

## The Fruits of Justification pt. 2, Romans 5:6-11, 8/23/20

Many of you are new to Brandywine in the past 5 years, but those who aren't, I wonder how many of you watching can remember my first sermon I ever gave here at Brandywine before I was your pastor? Probably not many, but I certainly do. I will give you a hint- it's this same Scripture we are studying this morning. The reason I chose this passage as my candidating message is because it's so personal to me. This is the Scripture I was reading 20 years ago when the gospel came into my heart in a powerful way, I believed the gospel, made the decision that I no longer wanted to run my own life, I surrendered my life to Jesus as my Savior and Lord. That happened because of the life-altering truth that I discovered right here in these short verses and so I am excited to study this Scripture with you this morning. Let's Pray.

Remember, here in chapter 5 Paul is sharing the fruits of justification. **Justification is being declared righteous in God's sight by faith in Jesus Christ.** This isn't just a doctrine for our heads, it has real, tangible impact in how we live. We saw four fruits of justification last week in 5:1-5 **Peace, Access, Hope, Purpose in Suffering.** Here today we will see one more: **Love.** That is both the subjective experience and the objective demonstration of the love of God. Remember verse 5 we looked at last week. **God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.** One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to experientially convince us that God loves us. Sometimes that's subtle, and other times it is powerful and overwhelming.

Can you think of an experience where you were overwhelmed by how much someone loved you? Maybe it was when someone visited you in the hospital, or just sat with you during a hard time, or gave you a very generous gift that you never expected, or wrote you love letter. You just knew this person truly loved you. Wow, what a wonderful experience, how much more so with God! This is what the Spirit does in the life of the believer- he makes sure we know without a doubt. I will share just one of those experiences- It was during a particularly difficult season: stress, challenges in ministry, and I just felt burnt out and spiritually disconnected. I felt like I was failing as a pastor, failing as a husband and failing as a father. The enemy was just pressing in and making me feel unworthy, having a pity party for myself. One day decided to go on a walk and I had a Pandora station on playing random songs and a song came on from Shane and Shane called Embracing Accusation. And it was as if the Holy Spirit wrote a song for me in that moment. I'm not a crier, but that moment I wept while I was walking my neighborhood and I was singing the song out loud, people are mowing their lawns and playing with their kids but I didn't care. It was like God gave me a big bear hug and said, Son- I love you more than you can imagine. Now get back out there and shepherd my flock! Have you experienced the love of God poured out by the Holy Spirit? If not, maybe it's because you aren't listening.

But maybe you ask, well how do I really know that God loves me? Maybe it's just a feeling, maybe it's all in my head...I mean have you ever thought someone loved you until you realized they just wanted something from you? Or maybe you say, I don't think it's possible for God to love me based on what I have done. Or you think of God as some distant, impersonal force that isn't capable of love. Well in these verses Paul tells us God's love is not just a subjective, warm-

fuzzy feeling, it is grounded in history and the apex of his love was demonstrated on the cross of Jesus.

So today, we are going to see **three proofs of God's Love for You** demonstrated at the Cross.

### **#1 He Sacrificed Himself Freely**

In the famous 70s musical Jesus Christ Superstar- Judas' song "Did you mean to die like that, was it a mistake? Or did you know your messy death would be a record-breaker?"<sup>1</sup> It sure is, no more death more famous, not even close... but did you know? Was that Jesus' intent? [Slide] Critics and skeptics of the gospel would have to admit that Jesus was a real historical person, an amazing teacher, a revolutionary and good person, and that he died on the cross. Those are all indisputable facts, but they would say- He didn't know and he certainly would have tried to stop it, he died an untimely, unjust, tragic death, cut off in the prime of his life, before he could really get going. Is that the account we find in Scripture or is that revisionist history? Paul tells us that there was nothing untimely about his death. <sup>6</sup> *You see, at just the right time... Christ died for the ungodly.* He came at exactly the right time in history, he lived to exactly the right age and died on exactly the right day, nothing was a surprise or a tragedy to Jesus, it all happened according to the sovereign plan of God. But not only was it exactly the right time, he gave his life freely, willingly. It wasn't coerced. He didn't try to escape, he didn't get lawyers to argue his way out of it. *John 10:18 This is why the Father loves me: because I freely lay down my life. And so I am free to take it up again. No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down; I also have the right to take it up again.* MSG  
Not only timely, not only freely but also joyfully. *Hebrews 12:2 For the joy set before him he endured the cross.*

The students had movie night outside recently and they watched **The Princess Bride**, and you may remember when the hero of the story named Wesley is comatose...and they bring him in to see **Miracle Max** played by Billy Crystal. And Miracle Max takes the bellows and starts pumping air into his lungs, and then Miracle Max says, "hello in there. Hey. What's so important? What you got worth living for?" And then he pushes on Wesley's chest and out come the words, "true love." His friend, Inigo Montoya standing next to Wesley says, "There can be no more noble cause than that." And Miracle Max says, "Sonny, true love is the greatest thing, except maybe for a MLT, mutton, lettuce, and tomato sandwich with the mutton that is sliced really thin."

