we cannot ever really be secure in it, because we will always be afraid that we may do something to lessen or destroy the depth of God's love for us. It is only those who know that God has loved them *in spite of* their sin who can trust him to continue to show them favor...in the gift of salvation.¹

Now, that is the Good News!

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 536.

III. Romans 5:9-10: Justified & Saved.

1. God did not simply declare us righteous in the moment. [His death was for our eternal life](#). The Father poured out the wrath for our sins on His Son...the wrath meant for us. [We can know that we know that we know that we are declared](#) (1) righteous and (2) we are brought into an eternal life with Him. [Can I get Hallelujah?!](#)
2. God did NOT need to be reconciled to us. [Rather, it was we that needed to be reconciled to Him](#). Yet, we were insufficient to the task of remaining holy; we were insufficient to the task of following the law in becoming holy...[we had NO way forward to be restored to Christ on our own](#). “But God”.
3. In my studies I came across a breakdown of John 3:16 called “Christ – the Greatest Gift”. [I share it here because this truth is so transforming and marvelous that I want your heart to be fully knit to the Truth-giver](#). I share it here because Christ Himself is the Gate to Glory...AND He has opened Himself with hand held out saying, “come”.

Christ – The Greatest Gift²

God	the greatest lover
so loved	the greatest degree
the world	the greatest company
that he gave	the greatest act
His only begotten son,	the greatest gift
that whosoever	the greatest opportunity
believeth	the greatest simplicity
in Him	the greatest attraction
should not perish	the greatest promise
but	the greatest difference
have	the greatest certainty

² James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: The Reign of Grace*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991–), 540.

everlasting life.	the greatest possession
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V. Romans 5:11: Today's Big Walkaway

1. Where you sit right now, I want you to imagine winning your dream vacation or perhaps the largest lottery jackpot in history. *I want you to imagine the best meal on planet earth.* I want you to imagine that everything wrong with your body suddenly and completely disappears.

Now, I want you to understand that the magnitude of what Paul is sharing is greater still than any and all of these combined by an infinite factor. *Paul is saying that we may rejoice at the very core of whom we are because we are saved!* We can know that we know that we know and experience the I AM for all eternity...it will never get old or stale for He is all that we need and it is Him that makes us complete. *We are reconciled to Him...we are His!*

2. Notice that the object of our rejoicing is to be God Himself!!!!!! *It is not in our salvation for salvation is born of our relationship with God.* So let us keep first things first, may we rejoice in God!
3. It is this last line that led me to NOT teach through the balance of this chapter today. *I want the gravity of what Paul is communicating to sink in with us.*

If God, with His pure and holy love, came to us while we were at war with Him, how much more now will His love manifest and change us as we abide in Him and He in us. *Our salvation is secure as is our destination at glory.*

VI. Closing

1. There is an old saying that reflects Christ Throwing Open the Gates to Glory.

- A. Christ giving His life *for* us saves us from the *penalty* of sin;
- B. *Christ giving His life to us* saves us from the *power* of sin,

C. And His giving His life will one day save us from the *presence* of sin.

2. God has orchestrated a different closing to our service today...

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A. Pray for those that have received Christ to walk faithfully in loving obedience individually and as integral parts of His (and our) church family.

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B. Pray for the lost.

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C. Pray for people, resources, and God's continuing leading as we (CCA) take bold steps of faith in proclaiming Him to one another and those whom He gives us influence over.

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D. Pray for the moving of the Spirit that is stirring in our nation; that we may cooperate with God in praying for and following His lead in our lives.

[Lord's Prayer]

Romans 5:6-11

Throwing Open The Gates of Glory

I. Introduction: The Joy of Being Reconciled to Christ

II. Romans 5:6-8: Amazing Unconditional Love

- Do I believe God's timing is perfect?
- God's unconditional (transforming) love
- The assurance of salvation

Additional Scripture References: Mt 9:13; Jn 3:16-17

III. Romans 5:9-10: Justified & Saved

- Christ – the greatest gift.

