

God Helps Those Who Cannot Help Themselves

by Jeff Noblit

God's holiness is infinitely greater than anything good in man, and we are all ungodly, sinful, and enemies of God, but God has reconciled us to Himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 46:28

Topics: "God's Nature", "Biblical Soundness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the true nature of God. He criticizes the portrayal of a shallow and weak God that is often preached in many pulpits today. The preacher highlights the transcendence and holiness of God, urging listeners to grasp the magnitude of who He is. He also expresses concern about the lack of biblical soundness and the focus on man-centered and culturally relevant approaches in churches. The sermon concludes with a powerful illustration of God's desire for His people to reflect His glory, despite their fallen nature.

Transcript

We turn to the Book of Romans as we conclude tonight. Thank you for the honor and the joy of sharing some of the things of Christ with you on this Friday evening. I attended my first deacons retreat in Alabama about 26 years ago.

I have some wonderful memories through the years. Dr. Al Mohler, the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said recently that if we don't reclaim Bible doctrine in Baptist life, by the next generation there will be no authentic Baptist witness. Dr. Mohler says that we become so mushy, so shallow, so man-centered, so pragmatic, so culturally relevant, that we forgot the diligence to strive with all of our might to be biblically sound.

What troubles me sometimes is not that what I hear in churches and from preachers and laymen alike, that it's so completely wrong, it's so sometimes shallow and incomplete. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would know the height, the breadth, the length, the depth of the love of Christ. Then he adds, which is beyond knowledge.

As I look at this text of Scripture, I want to give you this title, and that is that God helps those who cannot help themselves. Oh, that God would, oh, that God would for His great glory and the fame of His name

leave us humbled and Himself mightily exalted tonight. Sometimes to understand who God is, God wants to rivet home into our souls just what we are compared to Him.

Let me talk for just a moment about God's holiness. I want you to think of the best things about the best people you know. Just think about that.

The most giving person you know. The most loving person you've ever met. The most servant-hearted individual you've ever known in your life.

The tenderest, most caring person. Maybe the smartest or the wisest person. Or the most patient person.

Among many, many other things, God's holiness means that He infinitely exceeds anything good you see in anyone else. Infinitely exceeds it. He exceeds man in every good and in every righteous way.

But one of the grievous things of modern evangelicalism is that we've dumbed God down to where there's no fear of God. There's no trembling in our churches about this God who so wonderfully, though not completely, because no book could contain Him, but wonderfully revealed Himself in the Word of God. You see, in every good respect, God is immeasurably superior to man.

The theologians call this transcendence. He transcends and goes beyond anything you can comprehend. God forbid, pastors, in some perhaps good attempt to help others get saved, bring God down to comprehension.

If you bring God down to natural man's comprehension, you've lost God. It's a mystery to Him that we marvel over and are slain and humbled before. He so infinitely exceeds everything we know that there's nothing to compare Him with.

Now, though we use it to try to illustrate in the truest sense, in the fullest sense, you can never say God is like blank. Because He infinitely exceeds rather anything you put in the blank. You see, God does not conform to some law or some standard outside of Himself.

We don't say, well, now here's holiness right here, and here's man and other creatures, and here's God, and He reaches holiness. No, God is the measure of holiness. He is the standard.

He is the right. He is the ultimate. He's the final definition of truth and good and righteousness and morality and ethical uprightness.

And you must humble yourselves before Scripture and receive by faith the truth He reveals of Himself therein. Through the Scriptures, we know God truly, but we still only know Him partially. Do you know what heaven is? Heaven is having perfect eyes and perfect ears and a perfect mind, but not an infinite, infinite ear or infinite mind.

Yet a perfect eye, perfect ear and perfect mind and perfect emotions to take in the infinite beauty of God, which will only increase every day for all eternity. And every day for all eternity, you'll have exquisite pleasure and learning more of Him. Pleasures unlike any pleasure known on Earth.

And that's what you'll do for all eternity. Enjoy the pleasures of God. In a million years, in eternity, you'll just be getting started glorying in the infinite pleasures of the infinite, perfect and beautiful God.

