

Sermon Summary #4

The Logic of Love Romans 5:9-11; 8:31-32

Love and Logic. If you were to ask most people, they'd tell you that one often precludes the other. Logic is all about the *mind*. Love is all about the *heart*. Logic is about *reason*. Love is about *relationships*. Logic is concerned with *principles*, whereas love is all about *passion*. Well, today I'm going to take these two seemingly incompatible items and marry them. What I hope to show you today is that the security of your salvation in Christ Jesus is grounded in *the logic of love*.

Those of you who are joining us for the first time today will be happy to know that you've come in at just the right time, for today we are in the book of Romans. No other letter in the NT speaks so clearly and definitively to the issue of eternal security as does Paul's letter to the church in Rome.

Romans 5:6-11

When I began this series of sermons on the subject of the spiritual security of the born-again child of God, I mentioned that one of the reasons why it is so practical and helpful for us to think about this issue is because of *what it reveals about God*. This doctrine is a window into the heart of our heavenly Father. This truth pulls back the curtain on the mystery of God's ways and shines a light into the depths of how he thinks and feels and what his purposes are for you and me. And nowhere is this better seen than in Romans 5:6-11.

The point of the apostle here is that *our hope is as secure as God's love is sincere*. We are secure in our salvation as long as God loves us. But what if God should stop loving us? What if something should happen to diminish his passion for his people? Paul's purpose in vv. 6-11 is to prove that such will never happen.

The first thing Paul does is to answer the question, "*For what kind of people did Christ die?*" Only registered Republicans? Only God-fearing monotheists? Only those whose skin color is identical with ours? Only the wealthy? Only the poor?

Christ did not die for people of a particular political persuasion or socio-economic-educational status or who were naturally inclined toward God or who expressed a desire to cease from their enmity against him. In particular, he died for men and women, of all races, of all levels of social status who together are all *weak, ungodly, sinful, enemies!*

Jesus died for *spiritually impotent* people (cf. Rom. 3:10-12). He died for people who were helpless to prepare themselves, helpless to prove themselves worthy, helpless to do or think or say anything that might attract God's love. Contrary to the aphorism which asserts that "God helps those who help themselves," God helps those who are utterly and absolutely helpless.

Jesus died for *ungodly* people, i.e., people who are *both unlike God and opposed to God*. Jesus died for *sinful* people. He didn't die for a single righteous person. Jesus died for his enemies. Jesus didn't die for a single friend. He died for rebellious, insolent, haughty, arrogant, self-righteous, repulsive, disobedient, at-war-with-God people.

The kind of people for whom Jesus died is illustrated in vv. 7-8. The "righteous" person is the just man; the man governed by duty; the man who meets his obligations; the man who is lawful and evokes your respect, but not necessarily your affection. Paul says that *whereas you might admire such a man and perhaps even provide him with some measure of assistance, it is unlikely that you will die for him*.

The "good" man is the righteous man who is also kind, gentle, loving; the man who evokes your admiration and affection. For such a man you might be willing to die. Odds are a little more in his favor that someone would step forward to make the ultimate sacrifice on his behalf.

But God demonstrates the depth and quality of his love by sending his Son to die . . . not for the righteous man, not for the good man, but for weak, ungodly, sinful men who hate him!

What you and I would only reluctantly do for a good man God joyfully and spontaneously did for evil men. Mothers and fathers would gladly die for the sake of their own child. But would they die for the person who kidnapped and killed him?

But that is what God did. He didn't send his Son to die for those who loved him or sought him or helped him or served him. He sent his Son to die for his murderers, for those who spat in his face and despised him. So what was it about us that so attracted God that he sent his Son to die? Was it our pleas for help? Our good intentions? A spark of divinity? Our potential? Nothing!

We must also remember that the cross is the **demonstration** of God's love for us, **not the provocation** of it. Christ's love did not procure or obtain the love of God. It was a manifestation of that love. Jesus doesn't stand before the Father pleading, "Oh Father, I died for them, therefore love them." Rather he declares, "You love them, Father, and that is why I died for them."

My understanding is that God loved us *in spite of our unloveliness, not because of our loveliness*. Nothing in us stirred God's heart to send his Son. He sent his Son solely because of his character as a loving God. When God contemplated the objects of his redemptive love he saw only sin, rebellion, enmity, resistance. This is what magnifies the love of God in Christ is that "it was while we were still sinners" that "Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). It was as "weak" and "ungodly" people (Rom. 5:6), not treasures, that God saw us. The only thing we stirred in God's heart was wrath. The only thing we could have moved or induced or inclined God to do was to judge us eternally. The fact that he gave his Son in love was not because of anything in us that he regarded as worthy of his affection but solely because of his great and unfathomable determination to love those who were the moral antithesis of himself and enemies of everything that he regards as holy and true and right.

I've often heard people emphasize our value as treasures and pearls in God's sight, as if that is what moved his heart to send Jesus to die for us. But if that is the case, what becomes of grace? The cross is an expression of grace because those for whom Christ died merited only wrath and hell. If those for whom he died were contemplated as "treasures" whom God valued, do we not diminish the nature of grace? Do we not, to that degree, "merit" his atoning sacrifice? If God saw something in us that stirred him to send Jesus for us, the gift of his Son ceases to be grace and becomes a matter of debt.

