

Romans 5:6-11

“Christ Died for Us”

Last week we talked about how human beings can be a lot like two year olds. We tend to want what we want and don't give a lot of thought about the consequences. Out of our own vain need to have what we want when we wanted it we broke God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When we ate from that tree we broke God's rule, “Don't eat the fruit from that tree.” When we broke God's rule we broke our human nature and all of creation. We broke it. Our task was to take care of the Garden and instead we broke all of creation. We broke it. We broke it, and here's the kicker – we have no power to fix it. We are helpless to put the pieces of our broken world back together again.

Praise the Lord! God loves us!! Amen? **Amen.** Praise the Lord God loves us!! Amen?! **Amen!!** Hear the good news!

“While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6).

“But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

My sisters and brothers we broke it. Jesus Christ died to fix it. Jesus Christ died to fix it. But we still have a lot of work to do. Last week we talked about when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil it was like a branch being torn free from the vine of life. In John 15 Jesus said, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing”** (v 5). We do not have the power to fix anything on our own. When Adam and Even broke God's command all of humanity was severed from the vine of God's love, grace and power. A vast distance is now between us and the giver of life. We cannot hope to jump across it. We cannot fly across it to God's Kingdom. On our own we have no hope to live with God on God's celestial shores. No. We need a bridge. We need a bridge to cross from here to where God lives. Luckily for us Jesus Christ is the great bridge builder. Jesus Christ died for us so we would have the means to cross the great divide between where humanity stands today and where Christ sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Let me ask you. Do y'all know this song?

Verse

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.

Chorus

I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior,
Oh, there are ten thousand charms.

We are helpless to fix the brokenness of creation on our own. Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, died to put the broken pieces back together. Jesus came to seek and to save the ungodly, the lost and all sinners. Jesus did not come for the “perfect Christians.” Jesus came for all of us. **“For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him”** (John 3:17). Sisters and brothers God loves you. God loves all of you. God loves you so much God sent Jesus Christ to be born like one of us. Jesus Christ is fully human. Jesus knows what it is to be tempted to bend God's rules (Luke 4:1-13). Jesus knows what it is to get tired and need a break (Matt 14:22-24). Jesus knows what it is like to lose your temper (Matt 21:12, 13). And yet, through all of that, Jesus remains without sin. That is not a cheat. Yes. Jesus

is fully God as well as fully human; an inseparable combination of the two.¹ The difference is the human nature in Jesus made the choice we are helpless to make without God's grace. Adam and Eve chose to brake God's command. Jesus Christ chose to obey God's command. There in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was given the choice to be faithful to God or to try to go His own way. This is how Jesus handled it. Jesus prayed to God, **"Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done"** (Luke 22:42). Jesus made the choice to be obedient when so many times you and I have made the choice to be rebellious, and to go our own way. Praise be to God that Jesus did not wait until we are perfect, or pleasing for God to send Jesus Christ to die for us.

But let's think about that for a minute. Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God. It must have been difficult for the human part of Jesus to consider the death Jesus would face for all of us. I think Paul is right when Paul write to the Romans, **"Why one will hardly die for a righteous man – though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us** (Romans 5:7-8). Jesus died for us while we were still messed up. (pause) Let's face it. We are still messed up today, and yet Jesus is still reaching out to us. Jesus is still giving us the chance to cross that bridge to God.

Okay. Let's break that one down. By a show of hands how many people here would help a friend move? (pause) How many people here would help a coworker change a flat tire after work? (pause) How many people here would let that annoying guy down the street borrow your lawn mower if his broke down? (pause) How many of y'all would give a loan to one of the in-laws, or outlaws in your family? (pause) Alright, how many of you would lay down your life for whoever it is you are angry with this morning? (pause) And yet Jesus laid down His life for all of us while we were still rebellious sinners. As a matter of fact, we, the very people Jesus came to save, are the ones who arrested Jesus; beat Jesus, falsely convicted Jesus, canded, scourged and crucified Jesus. We did all of that. We willfully disobey God's commands every day, and Jesus still died a traitor's death on the cross for all of us.

Sisters and brothers our God is good and grate, but God's love is not to be taken for granted or taken for granted. God loves us enough to send God's only Son to die for us. Don't y'all think we ought to do something to show our gratitude for all God has done. If we have been truly saved by God the evidence of God's saving grace are good works which bear the fruit of faith.² We cannot earn salvation through these works. However, we can show our gratitude for all God has done for us. If God can offer God's only Son to be born like us and die as a traitor for us – even being crucified on a cross, then certainly we can do a little more to tend to the needs of the hurting in our community. There is a garden out there that needs to be planted, and there is a strong need for vegetables at the South Davidson Family Resource Center. If Jesus was willing to die for us don't ya think doing a little work in a garden is the least we can do for God?

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen

¹The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House 2016). The Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, Article II, ¶104, p73.

² Ibid., Article X, ¶104, p75.