

Costly Love

by Don McClure

The sermon explores the depth and nature of God's love for humanity, emphasizing His unconditional acceptance despite our sinfulness.

Duration: 41:19

Scripture: Luke 15:4-10, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:6-11

Topics: "Sin Nature", "Godly Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the intensification of sin in the world, as prophesied in the Bible for the last days. He highlights the disturbing content that is readily available on television, such as the use of sex to sell products and the objectification of women. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus is fully aware of our sinful nature and our capacity to do wrong. He reminds the audience that all people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, as stated in the book of Romans.

Transcript

Romans 5, beginning at verse 6 this evening. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than be now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we shall be saved, pardon me, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Father, we thank you for your word. It is such a wonderful thing.

And Lord, as we come tonight and we look at what your word has to tell us about what you know so clearly about us, but what we don't seem to really know about ourselves. But Lord, we ask that as we would look at this, that we would truly realize what our part is in the Christian life, what your part is, and that we'd have a great understanding of a working relationship between you and each one of us and how to live, how to understand the relationship that we have with one another. And so as we open your word tonight, may you open it up to our hearts and may we receive it in Jesus name.

Amen. Well, if you'll recall through the first three chapters of Romans, of course, we saw that ultimately, by the time we reached the end of it, all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. And here is the Bible tells us there, in essence, that as he goes one chapter after another, he spends three chapters, as you'll recall, simply telling us again and again and again, any way you want to look at it, any way you want to cut it, think of it, evaluate it.

All men have sinned. Every one of us, the religious sinner, the self-righteous sinner, the sinful sinner, the absolute rebellious sinner. Ultimately, we have all sinned.

By the time he reaches the end there at the end of the third chapter, that's where he leaves us. Then in chapter four, you recall, he takes us through this wonder adventure of the story of Abraham and his life of faith, wanting, I believe, to prep us for the faith that we are going to need for us to make the step between our own nature, our own sinfulness and the righteousness of God and how it's all going to be by faith. It isn't going to be by human effort, human commitment, human promise, human spirituality, human anything.

It's all going to be of God. And it is going to require a step of faith as dramatic as Abraham's faith ever was in believing that God could raise his own son from the dead, Isaac, if he was to die. They're trusting God that you can do this because you tell me you can.

And God wants us to know the very same thing of a faith and of a trust in him, because that is what it's going to require for me to really enter into a right relationship and fellowship with Jesus Christ, that fellowship that realizes he gives it all to me. And as we go on here in Romans six, this wonderful chapter, very insightful Romans five, pardon me, this wonderful, insightful chapter, it tells us essentially what God expects from us. When God looks at you and me and here we stand before him, as you'll recall in the earlier part of the chapter, we've been by prosagogue.

We have this wonderful access into his presence, his royalty. We're accepted in the eyes of the beloved. We are his child.

He looks upon us as royalty. He looks upon us as his sons and his daughters, as kings, as priests, as wonderfully beautiful in his eyes, in his sight, not a failing in us, not an inconsistency in us, nothing at all as we stand in Christ, that the work of Jesus is so total, so complete, so awesome that it is one there to where he is able to present me and you faultless before God. And that is what he does.

But as he does that, now he tells us a little bit of what it is that God wants, what he expects from us and what he wants us to essentially begin to be able to express express from him. You see, I think most of our problems in the Christian life are because we expect too much of ourself. And because we expect too much of ourself, we expect very little from God.

And that's the thing where many of our mistakes really are. And I think when we stop and look and see, well, what does God expect from me? What does he see when he looks at me? Because if I don't understand this, it'll always produce a very weak and unstable form of Christianity. If it's based on me, now I've come before God.

I'm loved. I'm accepted. I sit in his presence.

He admires me. He loves me. He respects me.

He sees me as complete and finished and beautiful and acceptable and wonderful. Well, then I maybe have to stand there and say, well, I must be something pretty good that there must be something pretty good in me. But here God wants to go on to tell us exactly what it is that he sees in one sense and what he knows about us while I still yet am before him.

While I'm acceptable, I'm pure, I'm adored, I'm loved, I'm completed in Christ. But here is God wants to tell us a little bit about his love for us. And in it, as he lays out for us beginning in here in verse six, he says, for if, when, uh, when we were yet without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly for scarcely for a righteous man will one die at paradvventure for a good man.