IV. Romans 5:11: Today's Big Walkaway

- A sure salvation...let us rejoice about God and about His restoring us to relationship with Himself.

V. Closing: A Time of Prayer

- We have been saved from the penalty and power of sin and one day, we will be saved from the presence of sin.
- Pray for the believer. Pray for the lost. Pray that His church will take bold steps of faith. Pray for the moving of the Spirit in our church and in the nation.

5-Day Devotional

Romans 5:6-11

Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

Day 1: The Measure of Distance

Reading: Jam 4:8-10, Psa 145:18

Devotional: The sermon illustration about the airplane reminds us that God's size in our life depends on our proximity to Him. Like the boy at the airport, we experience God's greatness most powerfully when we draw near. The question isn't whether God is great, but whether we've given Him space to work in our lives.

Today, examine the distance between you and God. Are you viewing Him from afar, making Him seem small and distant? Or have you approached close enough to be overwhelmed by His majesty? God promises to draw near to those who draw near to Him. The choice is yours—will you close the gap today? Consider one practical way to move closer: extended prayer time, Scripture meditation, or simply sitting in His presence without agenda.

Day 2: Loved in Our Weakness

Reading: Rom 5:6-8, Eph 2:1-5

Devotional: Paul's words shatter our performance-based understanding of love. Christ died for us not when we had our act together, but "while we were still sinners." This wasn't love earned by our goodness—it was love poured out in our brokenness. God didn't wait for you to clean up before extending His hand. He reached into your mess, your war against Him, your spiritual death, and said, "I choose you." This is agape love—purposeful, committed, benevolent, and joyful about its object: you.

Today, stop trying to make yourself worthy of God's love. You never will be, and you never need to be. Instead, receive His unconditional love as the undeserved gift it is. Let this truth transform how you see yourself and how you love others who are still "without strength."

Day 3: Perfect Timing, Perfect Trust

Reading: Gal 4:4-7, Ecc 3:1-11

Devotional: "In due time"—two words that challenge our impatience and limited perspective. God's timing is perfect, not because it feels comfortable, but because He sees what we cannot. When you're waiting for answered prayer, facing unexpected hardship, or questioning why God seems silent, remember: His timing has never failed. Jesus came at exactly the right moment in history. Your breakthrough, your healing, your answer will come at exactly the right moment too. The question isn't whether God's timing is perfect; it's whether you truly believe it in your heart.

Today, identify one area where you're struggling with God's timing. Instead of demanding answers, practice surrender. Pray, "Lord, I trust Your timing even when I

don't understand it." His delays are not denials—they're opportunities to grow deeper trust.

Day 4: The Authority Question

Reading: Matt 7:21-23, Luke 6:46

Devotional: Jesus asks the piercing question: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Many claim Christ but reject His authority over their daily decisions, relationships, and priorities. We pick and choose which commands to follow, which sins to address, which areas to surrender. But lordship isn't selective—it's total. Today's challenge is uncomfortable: examine where you've rejected God's authority. Is it in your finances? Your relationships? Your entertainment choices? Your time? Your tongue? True faith doesn't just acknowledge Jesus as Savior; it submits to Him as Lord. The church's problems stem from Christians who want salvation without surrender. Don't settle for a "millifrickel" of faith—a walk with God that's just slightly off. Go all in. Let Him have complete authority and watch Him do extraordinary things through your ordinary obedience.

Day 5: Rejoice in the Reconciliation

Reading: Rom 5:9-11, 2 Cor 5:17-21

Devotional: Paul culminates his argument with explosive joy: "We rejoice in God!" Not in our circumstances, our accomplishments, or even our blessings—but in God Himself. You are justified by Christ's blood, saved from wrath, reconciled through His death, and kept by His life. This isn't a temporary fix or conditional arrangement. Your salvation is secure, sealed by the greatest act in history. The gate to glory stands wide open, and you've walked through it. Now live like it. Let this reality—that you are eternally His and He is eternally yours—transform your daily existence. The God who loved you while you were His enemy loves you infinitely more now that you're His child.