We don't know who God is. This Mickey Mouse, shallow, weak, man-like God that's being preached in so many pulpits today. One occasion, the Old Testament prophet rebuked the nation of Israel as they clambered into idolatry.

And he said, you thought I was just like you. He's not. He's transcendent in holiness.

But one way we can and one way God wants us to grasp something of who he is, is that he wants you to receive and hopefully by the Holy Spirit's enabling, something of what you are naturally before him. Four words jump out in Romans chapter five, verses six through ten. Let's read that together.

And I'll look at those four words. And though I will not do a careful exegesis of the text, the points I will make are exegetically sound with the text. Ephesians, or rather Romans chapter five, beginning in verse six.

For while we were still helpless at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man, some would dare even to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more than having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him. 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.

Now it intrigued me to look at this text and realize that Paul wanted to drive home to the original audience of the church at Rome, and to all of us, four terms to describe who we are before this holy and true God. And the first word I want us to look at is at the last part of verse six, and that's the word the ungodly. Now I'm prone and you're prone just to read through it and say, yeah, generally we're ungodly and go on.

That's not what you should do. You should study to understand what does that mean that man, all men are ungodly before God. It means we are contrary to God.

It means we are not fitting to God. It means the totality of our being is opposite and contradicts who he is. The seven up commercial, this is a very trite illustration, and it's not my spirit to give something that gives some sort of trite illustration compared to the holiness of God.

But they call themselves the unkola, their opposite of cola. Well, God says I'm perfect and I'm true and I'm right. Everything about me is true and perfect and right.

But everything about you contradicts that. Now, here's something you need to know about God. God deeply enjoys himself.

God has infinite pleasure in himself because as a perfect being, he can only love that which is perfect and beautiful. And if he loved anything else other than himself, he would be loving something less than perfection and beauty. And that would be sin.

That's why we're to love the Lord our God, because he's worthy of love, because he's the perfect and best. But he looks down at many, says you're the anti-God, you're a contradiction of me and being ungodly. We are therefore guilty, sinful creatures that deserve to perish to God.

We are, in effect, by being ungodly. Listen now, totally repulsive to him. We are deeply offensive to God, period.

If I put a banana out there on the sidewalk in the month of August and I wait two weeks and it's just there in the 98, maybe 100 degrees sun and humidity, it's going to turn completely black. There's going to be some yellow stuff oozing out around it. Sure enough, the flies will get to it and maggots will begin to work on it.

And every human that walks upon that stench and filthy banana will find that thing totally repulsive. God says you are the ungodly. Everything about you contradicts him and everything about you is repulsive to him.

If you don't understand that, you do not know God as you need to know him. And I understand we are all saturated in a culture. The new conservative evangelicalism has brought men way up and brought God way down where there's not that big of a deal here.

I want to tell you something. There's a massively big deal here between the true holy God and ungodly men. Repulsive in his sights.

You say, well, Pastor, what about all the good things that people do? Who told you they were good? Where did you get your definition of good? If it's not good in God's eyes, it's not good. Isaiah 64, verse six, for all of us have become like one who is unclean and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. God says, gather up every good thing you strive to do in the strength of your natural man.

And God says, bring it up to me. And it's a filthy garment. Literally, it's a cloth saturated with the secretions of a bodily cavity.

I didn't say that. God said that. How does that help your self-esteem? You're going to have to go home and turn on Joel Osteen to compensate.

Tell you what's tragic? We have deacons and active Southern Baptists that watch that stuff and don't even know the heresy in it. Don't know the God denying, God blaspheming doctrine he's preaching. This is a day for men of God to be courageous and discerning.

All of your righteousness, all of your righteousness to God is a filthy rag soaked with secretions of a bodily cavity. It meant the ministration cloth, men. You talk to a Jew about the blood ministration cloth of a woman.

It's one of the most defiled things in the Jewish idea. Who told you those were good works? What about Mother Teresa and all the total sacrifice that the lepers in India? I want to say to you on the authority of God and the truth of this person. If Mother Teresa trusted in Catholic doctrine of work, salvation and the sacraments of a Catholic church and not Christ alone, she's in hell for her sins.