Some would even dare to die, but God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And then in verse 10, he says, for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son will much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life? But here, Paul has four things that we're going to look at in a moment that he tells us there, that when God looks at us, he says, here's what I know about you. And here's what I expect in one sense is he looks at them.

He, uh, he tells us we're without strength. We're ungodly. He tells us that, uh, we are sinners and we are enemies in one sense there before God by nature.

And yet, as God sees that all of these horrible things that we'll look at in a moment, you might say, he also with full understanding of that absolutely loves us. I hope tonight, even as we get into this, you will realize how much God loves you. Uh, John three 16 is of course is for God.

So love the world, but it isn't only the, the world. We're also told in Ephesians five that Christ loved the church, but yet also Paul not only says he loves the world and not only he loves the church, but in Galatians two 20, he says he loved me and he gave himself for me. And the individual love that God has for you, not just a love for the world, not just a love for the church, but the individual love that God has for every single one of us.

I think many times, uh, there's something about my nature. I realized God loves the world, but I don't know that he's all that crazy about me. You know, in a sense I, you know, I can see, I mean, such a mass of people, that's a pretty huge investment to lose a thing like that.

The whole planet, uh, you know, you, you probably ought to really put a little effort into that for the sake of said huge numbers, but when it would come down to just one of us, uh, now you say, well, Hey, you went a few, you lose a few, you know, sort of a thing. Now the, this great blanket affection that he has for the whole world. Does he truly have it for the individual as intense as it is? And you know, when you pick up the Bible and you begin to look, for example, in Luke at the, at the parables of Jesus, you realize there as he gives us these wonderful parables, you know, the story where the shepherd comes back with a hundred sheep.

And there, as he looks there and he counts them as they're all come in one, two, three, four, count off as they're coming in one after another, and you know, 93, 94, 95, 99. And he's ready to say a hundred and a hundred is gone. And he looks around when he realizes that one is gone.

And there he now takes the 99 leaves in there. And he says, I got to go find the one that's missing. He then goes on and he gives another parable after that, or the parable of 10 coins and the woman there that has lost one coin.

And for that, she gathers, she cleans the house. She does the radical things. They're looking for money and, uh, invites her friends over and does.

I've got to find that one coin. And then he goes on with the parable or the story of the two sons of the prodigal son, but there it was didn't make any difference to God, whether it was a hundred and one was gone, whether it was 10 and one was gone, whether it was two and one was missing his love, his desire was as intense for the one, regardless of the equation or, you know, the, the, the, you know, what it stood against and to realize God loves you as radically as he loved that one, or he loved, you know, whether it was the one of the hundred, the one of the 10 or the one of the two, he loves us. And he cares so deeply, so wonderfully about it.

That's how personal that's how deep that's how intimate the love of God is, is for us. But here Paul goes on and he tells us, I think some of the wonderful attributes of God's love and why it is such a profound love that as God looks at us, he knows fully well who it is that he is loving. He isn't fooled, you know, at all, you know, in any way at all.

He begins, first of all, to tell us there in verse six, for when we were without strength, God knows that who he chose to love when he chose you, when he chose me, when he made us his child, he is fully cognizant that he chose somebody, he called somebody to himself that is utterly without strength, that has nothing at all within them, that their Christ died for us when we were without strength. That word there, it's, it means as in its simplest form, like weak, or, or weaker, or feeble, but most, most correctly, it means impotent. And it's used as for the impotent man who laid by the pool for 38 years.

And the word there, it means essentially, they're not just simply without strength, it means without the capacity to produce life. There is no life within it. God knew when he looked at us, he realized there was absolutely no capacity to produce life, as we also would maybe understand the word impotency to be, in a sense, there's no capacity to help no life within no capacity to reproduce, or do anything at all there within.

And when Christ just as when he came by the man there who'd been by the pool for 38 years, the impotent man, and there within him his muscles, and for 38 years, they'd atrophied. The, the nerves had ceased sending messages back and forth, to be able to connect, you know, with any muscle, any muscle tissue, anything at all within it, where the man there could produce any life, as much as he wanted to walk, as he wished he could walk, as much as he would like to do, you know, to be free as everyone else around him. But there was absolutely nothing within him.