Today, practice rejoicing in God Himself. Not for what He gives, but for who He is. Your completion isn't found in pain-free living but in eternal relationship with the Great I Am.

Small Group Study Guide

Romans 5:6-11

Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

Opening Prayer: Begin your time together by asking God to open your hearts to His Word and give you wisdom to apply His truth to your lives.

Opening Question: Share about a time when someone showed you love even when you didn't deserve it. How did that make you feel?

Sermon Recap:

- God's Unconditional Love - Christ died for us while we were still sinners
- Perfect Timing - God's timing is always perfect, even when we don't understand it
- Assurance of Salvation - We are both justified and saved through Christ
- Rejoicing in God - Our joy comes from God Himself, not just His blessings

Key Scripture References:

- Romans 5:6-11

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The Airplane Illustration: How close is the "airplane" in your life right now? Is God distant or near? What factors affect this distance?
2. Verse 6-8 Focus: What does it mean that "Christ died for the ungodly" while we were still "without strength"? How does this challenge our understanding of earning God's love?
3. The sermon states: "We have nothing to offer Christ of our own." How does this truth make you feel? Humbled? Relieved? Challenged?
4. Authority Question: The pastor asked, "Do you deny God's authority in your life?" Where in your life might you be resisting God's authority, even in small ways (a "millifrickel")?
5. Perfect Timing: Share about a time when God's timing didn't make sense to you. Looking back, can you see His perfect timing now? How can we trust His timing in current struggles?

6. Church Participation: The sermon challenges us with: "Who's teaching the youth? Who's helping?" What problems do you see in the church, and what is your personal responsibility to address them?
7. Christlike Love: How is agape love (purposeful, faithful, committed love) different from the transactional love common in our culture? Give specific examples.
8. Uncomfortable Growth: The sermon states, "God probably does his finest work in us when we're uncomfortable." When has God used discomfort to grow you spiritually?
9. Rejoicing in God: Verse 11 says we "rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How can we rejoice in God Himself rather than just in what He gives us?

Key Takeaways:

1. God's love is not based on our actions, but on who He is
2. Christ died for sins we hadn't even committed yet
3. We are both justified (declared righteous) AND saved (eternally secure)
4. God's timing is perfect, even when we don't understand it
5. The closer we are to God, the greater He will be in our lives
6. We are called to love others unconditionally as God loves us

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Daily Proximity Check: Each morning this week, ask yourself: "How close is the airplane today?" Journal about what brings you closer to God or pushes you away.
2. Authority Audit: Identify one area where you've been resisting God's authority. Take one concrete step to surrender that area to Him this week.
3. Serve Uncomfortably: Sign up for one ministry or service opportunity that makes you uncomfortable. Step out in faith where God might be calling you.
4. Practice Agape Love: Identify someone who has wronged you or whom you find difficult. Pray for them daily and perform one act of unconditional love toward them this week.

5. Rejoice in God: Set aside 15 minutes each day to worship God for who He is (not what He's done for you). Focus on His character and attributes.

Reflection Questions:

- If I truly believed my salvation was secure, how would I live differently?
- What would it look like to give God complete authority in my life?
- Am I rejoicing in God Himself or just in His blessings?
- Where am I waiting for "perfect" before I serve God?

