

# **How Much More**

**Scripture: Romans 5:6-11**

**By Pastor John H. Noordhof  
Williamsburg Christian Reformed Church**

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Morning Service**

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People of God: Whenever we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of the heart of the gospel message. That God in his love sent his Son to die for our sins. In our text for this morning that message comes through loud and clear. This message, from our text can be summarized in three points: First, our impossible problem; second, God's incredible solution; and third, our infinite gain.

Let's deal with first, our impossible problem. In these verses Paul uses four words to describe the spiritual condition of humanity, apart from the grace of God. Those four words are: powerless, ungodly, sinners, and God's enemies. It's not a pretty list, but they do describe what we were the moment we were born.

First, there is the word powerless. It means that we are unable to help ourselves. That's the basic condition of humanity. Man is helpless to get out of the pit of sinful misery he finds himself in. He can't climb out but is stuck in his sinful condition.

This idea runs contrary to the common phrase, "God helps those who help themselves." That phrase reflects the mentality that it is up to us to solve our own problems. Just pull up your bootstraps and get going. But the biblical position is completely the opposite. We are powerless. We are unable to change our basic nature. As a result, we need God to change it for us. God helps those who cannot help themselves.

The second word is ungodly. Precisely because we cannot change our basic nature, we live our lives as if God does not exist. Humanity invents its own morality. People live to please themselves. They go their own way, doing what is right in their own eyes—completely ignoring the reality of God and his claim upon their lives.

We live in an “ungodly” society. We live in a time when the majority of people live as if God does not exist. This description of “godlessness” does not mean that everyone is wallowing in sin like a pig rolling in mud. It simply means living a life, ignoring the claims of God upon your life.

The third term is the very familiar word "sinner." Did you know that the idea behind the word “sinner” is to “miss the mark”? It’s the picture of an archer who takes aim, looks straight at the bull’s eye, pulls the bowstring taut, shoots the arrow, and then completely misses the target. He misses the mark.

Our target is God’s law. But we miss the mark. A person may have the right intention of keeping that law, but inevitably he falls short of the mark. He can’t hit the bull’s eye all the time. In fact, many times he misses far short of the target. That’s what it means to be sinner. It’s missing the mark of God’s law.

Finally, Paul uses the word enemy to describe fallen humanity. We were God's enemies. This is probably the worst description of all, because it places us in a collision course with God.

People are resistant to this description. They may be indifferent to God, as the term “ungodly” describes, but they don’t view themselves as being hostile to God. Are they really actively opposed to God? Are they really undermining God’s efforts to establish his Kingdom? Are they really in line with the great enemy, Satan?

Yes. Because indifference to the Creator is a great insult to him. Because if you’re not part of the Kingdom of God, then you are part of the kingdom of darkness. There is no neutrality. There is no such thing as sitting on the fence. You are either for God or against him.

Powerless, ungodly, sinner, God’s enemies—it’s a devastating critique of humanity. We face an impossible problem, which we ourselves cannot solve. But thankfully, God can. That gets us into the second point: God’s incredible solution.

Paul digs up this devastating description of humanity, not to make us feel bad or guilty, but to underscore the amazing love of God. Because Paul wants us to notice the timing of Christ’s death on the cross. Paul stresses that by saying "at just the right time" Christ died for us.

Well, what time was that? It was when we were powerless, it was when we were ungodly, it was when we were sinners; it was when we were considered enemies of God that Christ died for us. In other words, in the time when we did not deserve the love of God, in our worst condition, Christ laid down his life for our sake.

God went far beyond what we would do. Paul says *Very rarely will*

*anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.* People are willing to commit themselves to a good cause. They give their energy, time, and money. They are willing to sacrifice a great deal. But how many people are willing to sacrifice their own life for the cause? How many people would you voluntarily die for?

History does record people willing to sacrifice themselves for their devoted cause. Most of the time such sacrifices are not voluntary, such as assassinations. Martin Luther King Jr. did not desire death, though he was willing to stand by his principles that opened himself to death threats.