And when Jesus came and he asked the man, would you like to walk? Would you like to move on again? He said, oh, are you kidding me? But I have no man, I have nothing. See, I have nothing in me, and there's nobody outside. There's nothing in, there's nothing out, there is no capacity whatsoever.

He's an impotent, lifeless man. And yet there, just as much as when Jesus came to him, and there he looked at this man with no life within him. And that's exactly when he came to you and to me, and he said, follow me.

Realizing fully, he isn't asking anybody to follow him based upon any capacity for life within him, any more than we came to Lazarus's tomb. And he said, Lazarus, come forth, as if, Lazarus, come on, wake up, baby, you know, or something inside. He was dead in a doornail in there.

He was gone. There was no function connecting to the ear, like he's just sitting there waiting for the magic word outside, and I'm going to pop out of here. He was dead.

And here, when Jesus Christ came, and he chose you, when he chose me, he chose somebody that he was, chose somebody he knew was absolutely without life and the potential to produce it. Fully cognizant of it, didn't think anything different for one moment at all. And that's something I think a lot of us don't really understand.

I know when I was young, particularly as a Christian, I didn't really realize there was no life at all within me. When I came to the Lord, I was very zealous. I came to Christ when I was in college, and I wanted to serve.

And I'm out on college campuses, and I'm running around, and the next thing you know, I get recruited by a, you know, well-known campus ministry back in the 60s. Came on a staff, you know, with them, and I remember one time after being recruited, we're having this huge meeting, there's thousands there, and the leader of the movement addressing all of us, or there's a couple thousand, I think, anyway, of all the staff. I'll never forget, this is back in the 60s, but he looks at us, and he's telling us the potential of our life, and he's telling us our ministry.

He said, every one of you that have been selected, I'll never forget this, because he looked at us, and he said, all of you are \$20,000 a year people, and that was back when \$20,000 was a whole lot of money. Now it's kind of, I don't know, food stamp money, I don't know what it is, you know, welfare standards, it's considered below the poverty level, but back in the 60s, somebody that made \$20,000 a year, they were, you were making money, you had a future, and I'll never forget, he looked at us, and we have recruited, you know, the people that you've got potential in your life, and you've got, and as we've evaluated you, and our recruiters, and have selected you to join this ministry, and to be a part of it, it's because of the great potential we see in your life, and we kind of sit there, yeah, 20, I gave up a lot to be here. Yeah, I was going to sit on the board at General Motors, but I decided to come over here.

I mean, it was almost this thing of where you'd sit around, and everybody had kind of given, in fact, he told, we realized some of the careers some of you walked away from, because you see the eternal, and but sitting there, there was kind of this thing where you were actually told that you had something within you, and some strength that just yet undiscovered, or you know, and I, it had just got, it just had to be trained, and disciplined, and equipped, you know, somehow or another, and but it didn't take me long to realize there wasn't enough training, and enough discipling, enough equipping, for me at any rate, and to achieve the needed end, and how wonderful it is one day when you realize that Jesus, when he selected us, he didn't sit there and say, I picked you, because I just wanted a few good men to build my army. You know, he looked at you, and he, me, and he said, I picked you, because, and you were deadlier than a doornail. I expected nothing, and that's what I got, you know, or something, and the only problem is, you don't know it yet, but I do.

I'm fully aware of it, and here Paul says, this is when he looks at you, and he looks at me, this is his fundamental expectation. He then goes on, and he says, however we add that to it, it's not only a sense that God's love, it's unconditional, in the sense that we are absolutely without strength, but it's also a love that's unbelievable, in the sense that not only we are without strength, but he goes on and says, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. He said, I want you to know exactly who I chose, and what I, and I knew who I chose, and I knew who you were.

I would never fool for a moment. You were, you were without strength. There was no life within you whatsoever, and you were ungodly, and the word ungodly essentially means absolutely destitute of reverential awe towards God, a spirit that condemns God, absolutely ungodlike.

