

Reconciled • Romans 5:6-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Cristo Redentor*

1. Standing on the peak of Mt. Corcovado, overlooking the bustling city of Rio de Janeiro is a 700 ton, 130 ft. high statue called *Cristo Redentor* – Portuguese for “Christ the Redeemer.”
2. In July of this year, it was selected as one of the *new 7 Wonders of the World*.
3. Completed in 1931 after 5 years of construction, it was designed by local engineer Heitor da Silva Costa.
 - a. His design won out over several others because of the *powerful message* the image conveys.
 - b. That statue presents Jesus with arms held wide, welcoming the world to be *reconciled* to God.
4. Cristo Redentor is *doubly powerful* as a symbol because it stands in its welcoming posture above a city well-known for its immorality & irreligion.
 - a. 24/7 that immense presence towers in plain sight, reminding the millions living & visiting Rio that God invites them to Himself.
 - b. Yet most ignore the invitation & go blithely about their business.
5. Just as the real Christ that statue represents, holds wide *His* arms to welcome any who will turn to Him.

B. *Today*

1. It's that invitation to reconciliation with God, Paul turns in our text today.
2. As we saw 2 weeks ago, he's finished *proving* the Gospel of Grace & turns now to describing its *benefits* – What *difference* it makes for those who believe.

II. TEXT

A. V. 6

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

1. It was when we were *unable* to help ourselves that Jesus *rescued* us.
2. We were in desperate need with *no ability* to fix it when Christ came into our lives.
3. **It's important we remember this:**
 - a. The crucial point in our salvation arrived when we finally came to the end of ourselves & realized we can't do what's required of us by God,
 - b. So – moved by love, God did *for us* what *we could not do*.

- c. That's what the cross is all about.
- 4. When the reality of our *impotence* hit home, we realized the Gospel was **NOT**
 - a. A *religious sales pitch* to make us *better*.
 - b. It was a gift to make us **brand NEW**.
- 5. We realized the Gospel wasn't -
 - a. A *boost to assist our efforts* at getting to heaven,
 - b. It was a *stretcher* to *carry* us there.
- 6. There was a line in a song many years ago that said it well –
 - a. Christ helps the helpless & leaves the rest to help themselves.
 - b. But one day *they too* will realize they don't have what it takes.

- 7. Friends, let's remember this about the lost. Though they don't realize it, they are w/o strength!
- 8. Expecting them to live a holy & righteous life is unrealistic.
- 9. What we *ought* to expect from sinners is sin.
- 10. Don't get disappointed, worked up, & bummed out at the lost when they do what lost people do.

- 11. Not only did the Holy Spirit bring each of us *individually* to faith in Christ at exactly the right moment –
- 12. Jesus was born into history at the *optimum time*.
 - a. The timing of Calvary was perfect.
 - b. Most historians agree the world stage could not have been more perfectly prepared for the arrival of the Gospel than it was.
 - c. Rome had spread a common culture & language across the Western world.
 - d. East & West were connected by well-traveled trade routes
 - e. But the glory of Rome was dimming as corruption & scandal grew.
 - 1) Her grand mission of uniting the world in an overarching peace was falling apart.
 - 2) The cracks in Rome's massive system were widening.
 - f. The old religions were losing their appeal.
 - g. The philosophies that had at one time been popular couldn't answer life's most compelling questions.
 - h. Several 1st Century writers report there was a sense throughout the Empire of *disillusionment* with what was & a yearning for something better.
 - i. People *longed* for **something worth** talking about & living for.
 - j. The world was *weary*.
- 13. It was in to this disillusioned, weary world Jesus stepped & went to the cross to remove the barrier hindering people from the life they were created for.

B. Vs. 7-8

⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1. Jesus came at the opportune moment; but WHY? Why did He die such a hideous death?
 2. Because of God's love!
 3. Paul wants us to understand that the Gospel is motivated by an *absolutely astounding* love, so he *contrasts* it with the noblest love *we* can think of.
 4. We hear stories of those who sacrifice themselves for others.
 - a. Someone throws himself on a hand grenade or steps in the way of a bullet.
 - b. As noble as these acts are, they're nearly always done for a loved one or friend.
 - c. Stories of heroism on the field of battle are moving but not all that uncommon because that's what soldiers are trained for.
 - d. We rather *expect* a soldier to endanger himself if it's the only way to protect his buddies.
 - e. What we'd *never understand* is the soldier who takes a bullet FOR an enemy!
 - f. He's not serving in uniform to *protect* the enemy, he's trying to *defeat* him.
 5. When we were at war with God, Jesus took the bullet of holy wrath that was aimed at us.
 6. And He did it because He loves us!
 7. The Love of God is even greater because He didn't just offer *Himself* in our place, He *sent His Son*.
 - a. If one of my kids is ill & needs a transfusion that would require *all* my blood, I'd gladly lay down my life.
 - b. But if the one who needs a transfusion is Osama bin Laden & the only one with the right blood type is my son, sorry Osama you're a goner!
 - c. How great the love of the Father; He sent His only, precious, beloved Son to die for us *while we were His enemies!!*
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8. I recently read something very disturbing.
 - a. For some time Emergent Church leaders have said our understanding of the Gospel is all wrong.
 - b. They say they don't know what the Gospel is but certainly what *we've* always thought it was *can't* be right.

