

Sermon Series: Book of Romans
Sermon title: "Love"
Scripture Reading: Romans 5:6-11
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
December 25, 2022
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Opening Illustration

On July 11, 2022, David Barrett and his wife were out on a date night. They left their 18 year old daughter in charge of her 3 siblings and a friend for a sleepover.

While they were sleeping, the house caught on fire and the children didn't even know it.

Nick Bostic, a pizza deliveryman, was going to get gas in his car about midnight, when he passed the house engulfed in flames.

Nick had left his cellphone at home and so he couldn't call the fire department. He quickly pulled his car into the driveway and sprang into action.

Finding a back door unlocked, Nick ran inside the burning house yelling to see if anyone was home. Awakened by his voice were 4 of the children.

Nick quickly led the children through the thick smoke and out in the yard.

The children immediately told Nick that their 6 year old sister was still inside. Nick didn't hesitate.

He ran into the smoke and flames but couldn't find the child. Putting his shirt over his nose he walked through the pitch-black yelling for the kid.

Nick crawled on the ground, feeling in front of him with his hands, and used the child's cries to help him locate her in the darkness.

He took the child in his arms and tried to get out but couldn't because of the flames. He said it felt like he was in an oven.

Nick went upstairs and punched his hand through a window and jumped from the second floor, making sure to land on the side the child wasn't on.

Nick saved 5 children of the Barrett family that night – that he didn't even know. He was just passing by but risked his life to save others.

It happens every day actually.

Countless stories on the internet of people risking and sometimes giving their lives— to save their family, a friend or fellow soldiers, even sometimes a stranger.

People like Nick who arrive just in time to help.

Well, the Bible tells us that Jesus came to the earth to do something quite similar to what Nick Bostic did. But there's something uniquely different about what Jesus did.

Let's pray.

Romans 5:6-11 ESV

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

Well, over Advent or the Christmas Season, we've continued our study in the book of Romans.

Summary so far:

We've seen how mankind, all of us, have rejected God as a human race and as individuals.

We are all under sin, we are all sinners. We don't worship our Creator God as we should and we turn to idols and immorality.

We are separated from God because of our sin.

We can't work our way to God by doing good things but need a righteousness that far exceeds our own.

But God has done something amazing.

He did what we could not do.

He reconciled us to himself through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We saw that all who believe in Jesus Christ are declared right with God as a gift.

In Christ, we can have peace with God.

In Christ, we dwell in the realm of grace. God is now not against us but we have a relationship with him and access to him at all times.

In Christ we can rejoice in life, even in our present sufferings because we know that a great future awaits

us in heaven where we will be changed into people who don't sin anymore.

And that hope that we have is a hope that we can be sure of. We are not on the wrong track but have subjective proof because God has put his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We know God loves us because we can feel it.

Well, today we continue, here on Christmas Day to look at the benefits that we have in Christ... and today we see objective proof that we have a great hope.

What proof do we have that God loves us besides our feelings?

Jesus Christ was a real person in real history.

He really was born.

He really did die.

And Jesus Christ's death for us is proof that God really loves us.

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Main idea:

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, God's gift of love to the world.

Here's what we will see in this text.

Outline:

- I. A human's greatest demonstration of love is to die for someone they love.
- II. God's greatest demonstration of love is to die for those that hate him.
- III. If God has already done the hard thing, he'll surely do the easier things.

Romans 5:6-11 ESV

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

Let's quickly run through this text and explain it.
Let's start in **verse 7** and then we will work back a bit.

I. A human's greatest demonstration of love is to die for someone they love.

7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

This isn't the easiest phrase to understand.
It means...*even humans might die for others for a good reason.*

The Message paraphrases it well:

"We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice..."

Jesus himself said, this...*"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*

John 15:13

Just like Nick Bostic who ran into a house to save some strangers, humans do show some great love for others. But our loves pales in comparison to God's love.

"The pinnacle of human love is the giving of one's life for a person one is close to— a spouse, child, combat buddy— whereas God sent his Son to die for people who hated him." **Douglas Moo**

Notice how this text describes us humans.
And notice the contrast between human love and God's love.

Verse 6- "still weak"

6 For while we were still weak

This means literally 'powerless'. Powerless in what sense? Powerless to save ourselves or help ourselves.

We have all tried in every way we know how to fix ourselves and it hasn't worked.
We need to be changed by God, not fixing ourselves.

Verse 6- ungodly

This word means '*not reverent or religious*'.
Not morally upright but living without God.

Verse 8- sinners

Still sinners... which is all of us. We are all born in sin.

Verse 10- enemies of God

Because of our sin we are not for God and his desires but against him and in rebellion against God. Just look at the world. The whole world shakes its finger at God and says, "You won't tell me how to live."

So that's the state of humankind. The book of Romans and the whole Bible is crystal clear about that.

But because human beings are made in God's image we still are capable of some sacrificial love, but how does God love?

II. God's greatest demonstration of love is to die for those that hate him.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." **John 3:16**

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”

Ephesians 2:4

“Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” **Ephesians 5:2**

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the *[atoning sacrifice]* propitiation for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us”

1 John 3:16

“See what kind of love the Father has given unto us, that we should be called children of God: and so we are.” **1 John 3:1**

So, this is how God loves. He loves those who don't love him. He even sent Christ to die for their sins.

Can we comprehend that kind of love?

That's what Christmas is all about.

III. If God has already done the hard thing, he'll surely do the easier things.

9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** 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. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Christian, God has already done the hard thing. Justification was the hard thing, if we can say things are hard for God. Glorification is sure to happen because he has already done what needs to be done.

What does that mean for us in a nutshell at Christmas?

If Christ came the first time and did what he did, you can be sure he will come again and do what he said.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, God's gift of love to the world.

Someone may need to hear these simple words today,
“God loves you.” Yes. You. Just as you are.
Come to him. He will fix you up and change you.
Just come.

This is the message of Christmas. This is love.
God demonstrated and proved his love for you by
sending Christ to die.

Benediction

“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our
Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and
good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and
establish them in every good work and word.” **2**

Thessalonians 2:16