Not only you are without strength, but what there is in you is so far from being anything comparable to what God is, he says. God says, this is what I see when I see you, so it's not only an unconditional love, it's an unbelievable love, when you realize God sits there, and he says, I want you, I want to tell you who I chose, and what I saw, and basis of it, and I chose what I knew, and the very process of it was not only without strength, it was ungodly, and here is something, of course, Jesus, this shouldn't surprise us, but it does when it becomes personal, but when we look at Jesus, it shouldn't surprise us to realize that one of the major accusations of him, it is he spent time with ungodly people. He hung out and around with sinners, and winebibbers, and harlots, and, you know, rebellious people, wicked people, demon-possessed people, tax collectors, thieves, all manner of people that a godly person has nothing in common with, yet there Jesus was, that's where he spent his time, that's who he was ministering to, that's who he was talking to, that's who he was reaching out to, and who he was drawing, fully aware, not only these people are not the pick of the crop, they are at the lower part of the barrel, you know, there in society, but yet at the same time, of course, as far as God's concerned, we're all at the lower part of the barrel, it's just that it seems as if so often the ones that that recognize it are the ones that know they're there because they've been told that all their life by other people, you're no good, you're a thief, you're a harlot, you're a, you know, a liar, you're an alcoholic, you're a drug, and well, those people, it's easier almost to connect with them because they know a little bit of what God's always known, and the other people that say, not me, I'm better than you, well, it's hard to reach them, because their life is still based on quite a bunch of deceit and lie, but here, but when Jesus looks at us, it's something there that he seems to, you know, pick people that have the obvious and the greatest of needs, and I suppose in one sense, when he could love them and heal their sicknesses and transform their lives and forgive them of their sinfulness, then the rest of the society around that thinks themselves to be better is much easier to reach, in one sense, I suppose, although they're not any better, they're not any different, it's just now they realize he does love everyone, and here, though it's a love, he says that it is for those that are absolutely ungodlike, there is absolutely no concern, no care, no reverence for God whatsoever within them, in their nature.

One time I read in a commentary, it was a little long, so I won't read it to you, and it's also very gory, so I won't read it to you for that either, but a rather gory poem about a young man who'd fallen in love with a very wicked woman, and the wicked woman, jealous of his love that he had for his mother, she demanded of him that if you love me, you will prove it by killing your mother and cutting out her heart and bringing it to me so I can feed it to my dog. Not the greatest poem, you know, that you kind of want to sit down and read to your children at bedtime, but at any rate, the fellow, because he is so entranced by this love for this wicked woman, he goes and he does just that. He kills his mother, he cuts out her heart, and while he is running to give it, to present his mother's heart to his, sorry mom, it's nothing personal, but anyway, just, my mother is here, it's a terrible poem, but anyway, but here as he is running, he trips and falls down, the heart comes out, rolls by, and the heart speaks, you know, in a poem you can make it anything you want, but anyway, the heart, you know, speaks to the young man, and it's, and then, and it says, are you hurt, my child, are you hurt? And, you know, as you think of it, I mean, again, a rather gory poem, but when you stop to think of it, in a sense, that is precisely a picture of God's love.

Not only the Bible says, are we just ones that were without strength, the Bible says that we are so un-God-like, we hold God in absolutely no awe, no reverence whatsoever, to the degree that we will gladly cut out his heart if it will give us some door to another love in the world, some pleasure, something in the world, some other attraction, God's valueless to the natural mind. There's no awe of him, there's no respect of him, and whatever I must do or turn from him, kind of like Manasseh in the Bible, raised in a godly home and had a wonderful father, Hezekiah, who loved God, but there, and he wouldn't raise to know better, but yet, there when his own love for Baal and the gods and goddesses of the world around him, it seemed as if Manasseh gladly cut out the heart of God. He literally even sacrificed his own children there down in the valleys, there unto his gods and goddesses of pleasure and of wickedness and of perversion, but he was so entranced by it that turning away from God, rejecting everything he was, hey, this is what I want to do.