Pray Together For:

- Hearts that grasp the magnitude of God's unconditional love
- Trust in God's perfect timing in difficult circumstances
- Courage to serve even when uncomfortable
- Eyes to see where we're resisting God's authority
- A deeper desire to abide in Christ and let Him abide in us
- The assurance of our salvation to transform how we live

Discussion Questions
Romans 5:6-11
Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

1. How close is the 'airplane' of God in your life right now, and what specific steps can you take to move closer to Him?
2. In what areas of your life have you rejected God's authority, and what would full surrender to His will look like practically?
3. How does understanding that Christ died for you while you were still a sinner change the way you view your worth and identity?
4. What does it mean to you personally that God's timing is perfect, especially in situations where His timing has felt confusing or painful?
5. How can we as the church move from seeing problems to actively being part of the solution, even when it makes us uncomfortable?
6. What is the difference between loving someone with agape love versus loving them conditionally, and where do you struggle with this distinction?
7. If God's love is not based on our actions or worthiness, why do we still struggle with feeling like we need to earn His favor?
8. How does the assurance of salvation affect the way you live your daily life and make decisions?
9. What does it mean to rejoice in God Himself rather than in the blessings or benefits He provides?
10. How should the truth that we are reconciled to God through Christ transform our relationships with others who are still at war with Him?

Dinner Conversation Starters
Romans 5:6-11
Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

1. Airplane Perspective

The sermon shares a story about seeing God like an airplane—larger as we get closer. How do we keep God "close" in our daily lives, and what are some ways we can draw nearer to Him as a family?

2. Unconditional Love

Discuss the concept of God's agape love described in the sermon. What are practical ways we can show unconditional love to each other and to those outside our family?

3. God's Timing

The sermon emphasizes trusting God's perfect timing, even when we don't understand it. Share a time when something didn't happen as planned for our family and reflect on what we learned from it.

4. Services and Actions

There's a challenge to not just observe problems in our community or church but to act on them. What are some ways we, as a family, can serve or get involved to make a positive difference this season?

5. Rejoicing in God

The sermon suggests rejoicing not just in our blessings but in God Himself. What are some things we are grateful for today, and how can we express gratitude to God and each other, focusing more on the giver than the gifts?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Romans 5:6-11

Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Learning to See God in Everyday Life**: When things don't go their way, like losing a game or toy, encourage them to trust that God's got a plan, even if they can't understand it right now.

Discussion Questions: Can you think of a time when something didn't go as you wanted, but it turned out okay in the end? How do you think God was with you during that time?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Practicing Unconditional Love**: Encourage kids to show love to their friends and siblings, even when arguments happen or frustration arises during play or shared activities.

Discussion Questions: How can we choose to be kind and loving, even when someone makes us upset? What are some ways we can show our friends or siblings they are important to us, no matter what?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Navigating Social Media with Integrity and Grace**: Help teens consider how they use their digital presence to reflect God's love and make positive impacts, particularly when they see negativity or bullying online.

Discussion Questions: How can we use social media to show love and kindness to others? If we see someone being unkind online, what do you think Jesus might want us to do?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Teens and Young Adults

Romans 5:6-11

Throwing Open the Gates to Glory

1. Embrace Unity and Grace

Biblical Application: Ephesians 4:2-3 (NIV) – "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Scenario: In group projects or school clubs, there can often be disagreements or misunderstandings. Encourage Gen Z to foster unity and demonstrate grace, as Paul did with early church communities.

Discussion Question: How can you help create a peaceful and cooperative environment in group settings, even when opinions differ?

2. Reflect Christ's Love

Biblical Application: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV) – "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..."

Scenario: Reflect on how unconditional love, as seen in Jesus Christ's actions, can influence their friendships and romantic relationships, especially when dealing with conflicts or misunderstandings.

Discussion Question: How can you show love toward your friends especially when disagreements arise? What would it mean to love someone unconditionally, as God loves us?

3. Be a Light Online

Biblical Application: Matthew 5:16 (NIV) – "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Scenario: In the face of online negativity or pressures to conform, use digital platforms to reflect God's light and spread positivity.

Discussion Question: What are some positive ways you can use your digital presence to reflect God's light and love? How might you respond to negative posts or bullying in a way that honors God?