

"GOD'S LOVE"

Romans 5:8

In a 2017 lecture, Mark Meynell addressed the connection between identity and memory. . .

Adam Zeman, a Professor of Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology, wrote about amnesia and memory loss and their relationship to epilepsy. He mentioned two patients, Peter and Marcus, who described their amnesia in very similar terms. One said: "My memory of my past is a blank space. I feel lost and hopeless. I'm trying to explore a void." Both described how disconcerting it is to look at photos. Even though they recognize themselves, they have no recollection of the moment. One said that it's like "reading the biography of a stranger." He's conscious of recent memories slipping away from him, like ships sailing out to sea in the fog, never to be seen again.

Two things stand out in Zeman's essay. First, without memory, it's hard to cling to an

identity. So, one of the patients said: "I don't have the moorings that other people draw on to know who they are." Second, it's hard to have hope when we don't know our past.

Mark Meynell, "The Pulpit and the Body of Christ,"
Covenant Seminary 2017 Preaching Lectures

This certainly illustrates the importance of our identity as Christians. No wonder Jesus gathered His disciples together in the upper room and gave them and His church the Lord's Supper to serve as *an anchor to the past* and *a vision for the future*.

The foundational truth that undergirds this pivotal worship experience is *THE LOVE OF GOD*. Take your Bible and turn to Romans 5 . . .

Romans 5:8...But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

There is so much packed into this one verse about the love of God. In fact, I want to share three aspects of God's love with you this morning before we receive the Lord's Supper.

1. GOD'S LOVE IS UNDENIABLE

God Himself never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This is hard for us to grasp because we live in a world of flip-flopping politicians, truth-bending journalists, and self-centered celebrities. However, God never changes. He is infinitely and eternally holy.

Isaiah 6:3...And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

The Bible emphatically states that God is love. That's who He is and that's who He will always be. In our text, Paul wrote, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us.**"

1 John 4:7–8...Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

David Jackman wrote ...

Therefore to imagine that God does not love us is to deny His true nature, to repudiate His character. It is to distort the free grace of God into something much less worthy, a 'conditional love' that depends on the attractiveness or worthiness of the object for it to be exercised. Divine love is utterly different. It cannot be earned; it cannot be deserved. God loves us because that is His nature. (The Bible Speaks Today Commentary, The Message of John's Letters, p. 118)

I can say with utmost certainty that God loves you even if you think He doesn't!

2. GOD'S LOVE IS UNMERITED

Now look at the next part of our key verse— "**In that while we were yet sinners.**" The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to include a graphic description of every human being. Listen to these words and know that you fit into every word used here in Romans 5:6-10 . . .

Romans 5:6–10... For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. **8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **10** For if while 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.

Here is the hopeless condition of one who is unsaved . . .

■ **Helpless—vs. 6**

At one time we were totally powerless to improve our standing with God. No matter how good or religious we might think we are, the truth of this word rips from our hearts every shred of moral high ground. We are as helpless as a newborn baby.

■ **Ungodly—vs. 6**

Here is a word that describes our lack of reverence toward God. All of our lives we have lived with some degree of rebellion against the Almighty.

■ **Sinners—vs. 8**

Every member of the human race has fallen tragically short of God's holy standards. We have missed the target. There is not a scintilla of merit in any of us.

■ **Enemies—vs. 10**

This word speaks of a deep-seated hostility toward God. God forbid that you or I ever consider ourselves worthy of the amazing love of the spotless, pure, and infinitely holy God!

God's love is undeniable. **God's love is unmerited.** Do you see it? Are you deeply moved by God's amazing love? Here's the final aspect of God's love that I want you to focus on today...

3. GOD'S LOVE IS UNFORGETTABLE

Here's our key verse this morning. Say it after me:

Romans 5:8...**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

Feast your eyes on those last four words—**"Christ died for us."** This is a historical fact. J. Sidlow Baxter wrote...

The Son of God had to become human to even be capable of dying (Heb. 2:9,14). How amazing it is that God the Son could die, that He should die, that He would die, and that He did die.

Get out of your mind once and for all the idea that God has met you halfway. The initiative is entirely His! We are enemies of God, rebels to the core. Left to ourselves, we would not love him. We would oppose him. It took his boundless, sacrificial love to break our hearts of stone and to draw us to Himself . . .

- **Jesus, the Son of God, was mocked, maligned, and mistreated.**
- **His flesh was ripped from His body by the Roman scourge.**
- **He was paraded through the streets of Jerusalem like a common criminal.**
- **His hands and His feet were fastened to a cross with iron spikes.**
- **He endured God's wrath as He paid the penalty of our nasty, vile sin.**
- **He died for our sins because God loves us!**

Do you not marvel at the sacrificial love of Jesus? Do you not feel the need to fall to your knees in humility and brokenness before the resurrected and ascended Lord? Do your mortal lips not long to cry out in crisp, sharp tones, "*O what a Savior!*"

Don't you agree? God's love is undeniable, unmerited, and it is certainly unforgettable.

INVITATION

In light of God's love, every believer must examine his/her own heart.

- **Are you living for Jesus?**
- **Do you love Him with all your heart?**
- **Is there unconfessed sin in your life?**

Paul wrote the Spirit-inspired words of 1 Corinthians 11 for the church as it prepared to observe the Lord's Supper. Hear the Word of the Lord . . .

1 Corinthians 11:27–29... Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

Confess your sin to the Lord. Ask for His forgiveness and cleansing and spiritual renewal.

That's the least we can do in light of the love that God has shown to us.

I must ask you this destiny-defining question. Have you truly repented of your sins and received Jesus as Savior and Lord by faith? He loves you so much that He died for your sins on the cross, and He was raised from the dead so that you could receive the gift of eternal life. Come to Jesus!

LORD'S SUPPER

Our text in 1 Corinthians reminds us about what we are to remember. Today, through the observance of the Lord's Supper, we see how we are to remember.

PRAY

Deacons, we are so thankful for your service to the Lord and His church. Now serve the Body of Christ. Remember to take the tray and pass it to the person next to you and then take your piece of bread and cup of juice.

SONG: "This Blood"

This song is sung as the elements are being passed out to the church.

BREAD

It's interesting to note that in Romans 5:8 Paul focused on both the continuous action of God loving us and the completed action of Jesus dying for our sins on the cross. Would you take the bread—which represents the Body of Jesus sacrificed—and meditate on how Jesus died for your sins and how God continues to love you? Hear the Word of the Lord . . .

1 Corinthians 11:23–24... For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Receive the bread in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus' body.

JUICE

The grape juice in the cup represents the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed to pay the penalty for your sin. Think about the price Jesus paid for you. Jesus said this to His disciples in the upper room...

1 Corinthians 11:25... **In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

Receive the juice in remembrance of the blood of Jesus shed on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for your participation in the Lord's Supper. I can't think of a better way to begin a new year!

- As an act of reverence, please take your plastic cups and place them in one of our waste receptacles in the foyer.

- If you are prepared to do so, consider placing a benevolence offering on the deacon's Bible as you exit the worship center today.

As believers, our identity is anchored to the love of God and His love is undeniable, unmerited, and unforgettable.

We know that we have a future and a hope that stretches beyond this life in a broken and fallen world into the vast joy and the endless blessings of an eternity with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:26... For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

We know that the best is yet to come! Let's stand together and sing our benediction . . .

BENEDICTION: "THE DOXOLOGY"