Well, this is what God, when he looks at us, the amazing thing is Jesus, when he hung on the cross and when our sins, our sins hung him there, our sins cut out the heart of God as they hung upon the cross, as that was going on, he was hanging there and he says, forgive them. They know not what they do, forgive them, and he looks at you and I, now you hurt my child, are you okay? Still with a love, that's how great his love is. In many of us, perhaps, growing up, and how on one hand for some love or affection or care for the world, knowing maybe better how we ought to live or how we ought to walk, how easily we could just cut out the heart of God and just go live however we want in whether some form of promiscuity, some sex, some pleasure, some rebellion, some drugs, or whatever else it is, and we look back and realize, not only, I mean, but when realize God knew us all the time and he says, not only are you without strength, but I know that when I chose you, I chose and I called somebody who is entirely un-God-like.

There was a point I was absolutely worthless to you and I was negotiable for any pleasure that may come, you could walk away and leave me. And here, though, God says, I know this about you, and it isn't to make us feel guilty or to hurt us, he's just wanting us to know the depth and the quality of his love, of his adoration for us. And then he goes on in verse 7, he says, for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die, but God commendeth his love for us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

His love is not only unconditional, it's not only unbelievable, it's incomparable in the sense there that he looks at us as sinners. And whereas, as Jesus himself said in Matthew 9 13, I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners. First Timothy 1 15, Paul says, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

And here, while we deserve nothing but condemnation, oh, a good man some might dare to die, but God commendeth his love for us, in that while we were sinners. While we deserve essentially nothing but condemnation, God looked at us, said, well, you may deserve that, there's no argument in heaven about that. But what is so wonderful is a sense that God looks at us in this world that he created, in this life that we were created in the image of God at one point, and in this world that is so far fallen from it, when you realize what the earth once was, what man once was, that God still yet sees the beauty of it.

What a paradise it was, and how defiled it is now, and how the corruption that has literally taken over the world, demons, disease, death, the planets, you know, I mean, when you stop to think of it, the planet's filled with graveyards. There's not a city that doesn't have a bunch of them, all because of what? Sin coming into the world. Sin brought all kinds of physical problems with it, of which, you know, doctors, dentists, you know, specialists, eye, ear, nose, throat, heart, lungs, kidneys, foot, toes, I mean, you pick

part of the body, all, every doctor, he's there, what sustains him is sin.

You know, there's sin in the world. If you look at all the hospitals, you look at all the, you know, the ambulances, the paramedics, all the people that make their career, you know, essentially around fallen man, helping care for fallen man. And then, of course, the social ills, you look at the court system, the judges, the, you know, the prisons, lawyers, family law, you know, legislative law, I mean, every form of law there is.

I mean, all, why do we need all this? Because, man, we're sinners. The planet's filled with sinners. Wonder how many of us actually are, we have a career that we require, we couldn't even do our job if there weren't a lot of sinners around.

You need sinners. If you're a policeman, you got to, you know, God, keep sinners around here or I won't have anything to do. And, you know, you may work for an alarm company, you may build fences, you may put locks on doors, you may, I mean, so many careers, they're all revolve around sinful man.

And what happens if people aren't there? You know, and you look at the mental world and the psychological world and the mental wards and all of the other things and the ruin and the squalor and the misery and the pain and the suffering and the hatred and the war and the famine and the blight and the pestilence and the things that fill the world, all because it's a world of sinners. They're the product of sin. And tragically, of course, this is something that, as the Bible tells us in the last days, that it would just be more intense than ever, which it is.

I mean, it's the, what you and I are conditioned, what we see, I think most of the rest of history, if they just came home and turned on our television set for 10 minutes, they would be appalled that such a thing goes on. You know, when you look there and you turn on and now, I mean, Carl's Jr.'s, not to get into, you know, well, there is a hamburger joint out there, I'll leave them unnamed. But there, I mean, it goes out there, and when you stop to think here, now they've got this ad campaign with the likes of Hugh Hefner.

Hugh Hefner sitting there with a hamburger as if he's delighting in the latest playmate of the month, and as he's talking and fancying it in his mind, and he's selling a hamburger. And here as he's discussing it, and going on and on about the whole thing. And you realize here is a human being that who knows how many hundreds of millions of lives he has affected for the worse.

How many marriages he has destroyed. How many, you know, young men and young women have been drawn off into a life of pornography and of corruption. But under the leadership of this man, and now he is a spokesman, selling hamburgers, using his craft to do it.