Tell me something. How come our Baptist forefathers were martyred by the thousands to stand against that heresy? And today we're so cuddly and comfortable with the same heresies. I'll tell you why we don't know God anymore.

We don't know doctrine anymore. We don't know our Bibles anymore. You deacons ought to go home.

You ought to look at your pastor. I don't care who gets sick. You stay in the study and study and pray and we and study and pray and tell us what you learn about God.

Bless the hearts of our pastors. No wonder they don't know much doctrine. They're not allowed to study because ain't Susie's toe hurts.

And Satan loves that because if Satan can keep a weak diet from the pulpit, he can keep weak men. If he has a weak man, he's got weak families. If he keeps weak families, you have a weak nation and God gets no glory.

Jeremiah 17, nine, speaking of the natural heart, it is more deceitful than all else. It is desperately sick. And who can understand it? You say, well, I don't feel that I'm ungodly.

That's right. You're deceived by your desperately sick and deceitful heart. You are functioning from a limited and perverted view of God, which is nothing more than an idolatry.

The God of your understanding is not the true God of Scripture. If you know the true God of Scripture, that is, Holy Spirit of God is giving you an amen in your soul. As you hear these teachings that crush man and humility, but exalt God and holiness.

That's where we need to be, brothers. This idolatrous view of God that reigns in so many Baptist hearts may appease our consciences a little, but it's a fatal error. This idolatry is another evidence of our total ungodliness, which makes us even more loathsome in the eyes of God.

We fail God so completely in our hearts. We fail God so completely in our minds. We fail God so completely in our actions.

We are so completely repulsive and offensive and loathsome to God. My soul was horrified after Katrina came through New Orleans. I have three little daughters, not so little anymore.

Those little girls in a blackened, domed stadium, terrified for their lives, in that darkness, trying to find their way to a restroom. And brutal, monstrous men caught those little girls and violently raped them. I want to tell you something.

I would have been pleased before God if they exercised capital punishment on those men as soon as the lights came on. What a vile and what a repulsive thing to take precious little girls in the moment of their terror and brutally rape them. Brothers, do you know that when God says to me, you're ungodly, we are repulsive even more so and loathsome than those rapists would be to us? This is not my stuff.

It's the old book. The ungodly before a holy God. Paul didn't stop there.

He gives us another word. This word's in verse 8. But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, we're not just the ungodly. He uses another descriptive here, and it's the word sinners.

The word sinner means failing to reach the perfect God ordained standard God made us for. We fall short of it. God made us with a perfect design, and we all fail that design.

None of us reach what he made us to do and to be. God made us the highest of his creation. God stamped his image on us.

He wanted us to represent him in the universe. Man was made to show off to all the heavenly hosts what God is like. We're made in God's image.

But he said you completely fail to reveal to all the created hosts what I am. Matter of fact, you've marred my reflection. When I was a little boy, I used to like to fly kites.

Me and some of my buddies would fly kites out over the field in front of my house. And we got those little cheap quarter kites from down at the local dime store, and they were red and blue and yellow, and they were all about the same, you know, just a horizontal beam and a vertical beam. And one day I looked up in the sky, and there was a gray kite.

It was larger, and it was kind of shaking funny in the wind. I thought, now that's unique. I haven't seen a kite like that before.

I followed the string, and it went down behind my house about three blocks. So I said, I've got to find out what kind of kite this is. I'm about maybe nine, ten years old.

I run back through the neighborhood, and I see down the road a boy flying this kite. He's got the string in his hand, and he's about 15, and that impressed me. I mean, that was huge to me.

I run down there and said, man, that is a different kind of kite. It doesn't look like our store-bought kites. Tell me about your kite.

He said, I made it myself. I was so impressed. I thought, wow.

Tell me about that. He said, well, it's made out of newspaper. I cut it out.

I folded the edges over. I did a horizontal beam out of an old wooden yardstick. A vertical beam out of the rest of it.

Tied a string onto it, bowled the horizontal beam together, and that's flying in the sky. And I want you to know, as I looked at that kite, I thought, man, this guy's smart. He's creative.

He is so neat. That kite was shining the attributes of that boy to me. And God said, I made every one of you to be my kites.

