

Worthy of Love

Romans 5:6-9

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I. Unlovable vs. 6-7

- a. Helpless - of the inner life; *helpless* in a moral sense Ro 5:6.
 - i. He did not wait for us to start helping ourselves,
 - ii. their inability before the power of sin to do God's will.
 - iii. But God's love triumphed where human power failed
 - iv. We were weak, ungodly sinners (v. 8), and God's enemies (v. 10). "Weak" (*powerless*) refers to moral frailty rather than to physical weakness. We were quite powerless to help ourselves (and unable even to understand the things of God, 1 Cor. 2:14, let alone act on them).
 - v. The twin aspects of faith are the recognition of one's helplessness, distance from God, and tendency to ignore God,
- b. Christ Died
 - i. Right Time - Christ came into the world at the proper time, the fulness of the time (Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10; Titus 1:3).
 1. This agrees with other expressions that refer to Christ as coming at the consummation of the ages and the like (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:6; Tit. 1:3; Heb. 1:2; 9:26). The thought here is that there is nothing precipitate or delayed about God's action.
 - ii. Christ Died
 1. Paul's meaning is that, in dying for us, Christ died for those who were helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies. What Paul is here concerned to bring out is the fact that the divine love is love for the undeserving, love that is not the result of any worth in its objects but is self-caused and in its freedom itself confers worth upon them.
 - iii. For the Ungodly - to violating norms for a proper relation to deity, *irreverent, impious*
 1. A common view is that the reference is to sins against the first and second tables of the Law, offences against God and neighbour.
 2. is the assumption that Paul is here referring in OT fashion to "transgressors."
 3. They were "ungodly," their condition having already been described in 1:18ff., constantly tending to live independently of God or to live before God other than as creatures before their creator
- c. Hardly Die
 - i. Righteous Man - *one who does what is right*

1. That is no surprise. More surprising perhaps is his disavowal of categories which both Jew and Greek would recognize as appropriate to the truly religious man—“just” and “good.”
- ii. Good Man
 1. Good - to meeting a high standard of worth and merit
 - a. The surprising contrast of v 7 between the just man and the good man is probably best explained by reference to a similar distinction implied in the argument of chap. 2, particularly vv 7–10, where Paul seems to envisage a doing good which cuts across the clearly defined categories of the Jewish law. Perhaps then he intends to contrast the admirable but unattractive zealot for the law with the person whose goodness is less structured but acknowledged on all sides. The pedant or zealot does not inspire self-sacrificing devotion from third parties, though a truly good man might.
 2. Dare to Die- to have courage
 3. The emphasis is striking: the thematic repetition of the word “die” at the end of each of the four sentences would scarcely be missed by those hearing the letter read out. The point is that the death of Christ is an expression of the same love of God:

II. But... God’s Love (v. 8)

- a. Demonstrates Love
 - i. Demonstrates - to provide evidence of a personal characteristic or claim through action
 1. achievement which is publicly evident
 2. It is thus God’s loving action which displays His righteousness and love precisely in our unrighteousness and wretchedness. What the term denotes here is thus close to φανερόω and might be rendered “to bring to light.”
 - ii. Love – Eternal Love - As Jesus did not distinguish His activity from that of God, but did what only God can do, forgiving sins, so Paul regards the love of God as basically one with that of His Christ (R. 8:37; 2 Th. 2:16).
The loving action of God is revealed and executed in that of Christ:
 1. The meaning of the Pauline concept of ἀγάπη θεοῦ is plain. It is the orientation of the sovereign will of God to the world of men and the deliverance of this world. The work of love is God’s goal from the very first. From the days of Abraham God has foreseen a people free from the bondage of the Law. He has created this people by the sending of the Son and finally the Spirit.
 - iii. Towards Us
- b. While Sinners

- i. Sinners Of the state of a person who is not yet reconciled *irreligious, unobservant people, outsiders*
- ii. Christ Died
 1. For Christ's death on behalf of sinners compare, in this epistle, 3:25; 4:25; 6:10; 7:4; 8:32; 14:15

III. Made it Right (v. 9)

- a. Justified - *found in the right, be free of charges be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as*
 1. that is, they relate to the law court and the act of acquitting or vindicating someone. It has to do with the innocence or virtue of a person.
 2. Justification is by grace alone. Rooted in the nature of God, it is also made available through the work of Christ as God's gift.
 3. Justification by faith is set primarily against the background of Jewish legalism and its attempts to make the law the basis of salvation. Paul regards this as an alien message requiring the strongest condemnation (Gal 1:6–9). The word and work of Christ, embedded in the message that Paul proclaimed, was a reminder that righteousness or justification is the gift of God through the blood (*covenant* blood, Heb 13:20) of Jesus Christ. All this is entirely apart from the law (Rom 3:21). The law, in fact, is not capable of leading one to righteousness, nor was it given to bring about righteousness.
 4. The law brings judgment; it confronts one with his incapacity to cope with sin (Acts 13:39; Rom 8:3). Justification, then, has its forensic (judicial) dimensions in that it copes with, and represents salvation to, the problem of sin and guilt. The believer is set free from condemnation (Rom 8:1). Yet the fundamental understanding of justification is to be gained in moving away from the law and judgment to the covenant and grace
 5. St. Paul here separates between 'justification,' the pronouncing 'not guilty' of sinners in the past and their final salvation from the wrath to come. He also clearly connects the act of justification with the bloodshedding of Christ: he would have said with the author of Heb. 9:22
- ii. By His Blood
- b. Saved
 - i. Saved-
 1. On the other hand, the second clause of v 9 confirms that for Paul the process of "being saved" is the reversal of the process of divine wrath described in chap. What the output of divine love in Jesus' death and resurrection achieves is the rescue of man from the vicious circle of independence from God resulting in deeper

dependence on human passions, and so also rescue from final condemnation in the day of judgment.

ii. From the Wrath of God

1. **Wrath** of God's future *judgment* specifically qualified as punitive
 - a. Clearly Paul is referring to the wrath to come, the eschatological wrath. Christ's salvation is effective not only now, but in what lies beyond this life. Believers will not experience the wrath of God then.
 - b. Its association with final judgment is clear in Paul's reference to "the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom 2:5; cf. 2:8; 5:9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9).
 - c. Condemnation at the final judgment will be a consummation of this alienation. Thus is the wrath of God contrasted with salvation (1 Thess 5:9), eternal life (Rom 2:7–8), justification (Rom 1:17–18; 5:9), and membership of the kingdom of God (Eph 5:5–6).
 - d. The verb is here used in its narrower sense, of deliverance in the final judgment (cf., e.g., 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5), and that from which we are to be saved is specified as the divine wrath, as in 1 Th 5:9 (cf. 1 Th 1:10)

iii. Through Him

1. Certainly that now-declared-righteous person will not be forsaken by God's love, which has been poured out effusively in his heart. Since the divine dilemma of justification (3:26) has been solved on the basis of Jesus' shed **blood** (cf. 3:25), certainly Jesus Christ will see that justified sinners will **be saved from God's wrath**. Believers will never be condemned to hell (John 5:24; Rom. 8:1) nor will they be the objects of God's coming Tribulation wrath (1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9)