And here, when you, and this is just our, you know, then you turn to the next channel in these days, and here on the 6 o'clock news, you're watching Victoria's Secrets. Victoria's Secrets is mostly, I mean, as naked as you can put them on the 6 o'clock news, are walking around. I don't know why they call it Victoria's Secrets.

She doesn't look like she's got any left, you know, at any rate. But it's something where you look at this, and it's just there. And then the other night, the other night since I'm on it, I turn on the TV to watch and see who's playing Monday Night Football.

I don't know if any of you saw this. I turned it on, I thought, well, it's an ad or something, because there's this pretty gal in a kind of a sexy, low-cut dress, standing by a table with a martini glass or something on it.

And she's looking into the camera, and she says, ladies, wouldn't you like, and forgive me for this, but if you saw Monday Night Football or you just watch TV, it's nothing these days, but she says, ladies, wouldn't you like to meet a man with good hands? Wouldn't you like to be around a man with all the moves? And as she's looking at this, and then all of it, I'm wondering, what in the world is this? And the next thing you know, she introduces the greatest pass receiver, you know, of the year, this guy's got great hands, and then a great halfback, and while he's running up all the yards, this guy can make all the moves, ladies, and all of a sudden, we're selling sex to get women to watch football or something.

And you're wondering, what in the world is going on, watching this thing? I sat there, and I decided, that's it. I turned it off, and I did turn it back on a little later, but I was upset for a little while about that, but the Bible says, I mean, we're all sinners, and when we realize that this is the world in which we are living in, but to realize that Jesus fully cognizant of this, he comes, and he looks at us, and he says, I know you're without strength, and I know that you are ungodly, and I know you only have the capacity to do wrong. You are a sinner, and so often, we forget that.

So often, we don't realize that Jesus looks at us fully aware and cognizant that we are sinners who have failed terribly. He says, I know that, but so often, we do, we forget it. We don't think we're sinners, or if we've been a Christian, we cover it, and we pretend we're not, or we look at others, and then we're shocked when we find out we're a sinner.

I remember one time, it was back in the early 70s. I'll get in trouble for this, but anyway, I remember one night, I was sitting back here in the back, leaning on the agape box. Romaine and I would fight over the agape box, because there's no place to sit back there, and I remember, you know, I'm kind of honest.

There is a, is it still there? Is there an agape box here? Of course, there is. Put money in it two or three times a day. How did I forget that? But anyway, but there was an agape box back there, and when I, and I'm sitting there one night, and Chuck is up here, I think it was a Sunday night, and he's about to teach, but he's kind of fumbling around a little, unlike him, and he's kind of struggling a little bit, and he stopped, and he looked over at Kay sitting over here, and he says to Kay, he said, he apologized, he said, excuse me for a moment, he looks to Kay, and he says, Kay, will you forgive me? I'm sorry.

And we're shocked. We're looking. Chuck said, I want the tape, you know, or something, sort of a thing.

You know, I don't know what he said and what he did, and then he apologized. He said, I just can't teach until I get right, and I'm sorry, but I had some words, and is this great or what? You know, sort of a thing, and I wonder, what did he say? It must have been really bad. You know, I have no idea what it is.

All I know is it must have been really bad because I can be nasty to my wife and preach fine, so it must have been really bad that he couldn't even preach, but anyway, but when we realize we are all sinners, every one of us, every human being, we fail, and the Lord looks at us, and he knows this about us, and he says, I know who I picked when I picked you. I'm not surprised, but we are. That's the thing.

You see, I'm surprised when he brings it home to me. I'm surprised when I see this in my life, when I see the capacity of ungodliness, of an absolute capacity within my heart as a kid that can turn and have no reverence whatsoever for the things of God, and yet to realize that's his love, and lastly, it's also a love here, and we'll continue with this next week, but it's also a love here, as he says in verse 10, for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, well, much more being reconciled shall we be saved by his life, and here he looks, and he tells us God's love is not only for you and I, is it

unconditional, and not only is it unbelievable, not only is it incomparable, it's also unknown in its magnificence. It's absolutely beyond the comprehension that there could be a love so great, for if when we were enemies, God looked fully cognizant, fully aware when he died for us, when he laid his life, you know, down, when he gave himself over to the cross, there he looks at us, and that word enemy, it means enemy, it means hateful, hostile, in full opposition and in enmity against God.