To shine you in the universe. To show everyone what I'm like. You've every single one fallen short of that goal.

What's God going to do with all of us total, complete failures? He said, I've created you for my own glory, Isaiah 43.7. We should all have a deep, abiding joy and delight in God and in God's law. But we do not. We all have selfish hearts.

We all loathe God's law and we all constantly break God's law. Do you know how bad we are? God says to tell the truth all the time. We're all liars.

God says to respect property rights and don't steal. We've all stolen. Some of you stole from your employer today by leaving early.

God says to honor our parents. We've all dishonored our parents. God says to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

And we've turned the day of the Lord, the holy day, into a holiday. God says to honor marriage and do not commit adultery. And we've all at least committed adultery in our hearts.

We fail to reflect the good, holy, right, perfect, beautiful God. We fall short. We're sinners.

Genesis 6-5 says it this way. Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man, that it was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Paul, what else do you have for us here? Our self-esteem is not doing very well.

Paul said, I'm not through. Paul was a God-centered preacher. That's what we need.

Instead of man-centered preaching, we need God-centered preaching. That you let God be God and every man be a liar. Paul said, I've got a third term you need to understand.

That is the word enemies. You're God's enemy, verse 10. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled we should be saved by His life.

That's an interesting thing that we're the enemies of God. That word enemy means we are active in hostility against God. Did you know that? You know, we have this notion today that we're just kind of walking down a middle aisle and hell's on one side, heaven's on the other, and we need to decide which side we're going to be on.

That's absolutely false. We're already, headlong, moving, working, charging, energetically going down the wrong, hell-deserving, Satan-pleasing, God-hating path as God's enemies. He didn't say you look like my enemy, you might be me.

He said while you were enemies, you were reconciled to God. He said while you were sinners, Christ died for you. Some wonderful theological implications there, but I can't go there because it would freak some of you totally out.

Enemies! God's enemy. You see, there's no neutral ground. There's none whatsoever.

And he says the word enemy here is plural, which means it's every single one of us is God's enemy, naturally speaking. We all came into this world actively working against God. You didn't know how bad you were, did you? You're worse than I can tell you.

You're so deeply offensive to God that it is right and it glorifies God to throw you into hell to justly be punished for sinning against such a perfect and holy God. It's right if God does that. It's amazing to me why we want to so defend man and blaspheme God in our theology.

Enemies. Our minds are in active hostility against God. Think of how we soften the edges on God's law.

We begin to bend this commandment and bend that commandment and explain away this absolute and explain away that absolute. A man called me from out west a while back, and he had a couple in his church living in open fornication, but, quote, he wanted to win them to Christ, so he decided not to deal with the sin issue. My stars in heaven.

Let me tell you something, Brother Deacon and Brother Preacher, God doesn't need your help. Preach the truth and trust the Spirit of God to convict lost sinners and draw them into Jesus Christ. And I don't mean this as a personal attack.

Please know my spirit. But God didn't even need the creative wit and wisdom of Rick Warren. He just needs truth preachers who are courageous and love God and want to share the truth and just will die saying, if God doesn't bless it, I'm sunk.

But I will not craftily bend, twist, or change the gospel and the truth if it packs a me in church buildings. They will come for Jesus Christ and for Christ alone. They will come broken and repentant and contrite and at the end of themselves and humbled and throwing themselves totally on the mercies of Christ.

Or they will not come at all. But we're active in our minds fixing God up so this modern culture might like Him better. I won't tell you what this modern culture will do.

If they don't like God as He is, they can go to hell. God's not changing for them. And you better not change Him for them.

Let God be God. We should love God with all of our minds, but we don't in our minds. We are traitors and we're rebels.

We reject Him. We ignore Him. He should be the centerpiece of our thinking all day long.

But how many times during the day do we just ignore His reality? We pervert Him again to make Him plattable to the modern culture. We explain Him away. We're just active traitors and rebellions.

We're the enemies of God. God's true. I don't care what you think.

God's right about this. When you say you're my enemy. We're the enemies of God, not just in our minds.

We're the enemies of God in our actions. Every sinful deed, whether you define it as a little deed or a small deed, is an attack against God. It's the strike of a hostile enemy.

