**4th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Sermon**

**Text: Romans 5:6-11**

 Many of us are watching. We see what is happening around us. People struggle, fear, and worry, some retreat, others try to isolate themselves from it all. Are you frustrated, angry or feel hopeless? This is when the placards start to show up. The spray-painted words over the other graffiti. LOVE. Yes, the very protester’s and rioters lift up the signs. And the chat begins with the refrain from that famous Beatle song. “All we need is love, love, all we need is love. Altogether now. All we need is love,” Seems to be the right answer. Yes, we need love. It will cover over all this hate.

 Like the words grace and faith that we heard about the last few Sundays, the word love is a word we know well. We use it often, sometimes without even thinking…I love it, it is lovely, I love you. And now perhaps many of us here have that Beatle song’s refrain sounding in our ears… “All you need is love, love. Love is all you need”

 Yes, love is the answer! But the world looks for it in all the wrong places. It thinks we can call it up from thin air, squeeze it out of a slogan or a sign. Will it to happen from a song or a chant. But that is not possible. The Devil, the world and our sinful nature gets in the way. So, where then can we find the love we need? Our text for today tells us. Paul, working in this section of Romans, can help us understand the hope and love we have because of what Jesus has done for us. Let’s dive right into the text and see the beautiful message of love. **Real love!**

 Our text gives us the context. **For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly.** This is what happened. While we were still helpless. What does Paul mean by saying that we were helpless? It means to be “without strength” is the original language. The apostle Paul is not talking about our physical strength. Rather, we have a moral situation. We have a moral weakness. The end of verse 6 tells us that this problem is we are ungodly. That is our condition. Nothing can change that. We are and always will be helpless. The weakness is caused by original sin. There is nothing we can do to correct that problem.

 We are helpless. Do you know what that helpless, weak feeling is like. Let me try to give you an example. You are on the highway. The speed limit is 70. Not paying attention to your speed, with your mind on other things, suddenly you passes a police car. You glance over and see he has his radar gun pointed at you. You look down and you see that you are going 83. You have broken the speed limit. You did not do it on purpose, but you did. At that moment you have a feeling of helplessness. Yes, you can slow down now, but it is too late. You can drive the speed limit the rest of the way home, but that does not change the fact that there are blue lights flashing in your rearview mirror.

 You are helpless. You cannot fix it. You cannot correct your mistake. Now the consequences are due to you. You have broken the law. As our text says….we are ungodly! **Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.** **1 John 3:4.**

 But rather than us paying the price for our own mistakes, at the right time Jesus paid. At just the right moment, at the perfectly appointed time. We are not deserving. We are not worthy. We are not someone worth dying for. We are helpless and ungodly. We have been caught red handed, hand in the cookie jar. The next verse in our text will amplify this thought further. **It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him.**

 The point here is very simple. People do not die even for worthy people. Paul is not talking about those occasions where someone has died for another like in battle or other extreme situations. Rather, Paul is asking us to think about it. Our natural reaction to self-preservation is not to die for that person. We may try to save that person from harm yes, but rarely will someone step up and sacrifice themselves.

 Paul is making an illustration from the lesser to the greater. We would hardly die for a good person and especially not someone evil who does not deserve our help. But look at Jesus and what he did! Jesus died for the ungodly, not the good. Do you remember verse 6? Who did Jesus die for? Jesus died for the guilty, the ungodly, for you, for me, and the entire world. This is the point of verse 8. **8But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

 Talk about love. Talk about love, Jesus came and died for us when we were still sinners. This is the **ever-present**, **clear demonstration** of the love. What Paul wants us to see is this. If He loved us that much when we were nothing, week, helpless, how much more does He love us now that we have put our faith into the Lord Jesus Christ? **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32**

Our text goes on to tells us that this demonstration of love goes on, and on. **9Therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, it is even more certain that we will be saved from God’s wrath through him. 10For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, it is even more certain that, since we have been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. 11And not only is this so, but we also go on rejoicing confidently in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this reconciliation.**

 See the “**even more certian**” phrase in the middle of the sentence. Jesus died. We are saved from God’s wrath. But there is more! This is the point: Jesus has already done the unthinkable (dying for the ungodly sinners). Then how much more can we know that God will do the obvious **(saved by his life**)! To say this another way, God has already done the difficult thing (sending Jesus to die for ungodly wretches like us). How much more will God do the easier thing (credit us with Jesus’ righteous life)? This life confirmed when he rose form the dead!

 If someone has driven to the other end of the country, through rain and snow, to see a friend in need, they are not going to abandon their journey when they arrive at the house, the skies clear, the sun comes out, and all they have to do is walk up the garden path and ring the doorbell. Of course, God will finish the work!

 And our closing verse shows how we should react to this Great Love! **11And not only is this so, but we also go on rejoicing confidently in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this reconciliation.**

 Don’t feel sad with all that is happening around us, instead, celebrate. In fact, rejoicing is a mark of the Christian life. How can we not praise God when we grasp what God has done for us? We also are filled with the same love. It shows through our faith in him. That love has power to change things around us also.

How will things change. All we need is love…..God’s love! 1 Peter 4

**Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.** **Amen**

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