God looks at the human nature, the natural man, and to realize there is something in me, as Jeremiah says, the human heart is wicked above all things. The deceitfulness, the wretchedness of it is so terrible, who could even begin to know it, and we spend a lot of our life sometimes as a Christian there, because we start off on this unstable ground of thinking, when I gave my life to God, he got a deal, you know, or something. When I gave him my life, and I can actually remember kind of being at things and saying, Lord, I'm going to make it worth it for you that you saved me, yessiree, Bob, you know, you're going to be glad you wrote my name down in your book, because I'm going to do big stuff for you, you know, or something in the honest thought that there was something inside of me that could be one shred of benefit for heaven, and there's none, absolutely none.

It is truly all of grace, all of grace, and here, when there is something that God looks at us and realizing they're bitter enemies. I wanted my own kingdom, my own world, I wanted to rule my own life, I wanted to be the master of my own destiny and chart my own course, and I avoided him, and I was an enemy of his kingdom, and of his realm, and of his authority, and by nature, we fight it. We oppose it until one day his love breaks us down.

One day, as we realize we fail him, and his heart rolls by, and it says, oh, you hurt my child. And one day, as we realize how patient he is, and how kind he is, and why hasn't he cut me off? Why isn't he through with me? And we realize that because he says, because I knew who I chose. The problem is, you didn't.

You thought you were different. You thought you were better. You thought you could impress, when in reality, you can do nothing.

And not only so, verse 11, but we also join God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Here he said, and we're going to have to go back to this because I'm out of time for this week, but that atonement, he says, what has happened? He says, here when Jesus Christ came, he is fully cognizant. I know you.

I know who I died for. I know who I chose. I know your nature.

I'm not surprised by it. Don't you be either. And you see, if anything, what this ought to do, what is the natural, you know, response when this begins to settle in? You've got to be utterly taken back.

You what? Knowing all of this, you love me. Yes. Knowing I'll fight you, knowing I oppose you, know I've got a nature within me that wants to go off.

Now, let me tell you, he's going to deal because some may just think, well, wow, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? If you know all this about me, then I'm going to go out and do what I was doing. Well, he's going to deal with that. That's a risk you might say God might be taking.

He's going to deal with it. And then later on, and not that far distant future down in the verses here, but he's going to say, shall we therefore continue because God knew, because he loved, because he cared, because he knew all of this? Does that now give me just an open sheet to say, well, then I'm going to go

do whatever it is because God loves me. I'm going to cut his heart out if I want.

I'm going to go where I want to go and I'm going to party where I want to party. Well, Paul said, God forbid, perish the thought. Because the result for the person that thinks that they can go ahead and do these things because his love is this great.

And now they have license to sin is one where Paul brings up the question, maybe we better go back and see if you've understood his love at all. You see, because if I understand that there is a love like this, that'll destroy all other loves out there. There when Baal or the woman that comes and says, here, I'm wonderful and all love you, but you just got to go cut the heart of God out for me and bring it to me.

And I sit there and I look at God's love and I look at his heart and I look at the heart of this wretched woman or world or desire or whatever else it is out there that wants to entice me to take me away and realize this is what you are. And this is his. I must choose the love that's going to govern my life.

I can't make myself any better. And I can't make any promises that if you will love me, which he already does, I'll make it worth it to you. I can only stand in awe that is there.

And as Paul says, the love of Christ constrains me. When Paul could look there and realize this is how great the love of God is. And he says, and it gives us full atonement.

It's a it's an accounting term in a sense of everything has been atoned. It is entirely paid the sinfulness, the ungodliness, the impotency, the without strength, the enemy of it all. God looks and he says, dealing with that stuff is nothing.

Getting your heart to respond to mine is everything. Forgiving you, loving, redeeming, atoning. It's my work, God says.

I'm very good at it. Winning you, winning your love is the project here in Romans. And then taking and filling and transforming a life is the objective.

But he says, you'll risk maybe. But love takes risks. Unbelievable ones.

When it chose you and it chose me, didn't it?

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