

Session 1

October 18, 2020

CHRIST'S COMMITMENT TO US

Romans 5:6-12; 18-21

The first verses of Romans 5 reflect on the wonderful benefits of receiving Christ's glorious salvation. We have *peace* (v. 1), *access* (v. 2), *joy*, and *hope* (v. 3). Verse 5 declares that this hope will never disappoint, because God's love "has been poured out in our hearts." And it all comes because of Christ's unwavering commitment to His children. Here, Paul highlights three ways that Jesus Christ demonstrates that commitment to us.

By His love (vv. 6-8). John 3:16 reminds us that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." In Romans 5, we are reminded that, in true trinitarian form, Christ Himself also loved and also gave. Jesus said, "No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down Myself" (John 10:18). Love is demonstrated in sacrifice; the greater the love, the greater the sacrifice. In our text, we get an idea how much love Christ has for the lost. Look how we are described: In verse 6, we are *helpless*. The word literally means "without strength" or "lacking the ability." The lost are powerless to do anything about their own sinful condition. Second, we are *ungodly*. This word means "wicked," but in an impious, irreverent way. In other words, lost people have no respect for the things of God. In verse 7, we are described as *sinners*. Here the radical love of Christ is described. We were not "just," nor were we "good." But while we were still in the depths of our depravity, Christ died for us! The grammatical construction emphasizes this as well. Christ died for us (past tense) while we *continued being in sin* (present tense). The Lord Jesus was certainly right: "Greater love has no man than this!" (John 15:13).

For reflection: *The doctrine of "total depravity" doesn't mean that a lost person is always as evil as he can possibly be, but rather that every aspect of the human being has been tainted by sin. What does this say about God's incredible love for us?*

By His reconciliation (vv. 9-11). The second way that Christ demonstrates His unwavering commitment to His children is by providing *reconciliation*. The phrase "Much more then" (v. 9) continues the flow of Paul's argument highlighting the benefits we receive as Christ's beloved. It's like saying, "It's quite logical and easy to see that..." First, there is *justification*. This is what Paul means by being "declared righteous by His blood." If we are declared "not guilty" in God's sight here on earth, then we most certainly will be "saved" through that same blood sacrifice from God's future wrath (see Rom. 1: 18 ff). What's more, if we are declared not guilty, then the sin and enmity that separated us from God is null and void. The barrier between us is removed, and we are *reconciled* to our Creator (v. 10). In addition, the strife that existed since we were *enemies* of God (v. 10) is now replaced by *rejoicing* (v. 11). Imagine that! We who were once enemies of God are now treated as His friends...and called His children! For reflection: *What kind of example does Christ set with His reconciliatory death? How might we apply this in our own lives?*

By His grace (vv. 12; 18-21). Verse 12 sets up the argument that follows. Literally and historically, sin entered the human race by the disobedience of the very first human, Adam (see Genesis 3). While even some believers argue against the idea of an inherited sin nature, the truth is firmly entrenched in the Scripture. Here is one such example (see Eph. 2:3 for another). Since

Adam's very nature was corrupted by sin, that sin nature was passed through succeeding generations (and it didn't take long! The first sin occurred in Genesis 3; the first murder in Genesis 4!). The result is that all are sinners. Simply put, we are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are, by our inherited nature, sinners! Here is Paul's illustration (v. 19): just as sin entered the human race through one man's act (Adam's disobedience), so salvation entered through one man's act (Christ's sacrificial death). And that was before any law was given! Once Moses brought the law, the guilt of sin was *multiplied* (v. 20). Even so, God's grace is more than sufficient. The result of His unwavering grace? The penalty of eternal death brought on by Adam was replaced by the blessing of eternal life available in Christ (v. 21). For reflection: *Apart from the Bible, what tangible evidence exists that all humans possess a sin nature?*