It's the actions of a traitor and a rebel. You see, every single man sitting in this building, if you could, you would have charged into heaven, dragged God off the throne, thrown Him into hell, and put yourself on that throne. That's what we are, naturally.

That's why God says you're my enemy. I mean, if you're so doggone good and you're just pretty precious and God found you so desirable, why did it take the death of His Son to fix you? Joel's wrong. And everybody that soft-paddles the truth of sin and the necessity of repentance is wrong.

It's wrong. And we're packing our churches with people who have sentimental, emotional experiences, walk down to the magic spot, chant a little prayer, and they're not genuinely converted. 16.4 million Southern Baptists.

Six million go to church. Paige Patterson says 40% of those in church are unconverted. That gets you back down to two million converted Baptists every Sunday out of 16.4. You tell me what the problem is.

We're not preaching enough truth. We're packing churches with people who think they've got it and they don't have it. But I want to tell you something.

Those He saves, He keeps. It's called the old doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. We call it eternal security.

That's fine with me. But what that means is once you're saved, you may struggle, you may fall, you may fail, but you can't stay that way. You're back in church.

Please forgive me. I want to get back in. I want to be active.

I want to serve God. Because those He saves, He sustains, and He glorifies. He keeps them all the way.

We're active in our hostility against God, in our minds, in our actions. But brothers, all the horror of it all is not that you're God's enemy, but apart from Christ, God's your enemy. You're the one He's focused His wrath towards and His wrath upon.

You say, well, I don't see God doing anything actively against me. Oh, but He is. Right now, every moment of every day, whether it's the thought of the mind, the motivation of the heart, the intent of the heart, or any action or deed that violates His perfect holiness in the slightest way, puts a little more of divine wrath in the cup of wrath that's against you.

It's filling up a little more, and a little more, and a little more, and a little more every day. God's cup of just wrath is filling up against you. He's actively your enemy.

Romans 2 verse 5 says, Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant hearts, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. He's actively storing up the wrath that He will for His own glory pour on you and you will suffer eternally because offending and sinning against such a holy God deserves eternal punishment. He's that good and that perfect and that wonderful.

Do you realize that every single person in this world and every one of you are going to glorify God either as an example of what grace can do with a worthless sinner or by receiving your just punishment for all eternity in hell. Either way, God's going to be glorified. I don't know if anybody's told you lately, but everything is about Him and His glory and His pleasure.

He's not calling a committee meeting. He's not going to make a resolution at the Southern Baptist Convention about it. It's settled.

It's all about Him. I'm a little bit tired of cocky, arrogant, and proud men in our churches who stroll down the aisle as if God's getting something good when they come. We changed a lot of things in our churches many years ago.

It's not easy to join our church. You better know you've been saved. You better love God.

You better show something. You better have some biblical fruit in your life. Because we began practicing church discipline about 18 years ago and I kept wondering, why do I have to discipline so many people if they really got saved? And God said, I'll tell you why.

You don't know what real conversion is. They walk to the magic spot. They may have said a prayer, but they're not changed.

I said, Lord, if you'll help me, I'll try to get this thing fixed. And God has graciously helped us. And we are seeing the most glorious conversions in our church.

Brokenness and weeping. I mean, one of the prominent businessmen in the community standing before the congregation said, I'm a wicked sinner. I don't know why God didn't throw me into hell.

A woman that said she paced the hallways of her house all night long, fearing the wrath of God, before she came to peace in Christ. Some of you remember, if not, you remember your granddaddies saying this phrase, they need to pray their way through. We need to get back to some of that.

I'm chasing a rabbit, but this is a pretty good rabbit. I used to teach that if you wanted to be assured of your salvation, you need to go out behind the barn, ask Jesus to save you, drive a stake in the ground, and say, devil, you see that tomato stake right there? That peruse right there? I drove that in the ground when I asked Jesus to save me. Well, the Bible says the Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you're a child of God.

What in Sam Hill do you need a tomato stake for when you've got the omnipotent Spirit of God to tell you that? I'll tell you why. Because lost flesh men can drive a tomato stake, but only a truly regenerate, born again child of God will hear the Spirit of God. And brothers, before you can hear the Spirit of God, you've got to know what an ungodly, sinful enemy you are against God.

