

“Unrivaled Love”

Romans 5:6-11

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connect groups

PATH

Modern wisdom continually tells us, “Love is a verb,” rather than a sentimental feeling. Love is a commitment that involves action. For the first time in the letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul introduced the word *love* and a very singular kind of love—God’s love for us. Wanting to show how secure we are in this salvation, Paul describes the greatest demonstration of love—its proof, its provision, and its product.

I. The Proof of God’s Love (vv. 6-8)

- A. His Gift Was Sacrificial (vv. 6-8)
- B. His Gift Was Unconditional (v. 6)
- C. His Gift Was Incomparable (vv. 7-8)

II. The Provision of God’s Love (vv. 9-10)

- A. Jesus’ Death Saved Us from God’s Wrath (v. 9)
- B. Jesus’ Life Saved Us from Our Ruin (v. 10)

III. The Product of God’s Love (v. 11)

POINTS

The Proof of God’s Love (vv. 6-8)

- True love has been pondered and debated for centuries. We live in a fallen world filled with broken and imperfect people; when broken people love other broken people, love is imperfect. When God loves people, it’s vastly different—His love is perfect and sure.
- Paul highlighted the greatest act of love—God’s love for broken, imperfect people—and provided three facets of God’s unrivaled love:
 - His Gift Was Sacrificial (vv. 6-8)
 - The proof of His love is in the gift God gave: Jesus (see John 3:16). Real love is never silent or passive. Through Christ, God actively loves the world.
 - His Gift Was Unconditional (v. 6)
 - The word *helpless* means powerless and spiritually dead (see Ephesians 2:1). Before coming to Christ, people are like the walking dead and unable to save themselves.
 - Galatians 4:4 states Jesus came in “the fullness of time.” Jesus came “to seek and to save” (Luke 19:10). God hates sin but loves the sinner.

- His Gift Was Incomparable (vv. 7-8)
 - Paul compared God’s love to human love. Human love is object-oriented and often based on attractiveness, whereas God’s love is subject-oriented, based on the content of His own character.

The Provision of God’s Love (vv. 9-10)

- God’s love provided two things:
 - Jesus’ Death Saved Us from God’s Wrath (v. 9)
 - Wrath is no longer an issue for those who believe (see John 5:24); however, not all people will escape God’s wrath (see John 3:36). The Bible divides the world into two camps: those who believe and those who don’t; one encounters wrath, the other doesn’t (see 1 Thessalonians 1:10).
 - Jesus’ Life Saves Us from Our Ruin (v. 10)
 - We are kept in Christ’s love. If the dying Savior reconciled us to God, surely a living Savior will keep us. If our past and future salvation is secured by God, how can we be insecure?

- God will finish what He started. Jesus not only pardoned us, He preserves us; He heals our soul and keeps our soul (see 2 Timothy 1:12).

The Product of God’s Love (v. 11)

- Romans 5:11 shows the result of experiencing God’s love—authentic joy. Thomas Aquinas said, “No man can live without joy. That is why one deprived of spiritual joy goes over to carnal pleasures.”
- One of the first signs that we are right with God is that we experience joy (see Acts 8:8 and 13:48). God is not interested in putting a temporary smile on a face, but depositing joy in the heart. The effect of true love is true joy, and Jesus is the source of both. God knows what you want and need and sent the Savior to show you the way. True love is to discover the love the Creator gave in Christ Jesus.

PRACTICE

Connect Up: God is love (see 1 John 4:7-21), but that does not mean He is without justice (leading to wrath). God’s love is both caring and just, making us perfect and complete like Him (see Matthew 5:48). Theologically, the unified character of God is called *simplicity* (i.e., without parts, indivisible). Why is it important to discuss both love and justice in relation to a unified understanding of God’s character? Why does God punish evil, yet love the evildoer? How can both be true?

Connect In: How should the love/justice dynamic work in harmony within the church? Here are some areas to ponder:

- We preach the value of life, given by God in love, but teach the evils of certain actions against life, such as abortion. What other aspects of the world are anti-life, thereby worthy of scrutiny under God’s judgment?
- We believe forgiveness is mandated (see Matthew 18:22), but believe that just punishment, such as imprisonment for crimes, is part of how God works in the world, particularly through government (see Romans 13:1). How are forgiveness and wrath complementary in God’s character? How is the church to balance the characteristics of love and justice in the world today?

Connect Out: Using the concept of joy as a springboard, how could you implement the quote Pastor Skip gave from Thomas Aquinas to describe why people pursue carnal things in life? Why are people seeking joy apart from God, and why does that joy fail them? How can you weave true joy (the result of our salvation from wrath and ruin through Christ) as a talking point in sharing the gospel? Because of the power of joy, why is it important for Christians to exude joy when witnessing? What does our joy look like? How is it different from happiness?