- c. Lately, Emergent leaders like Brian McLaren & Steven Chalke have been *saying* that the belief Jesus paid for our sin on the Cross is dangerously wrong because it turns God into a “cosmic child abuser.”¹
- d. A God of love, they say, would *never* consent to the barbarity of the Cross.
9. This is *utter blasphemy* & contradicts many passages of Scripture – like vs. 7-8.
- a. 1 John 2:2 says -
And He Himself is the propitiation [a sacrifices that appeases wrath] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
- b. or 1 John 4:10 -
In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
10. If Jesus didn't go to the cross to atone for our sins, then *why did* He go?
- a. McLaren & Chalke say all the cross does is reveal the *cruelty* of humanity.
- b. So their Jesus is nothing but a helpless victim.
- c. And they think that's supposed to *inspire* us!! To what??
- d. Their Jesus is a weak, impotent deity unworthy of attention, let alone worship.
11. NO! It was the *Love of God* that sent Jesus to the Cross.
12. It was *love, not nails*, that held Him there till the cup of divine wrath was drained dry & the last particle of God's justice was satisfied.

C. V. 9

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

1. There it is → our justification comes by the Cross.
2. Paul directs our gaze *back* so we can more clearly see what's *ahead*.
3. Knowing we *now stand* justified before God,
4. We can live in the confidence we'll *never, ever* be the objects of His wrath.
5. We'll never stand before Him in judgment for sin.
6. We *will* face judgment, but for *rewards* on how we've used our time, talent, & treasure,
7. But we'll never face an *angry* God.
8. I wrestled my junior & senior year. We had a good team; took league pretty easily & had several wrestlers that went to CIF & did well. One even took State & was voted Masters Tournament MVP.
 - a. We had a pre-match warm up routine that was intimidating.

¹ http://www.apprising.org/archives/2005/12/brian_mclaren_i.html

- b. When we came out to wrestle, opponents were usually pretty shook up.
 - c. You could see it on their faces. They did not like being on the other side of the mat.
9. At the end of the Season, we had a Sports Awards banquet.
- a. It was a dress up affair & a good meal.
 - b. Then down to business; passing out the awards.
 - c. There was no anger now, no hostility; It was all a joyous celebration of our victorious season.
 - d. And those who'd excelled were honored with rewards.
10. Our cross-town rival was Valencia High. It was an old school with a long reputation.
- a. They'd been above us in wrestling in previous years, but now my school dominated.
 - b. Senior year, one of the Valencia wrestlers moved into our district & came out for our team.
 - c. He'd been an *adversary* but became a *teammate* & sat with us at the end of the season getting his awards along with everyone else.
11. That's us. We used to wrestle for *Hell High*, but God relocated us & now we wrestle for *Heaven High*.
- a. We're never going to face the wrath & anger of our coach because we're His team.
 - b. All we'll know in the way of judgment is a great banquet at which our awards will be passed out.
 - c. You can read about that in 1 Cor. 3 • 2 Cor. 5

D. V. 10

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- 1. If the *death* of Christ reconciled us to God when we *were at odds with Him*,
- 2. How much more will His *LIFE* secure our complete salvation now that we're *in right standing with Him*?
- 3. If God would do so much for us when we weren't interested in Him, how much more will He do now that we're in love with Him?

E. V. 11

And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

1. Here's what Paul's saying . . .
2. Christian, **look back**; see the **Cross** – that's where we were made right with God **in Christ**.
3. Now, **look forward**, see **heaven** – our destiny, where we'll be glorified **in Christ**.
4. Now, **look here**, at this **moment** – this is our life, reconciled to God, in right relationship with Him **in Christ**.
5. The emphasis is on this **reconciliation**, this making right our relationship with God.
6. Our reconciliation to Him **potentially** reconciles all other relationships.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Reconciled

1. The **popular/common meaning** of reconciliation means to be **restored** after alienation **to** a place of favor.
2. But the **root** of reconciliation means a **return** to a relationally **right** alignment.
3. Being right with God puts us in the place where we can be **right** in all our other relationships.
 - a. With our brothers & sisters in Christ, loving & serving them.
 - b. With our family, loving & serving them as well.
 - c. In our relationship with creation as good stewards.
 - d. With the world as spiritual & moral salt & light.
 - e. Even with the devil as an opponent –
 - 1) that's our right relationship to him now,
 - 2) & we ought to be reconciled to it.
4. Man was created to be the **friend** of God & the **opponent** of Satan.
 - a. The Fall saw humanity turn from God to become the **ally** of the devil.
 - b. Christ not only restored us to **favor & fellowship** with God,
 - c. He's restored our proper posture toward Satan; as an opponent.
 - d. And He's given us all the equipment we need to do battle & overcome him.

B. Follow Through

1. As we end today, want to ask you to meditate on that last phrase of v. 11 as it relates to your relationships -
we have now received the reconciliation
2. How does your relationship with God **impact** all the **rest** of your relationships?
 - a. What difference does it make with people here, at home, work, at the store, on-line?

- b. What difference does God make in the way you treat the Earth & its resources?
- c. Consider this – what difference ought your *friendship with God* make to your relationship to Satan?
- d. When I ask myself that question, it makes me wonder if my *choices* indicate whose friend I really am – God's or the enemy's.