Are you uncomfortable? That's not my goal. My goal is in the discomfort of conviction you will find the glorious rest of Jesus Christ. Paul, are you about through? One more word.

It's in verse 6. For while we were still helpless, You talk about salvation by grace. You're ungodly, which means God's looked at you and He sees nothing that's desirable. He didn't look down from heaven and say, You're so precious and you're so special, I just want to send my Son for you.

That is heresy. God saw you as ungodly and loathsome. Not only that, you're a sinner.

Everything He made you to do, you fail Him. Not only that, you're an active and hostile enemy and a traitor and a rebel against Him. And on top of that, you're helpless to fix it.

Now tie that on to your work of salvation. While we were still helpless. Helpless.

The word helpless means without strength. It means altogether unable to help ourselves out of our predicament. See, God is Creator and King of all.

God rightfully expects and God rightfully demands that we love Him, honor Him, and obey Him, which means to glorify Him. Mark 12, verse 30 says, And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. That should be normal for mankind.

You tell me one man that every moment of every day loves God with all of his heart, all of his soul, all of his mind. You know what you do? Here's what you do. Well, nobody does that.

That doesn't change the standard. God didn't change. He is worthy of all of that because of who He intrinsically is.

And that's where we are and we're helpless to fix it. Don't tell me this silly Armenian nonsense that man somehow has a spark of goodness in him and he's going to pull himself up and find God. You tell me how an ungodly sinner, enemy of God, who's helpless can pull himself anywhere.

That's why Paul said you've got to understand you're helpless. I mean, if God is God, why wouldn't man fully honor Him and obey Him? I mean, He's infinite in power, in wisdom, and in beauty. Did you know God made you to desire pleasure? He's just sick of you being so easily satisfied with the wretched, empty, rotten temporal pleasures of this world.

He wants you to find the infinitely joyous and wonderful pleasures of Himself. But we don't. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Paul says we're helpless. It means we're helpless either to resist sin or to do good. You cannot stop being ungodly.

You cannot stop sinning. You cannot stop being God's enemy. You're helpless.

And you cannot start doing good. You cannot start being godly. You cannot start being God's friend or on His side.

You are helpless, utterly unable to help yourself out of your problem. John 3.18 says, He who has not believed has been judged already. Romans 8.31 says, If God is for us, who can be against us? But the other side of the coin is true too.

If God is against us, it doesn't matter who's for us. We're helpless. Another Bible word for this helplessness is the word lost.

It's like being out in the wilderness without a compass, without a map, or without a guide. And worse than that, without any strength to help ourselves if we did have a compass, a map, or a guide. Perhaps it's like a man who's a quadriplegic.

He has no strength in his arms. He has no strength in his midsection. He has no strength in his legs.

He's dropped in the middle of a great forest. He's given no map, no compass. He has no guide.

And he knows that a major developer is going to burn that entire forest and run over those mighty massive bulldozers in the next few days. And there he lays. If someone did give him a map, he would have no strength to take himself out.

He is helpless. And God says, that's where you are. That's where we all are.

Unable to help ourselves out of this predicament. Now we try to. Oh, we try to.

And many of you in this building tonight, you've tried to. You've put on religion. You've gone through the motions.

You've jumped through the hoops. But you are not changed. You have never felt the true weight of your wickedness and the true weight of your sin.

You've never felt the gross wickedness of your abominable loathsomeness before a holy God. And you've never journeyed over from conviction to rest by faith in Christ and his death alone for your salvation. What you tried was religion.

You did what a preacher said and the preacher meant well. And the preacher wasn't wrong. But you just jumped through the hoops in the power of your flesh.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon used to end his services by saying, I'm not going to tell you to come to a mourner's bench. I'm not going to ask you to come to an inquiry room. He says, your flesh would love for me to do something or give you something you can do so that you can feel like you did what God wants you to do to be saved.

But it's not in you. God does not want the efforts of ungodly, sinful enemies before him. Man tries, but to no avail.

