

Love in Spite of Us

10-12-25

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Summary: For whom would you die? Would you give your life for someone who disliked you? Jesus did.

But God ... I have found these one of the most comforting words in the Bible. Despite my faults, and shortcoming, God loves me. God loves me, not for who I am, but in spite of who I am.

ILL: Juan Zamora of Richland, Washington, owed a bill he could not pay for a charge he did not make. After filling up with gasoline and charging the \$26 to his PayPal debit card, he arrived home to a message on his answering machine. The message, from PayPal, asked him to verify a gas purchase of \$81,400,836,908 and notified him of a \$90 dollar overdraft fee. Imagine that. Juan did not have over 81 billion dollars in his PayPal account to cover the charge.

The debt we owe [to God] is our own, but we could not pay it any more than Juan Zamora could pay his \$81 billion debt. Juan was eventually able to convince the company that, while gas prices may be extremely high, his Camaro would not hold \$81 billion worth of gas. In our case, [the debt we could not pay] Jesus paid our debt for us. [1]

We know the verses:

Romans 3:23 (NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The question this morning is, "Why did Jesus pay that debt for us?" As we are going to see it is all about God's love for us. William Barclay in his commentary states that often we have it wrong about God.

"There is one thing to note here of quite extraordinary importance. Paul is quite clear that the whole saving process, the coming of Christ and the death of Christ, is the proof of God's love. Sometimes the thing is stated as if on the one side there was a gentle and loving Christ, and on the other an angry and vengeful God; and as if Christ had done something which changed God's attitude to men. Nothing could be further from the truth. The whole matter springs from the love of God. Jesus did not come to change God's attitude to men; he came to show what it is and always was. He came to prove unanswerable that God is love."

Our focal verse is:

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We are looking closely at “But God demonstrates His own love”. Other translations has “proved His love.” Let’s put it all into context:

Romans 5:6–11

This is the overwhelming part for me about Jesus dying on the cross for me. He did not die for good people. He did not die for those who never lie cheat or steal, commit adultery, or do any immoral act. Jesus came to save the truly lost. He came to save those that needed saving. He came to save lost mankind. Not everyone see it quite that way. They may have never anything bad, at least in their eyes or in the eyes of the world. But everyone has offended Holy God at some point. “For all have sinned” and “The wages of sin is death.”

Romans 5:6 (NKJV) For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

This verse talks about you and me. There was a time when we were “without strength” other translation have that we were “powerless,” or “helpless.” This, in context, does not mean physical weakness, but rather our moral frailty. At the right time, Christ died “for the ungodly.” In our moral frailty we were unable to understand, much less able to do those things of God. We were unable to even go to God. We were lost in our sins just as much as a condemned murderer. Verse 10 goes further and says we were enemies with God.

Then Paul changes gears for a moment. He takes a humanly look around and he makes the comment:

Romans 5:7 (NKJV) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

Who would you die for? Let’s look at that for a second. We would jump up and say I would die for my wife, or my child, or another family member that is loved. I have read accounts of men in combat who would throw themselves on a grenade to save their comrades. Would you die for someone who held the cure for cancer? Would you die so many could live? Jesus makes the comment about love:

John 15:13 (NKJV) Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

We get that. We understand that there are people we love and if called upon and perhaps we would take their place if they were in danger. If we were able, we would step in as a substitute for a loved friend, to take what unpleasant experience they would be facing, to enable them to avoid the unpleasant experience, whether it be disease, punishment, and perhaps even death itself.

But what if we had a chance to fill it as a substitute for someone we despised? Someone who was, in our eyes, scum of the earth, and who we figured deserved everything bad that was coming their way? But this is what happens with us and God. Yes God is love, but God is also just. Justice will prevail. God set the penalty for sin as death back in the garden and justice will be met and justice must be met. But also because of His great love for us, Almighty God sends Jesus to take our place: "But God ..."

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Do we begin to realize the great love God has for us? "God demonstrates" The HCSB has "God proves." In the Greek the word is in the Present-Active-Indicative tense. We can easily say that God "keeps on demonstrating" His love towards us. How? Because "while we were still sinners," while we were morally frail and ungodly, while we were enemies with God, it was while we were bad people, deserving of the wages of our sins, while we deserved spiritual, and eternal death, that "Christ died for us."

God did not wait for us to clean up our act. God did not wait for us to merit His love (of course, we would never measure up to the level of meriting His love). God did not wait for all of that. He sent His only begotten Son Jesus, to die in our place, as our substitute. Jesus died a substitutionary death for us. When it should have been us on that cross for offending a most Holy God, Jesus died in our place. If that does not prove that God loves us, what more could we ask for? God does not want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Romans 5:9 (NKJV) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Because Jesus' substitutionary death for us on the cross, we have "been justified by His blood" we have been made righteous before God. The price for our sins have been paid. Because we have been declared righteous, we are saved from the wrath to come. The wrath to come is the eternal torment for those who have refused the justification offered by the death of Jesus.

Romans 5:10 (NKJV) For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

This death of Jesus in our place brought reconciliation with God, Not just for us, but for the whole world. Now here is that catch. Reconciliation is a two-way street. Reconciliation is never unilateral, it is a personal relationship. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Through His death, God has reconciled the whole world to himself. But have we reconciled ourselves to Him? Paul said that his was the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:18–20 (NKJV) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Now the ball in our court, will we be reconciled to God?

Colossians 1:21 (NKJV) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

By accepting the reconciliation, accepting what Jesus has done on our behalf, we are now in position to establish a personal relationship with Him. That is why God created us, for fellowship with Him. By reconciliation to God, our status with God has changed, we are no longer morally frail, ungodly sinners and enemies, but we have been made righteous. We call this justification.

However, that is not all. Our status has changed, but we must change our state, our condition. Now that we have been justified by the blood of Jesus, His risen life must now change our current state. Now being justified, we can no longer live as sinners. We must be changed to become more like Him. We call this sanctification.

Back to Romans 5:10, "having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Having been justified by His death, Jesus through His present life, not His life on earth before His death, but His present life in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father. What is Jesus doing right now at the right Hand of the Father?

Romans 8:34 (NKJV) Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Jesus is interceding for you and me. Yes, we are no longer living a life of sin, that does not mean we do not commit sin, but we have a life not characterized by sin. And Jesus is there in Heaven making intercession for us before Almighty God.

Hebrews 7:25 (NKJV) Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

This means much more than saving us from the eschatological (end times) judgment, but also each and every day Jesus lives to bring us daily deliverance. Not to take away hard times, but to be with us through all the trouble.

Romans 5:11 (NKJV) And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

This cause for great rejoicing. We are reconciled with God. And it was Almighty God who initiated the reconciliation with us by sending us Jesus. It is all about Him.

Romans 5:1 (NKJV) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Have you made your peace with God? Have you been reconciled to Him. It is only by the blood of Jesus that this is made possible.

We come to God only through Jesus. But God demonstrated His own love toward us that He gave us Jesus. It is all about Him. We cannot to come to God except through Jesus. Do you know Jesus?