But from time to time, we read about stories of persons who deliberately sacrificed themselves so that other people might live. We have the story of 9/11. Think about the passengers in the plane that crashed in the fields of Pennsylvania. As their plane was hijacked, they began to make calls on their cell phones. They realized that their plane would be used as a weapon of mass destruction. As a result, they decided to take the plane down. They sacrificed their own lives, so that others would be saved.

We consider them heroes. Rightly so. But in so doing, we also recognize the uniqueness of their situation. We wonder whether we would be so brave. Such self-sacrifice is unique. It happens, as verse seven recognizes, but when it does, it is special.

But the death of Christ was different. It was not forced. It was not like an assassination, like that of Martin Luther King Jr. Christ freely gave of himself. It was decided long before he was born in Bethlehem that he would die on the cross.

Nor was it like the self-sacrifice of the passengers on that airplane. They died for what they considered to be a good cause, for good people. They didn't die so that bin Laden could be the hero. Yes, people might be willing to die for friends and loved ones. As great as that is, God's love is much greater. God did what we would never do. As verse 8 puts it: *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Would a Jew, whose family died in the holocaust, be willing to die for Hitler? Would a black woman, suffering from injustice in the midst of the ghetto be willing to give of herself for the Ku Klux Klan? Would an American soldier in Afghanistan be willing to die so that bin Laden could go free? Common sense, even our sense of justice, says no. Yet that is what God has done for us. That's how God has demonstrated his love.

The wonder is not that Christ should die for us—though that would be wonderful enough. The wonder is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners, still ungodly, still powerless, and still enemies of God. That's the

amazing love of God at work.

Christ didn't die for good people. He died for bad people. He didn't die for saints. He died for sinners. He didn't die for his friends. He died for his enemies. He didn't die for people who loved him. He died for people who hated him.

God did what we would never do. Christ's death for our sake is proof enough of God's love towards us. At times, we wonder: where's the love of God? When we see so much injustice and evil in our world, we ask: where is God's love? When we see loved ones endure so much suffering, we ask: where is God's love?

Then we are called to look to the cross. To gaze upon the cruel cross and see the Son of God. As one of our hymns puts it: See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? Look to the cross and see God's love for us.

This leads me to the third point: our infinite gain. From our impossible problem God has provided an incredible solution. All of that is for our infinite gain. We do not have to doubt our salvation. We should not question whether we will escape the forces of hell. We will.

Paul speaks about the certainty of our salvation in verse 9 through 11. In these complex sentences, we twice hear the refrain, "how much more." It's a form of argument that is called "from the greater to the lesser." If the greater thing is true, then the lesser thing must also be true.

If we have been justified before the face of God, if these labels like sinner and enemy no longer apply to us, how much more can we expect to receive the blessings of God. If God already loved us in our miserable condition, why should we doubt his love now that we have been cleansed of our sin through the death of Christ.

That's the assurance Paul holds out to us this morning. We could once be described as powerless, but now we have the power of the Spirit. We were once ungodly, but now we worship and serve the Lord. We were once sinners, but now we are called saints. We were once enemies of God, but now we are children of God.

That's the great change that has taken place because of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. And if that's the case, we do not have to doubt our future. If God gave his Son to die while we were yet sinners, will he not save us to the end? If God reconciled us while we were enemies, will he not save us now that we are his friends? Of course, he will. He will make sure we will make into the new creation.

This leads us to rejoice in God. That's how Paul concludes this

section. We rejoice in God. This word is not the usual word for “rejoice”; instead, more accurately, it is the word "to boast". We boast in God and what he has done for us. That's the way it should be.

We boast in God because it is God who justified us so that we have peace with God, access to his presence, and assurance of our future hope. We boast in God because if God poured out his love to us while we were yet enemies, how much more will God sustain and love us now that we are part of his family. As a result, though we many our struggles and burdens in this life, we have a glorious future. A future that is secure and certain. Amen.