There is nothing more noble, nothing greater to live for or to die for than true love. True love is willing to give and sacrifice. Mufasa from the Lion King, **"Some search only for what they can take, but a true King searches for what he can give."** Jesus was a true King searching for what he could give and he gave his very life for you, and he did it freely and joyfully because of true love! <sup>2</sup>

### **#2 He Sacrificed for His Enemies.**

<sup>1</sup> Illustration from Tim Keller Sermon on Romans 5

<sup>2</sup> Illustration from Skip Heitzig in Romans 5 Sermon

<sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Paul intentionally contrasts human love with God's love here. Human love is almost always based on the attractiveness and worthiness of the object that it loves. And if the object is more attractive, more worthy, more loveable, then there's more love. And we are inclined to love people who love us. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, if you love those who love you, big deal. That's human, that's natural. God's love is so different, so supernatural, God's love comes down to enemies, to rebels. He uses four words to convey this: "weak" - powerless, God's love came to us when we were utterly helpless. Unable to earn it, deserve it, work for it. "ungodly" - turned from God to live our own life, live without God and his character in our lives. "sinners" - divine law-breakers, people found guilty by the courtroom of heaven. "enemies" - hostile to God, claiming authority that only belongs to God.

Looks like a great match.com profile...who wouldn't want to match with that? And yet this is the reality of our fallen nature. But God picks that profile. He says- I will choose to love you. And God doesn't wait to love us until we get our stuff together. He doesn't wait until we clean ourselves up, stop doing bad things and start reading our Bible, praying our prayers, giving money to the church. No, no... he loves us at our worst, while we are still sinners!

See God laying his life down for us is not like me laying down my life for my kids. That's noble, and I believe I would do it if necessary. Paul says, "That's good, but here's what is "God". What God did would be like me laying down my life for someone who murdered my family. Imagine if he was being sentenced to life in prison and I showed up at the trial and offered to take his place and sign over all my assets so that he could go home to his children and start over in life. You say, "Who would do that?" *God did*. He did that to make us his sons and daughters.

This is the beautiful doctrine of substitutionary atonement. That is, v.8 Christ died for us. He didn't die just to show us how much he loved us. He didn't die just to give us a good example of service and selflessness. He died because we needed a substitute to die in our place. John Stott Quote: "As the essence of sin is us substituting ourselves for God, so the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for us."

"In other words, because we put ourselves where only God deserves to be, He put himself where only we deserve to be."<sup>3</sup>

### #3 He Sacrificed to Make Us Friends Forever

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<sup>3</sup> John Stott's Commentary on Romans

<sup>9</sup> Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, while 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! <sup>11</sup> Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

We made this point last week, that Jesus has put to end our hostility with God. Paul now says we have been reconciled. Reconciliation means not only to no longer be enemies, but also to become friends. We are now on team God, we are his entourage. Better yet- His children.

But still, so many Christians worry if God will keep loving them because they feel like they have messed up too much. Or we tend to think that God must love the ones who love him or that his love depends on how good we are and so we work to get love. Because that's how human love often works. But Paul's argument is very strong against that here. If Jesus saved us when we were his enemies then how much more will he keep us safe now that we are his friends. If he was able to save us when we were hostile to him, would he give up on us now that we are his friends? If he didn't give up on you when you were at war with him what could you do to make him give up on you now that you're at peace with him?<sup>4</sup> Paul answers this question more directly in chapter 8 but here he says it is unimaginable that Christ would fail to save us to the end. Friend, God always finishes what he starts.

3 Proofs that God Loves You as demonstrated on the Cross.

He sacrificed himself freely

He sacrificed for His Enemies

He sacrificed to make us friends forever

This kind of love is foreign to some of us because some of us grew up in homes or are in a relationship now where you only received acceptance, attention and love when you achieved something, or behaved well enough or performed. This is the love of the world. Some of us grew up with a religion that says, "You jump through these hoops, you perform these acts and you can maybe get enough acceptance that God will let you in to heaven by the skin of your teeth." Go to confession, pray these prayers, give these alms, pay homage to this holy site, attend church..." But only in Christianity does God say- "In the midst of your unworthiness, your self-centeredness, at your worst is the right time that I love you and accept you in Jesus." Tim Keller- "The Gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope." And if you doubt it- look to history. Look to the cross.

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<sup>4</sup> Tim Keller in *Romans for You*