Pastor, can I be saved being ungodly? Can I be saved being this sinner? Can I be saved being an active, hostile enemy to God? Can I be saved as a helpless one? No! Not in your strength. Absolutely not. You cannot save yourself.

If God does not act toward you, it's over. Finished. Forever.

I mean, think about it. Would God love you, the loathsome, ungodly one? Would God love you, the sinner who every second of every day you failed the very purpose he made you for? You fell short? Would God love you who in your mind and your actions have been an open, active hostility as a traitor and a rebel? Would God love you, pathetic one who has no ability whatsoever to even turn toward God? Yes, he would. I'll just use one part of the text, Romans 5.8. All brothers, if you hang on anything this weekend, hang on this.

That God demonstrates his own love toward us. And that while we were yet, and in the context you can say this. While we were yet loathsome, ungodly ones.

While we were yet falling short, sinful ones. While we were yet hostile enemies. While we were yet totally helpless.

Christ died for us. Oh, man. You see, here's the way we are.

I'll love you if you do something for me. That means I like the way you look. I like your personality.

I like your humor. I like your style. I like your wealth.

But all of us are geared that way because our love is a real low version of love. You better be thankful he's not like us. Because you didn't do anything for him.

You didn't do a thing. The only thing naturally you did for God was ball up just condemnation that should fall on you. Under the glory of perfect, beautiful justice.

But listen to what the text says. God demonstrates His own love. It means a distinct, unique, separated, transcendently superior love to any love man knows.

God can and does love one that He finds nothing appealing in. Nothing lovely in. Nothing attractive in.

That's His kind of love. Listen to me. Don't bring God down and man up to help lost people understand how He loves them and they're precious.

They're not precious. They're wicked, ungodly, sinful enemies. But then tell them that God is a God who has chosen in the infinite glories of His grace and mercy to love such unlovely ones.

That's the glory of God. If you don't understand that about God, listen to me, sir. You don't know God.

You're living in a false, superstitious delusion of one of the false idolatrous images of God that's been thrown around in the world today. He's the God of such love. He loves the grossest and most unlovely ones.

You see, it's all about Him. Three times in Ephesians chapter one, Paul says it's all to the praise of the glory of His grace. The purpose of conversion is to the praise of the glory of His grace.

In other words, God wants the whole universe to marvel over who He is. And the whole universe cannot see part of what He is unless He shows forth His grace and mercy in saving totally wretched, ungodly enemies and sinners who are helpless. And you qualify.

And God shows off how wonderful love, grace and mercy is in saving such pitiful wretches. And if He wasn't for the end of God showing off His own glory, you'd go to hell and it'd be perfectly right and just. It's all about Him, brothers.

Doesn't start with man, it starts with Him. But what love this is. Through Christ, God loves the ungodly.

Through Christ, God loves the sinner. Through Christ, God loves His enemy. Through Christ, God loves the pitiful, helpless one.

In Christ, the ungodly becomes attractive and desirable. Let me say something to you, sir. If you know Christ and you're truly converted, God doesn't just accept you.

He infinitely, joyously likes you. That's an unbelievable thing when you think of what you were apart from Christ. Powerful truth.

You see, in Christ, the sinner reaches the mark, the standard. In Christ, the enemy becomes a desired and dear friend, even his own child. And in Christ, the helpless one is picked up and carried to safety.

Brothers, if that isn't love, the ocean's dry. There's no stars in the sky. And the sparrow can't fly.

If that isn't love, then heaven's a myth. There's no feeling like this if that isn't love. His love is deeper than the ocean.

His love is higher than the heavens. His love is broader than the universe. His love is too glorious for the poet's pen.

His love is too marvelous for the singer's song. His love is too amazing for the scientist to observe. His love is more beautiful than a rose.

His love is more fragrant than the most costly perfume. His love is more desirable than all the world's gold. His love is more enduring than the universe.

And His love is more pleasure-producing than all the earth's delights combined. Because He's the God who helps those who cannot help themselves. Oh, may we leave more in love with Him, more in awe of Him, more astounded about Him, more entrenched with Him, and much less concerned with ourselves.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jeff-noblit/god-helps-those-who-cannot-help-themselves/>

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