I've often heard this: "We say to Jesus: 'Who were we that led you to do this for us?' Jesus then says to us: 'You were a treasure hidden to yourself but seen by me.'" But my understanding is that when we ask, "Who were we that led you to do this for us?" the only answer is: "You were hell-deserving rebels who had no claim on anything in me other than to be the recipients and objects of eternal wrath. I did this for you not because you were a treasure or because of anything in you; indeed it was in spite of what was in you. I did this for you solely because of what was in me, namely, sovereign and free and gracious love for those who deserved only to be hated."

Certainly I agree that God saved us in Christ *in order that he might make treasures of us*, but not because we already were treasures. I am hopeful that most agree with this but I fear that some might still think that the cause or ground or reason why God loved us in Christ was our loveliness or our value as treasures. If that were the case, we can no longer speak of the cross as an act of grace.

It was grace because the cause/ground/reason for it is found wholly in God's good pleasure and decision to shed his love on *people whose only distinguishing feature was the fact that they deserved his wrath*. What I am saying is that when people think about why God smiled on them in the cross of Christ they should say: "It certainly wasn't because of anything in me. In fact, I should have brought only a frown of judgment to his face. That he should have smiled in redemptive love is traceable only to his sovereign and gracious good pleasure. Thanks be to God that he

has chosen to make a treasure out of a moral dung heap. But it was not because I was a treasure but in spite of my being a moral dung heap that he was moved to love me in the first place."

Now we come to *the glorious logic of love!* Look in vv. 9-11 at what Paul concludes from all this.

If it is true and certain that we have been justified by faith in Christ, on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ, it is ***much more true and certain*** that we will be delivered from God's wrath in the future. But on what basis does Paul make this assertion?

The technical name for this sort of logical argument is *a fortiori*, i.e., reasoning from the greater to the lesser. If the greater task was for God to send his Son to die for us while we were his enemies, how much easier is it for him to save us now that we are his friends! If Christ died for us when we hated him, how much more shall he live for us now that we are his friends! If God loved us as much as he did while we were helpless, sinful and ungodly, how much more shall he love us now that by his grace we are justified, righteous in Christ, adopted as children, and reconciled to his heart!

If ever there were a time for God not to love you or a time for him to forsake and abandon and desert you, it would have been while you were an alien, un-reconciled, and at enmity with him. But now you are no longer an alien but a member of God's household; no longer un-reconciled but a child; no longer at enmity but in love with the Lord of your life. ***It is logically and theologically impossible that God should love you less now, now that you are his child, than he loved you then, when you were his enemy!***

When you find yourself depressed and fearful that God has abandoned you, take yourself in hand and shout aloud to your soul: **Much more! Much more! Much more!** Awaken passion and joy and peace in your soul with the logic of God's love!

Paul is clear and we need to hear him: the wrath of God is coming (v. 9). He is referring here to that great day of final judgment. Who or what will rescue us from this coming wrath? The answer is clear from everything Paul has said in these verses: ***Only the love of God can rescue us from the wrath of God!*** And we know with unshakable assurance that we will never taste the wrath of God because of the logic of love. So let me say it again: If God did the immeasurably greater thing in giving us his Son when we were his bitter and ungodly enemies, **how much more** shall he sustain us in and through his Son now that we have been reconciled to him as friends and children!

Romans 8:31-32

Evidently the Apostle Paul thought this point was worth making twice. So he returns to it in Romans 8:31-32.

The point Paul made so powerfully in Romans 5:9-10 he now makes yet again in Romans 8:32 – “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

If Paul had merely asked, “***Will God give us all things?***” we might have wondered. We might have said in response: “Well, you know, I need so many things, big things, important things; how can I be certain God will provide them? I’m not saying he lacks the power to do so, but what if he lacks the will?”

But look at how Paul phrased the question. The God who Paul says will graciously give us all things is ***the God who “did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all!”*** In other words, the God about whom we ask if he will give us all things we need is the very God, the only God, who has already given us his very own beloved Son, Jesus Christ!

His point here is the same that we saw in Romans 5:9-10 - since God has done the unspeakably and indescribably great and costly thing, namely, sacrifice for us his only begotten Son, we may be fully confident that he will do what is by comparison infinitely less.

Why was God's gift to us of Jesus Christ the greatest imaginable thing for God to do?

(1) Because he *loves his Son* infinitely; his own Son, his dear Son. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for my children. I'm often frightened by the depth and intensity of my love for them. It scares me because of the lengths to which I would go to ensure their spiritual, physical, and emotional welfare. And yet, for all my love, for all the energy of my affection for them, it pales in comparison with the passion that God the Father has for God the Son. We're talking about the love that exists between the first and second persons of the divine Trinity. We're talking about *infinite love, omnipotent love, eternal love*.

It *wasn't an angel* that he sent into this world clothed in flesh to suffer at the hands of evil men and be nailed to a cross. God didn't send the archangel Michael or Gabriel. It wasn't one of *the four living creatures* from the book of Revelation. It was his precious, only-begotten, eternal Son!

(2) The second reason why this was such an unimaginable expression of love and sacrifice is because his Son *did not deserve to die*. His Son deserved worship and honor and praise, not spitting and beating and scorn and, worst of all, the wrath of God himself.

The point is this: If God would do the greatest thing for you, he will certainly do all lesser things. You live in fear that God won't do all lesser things and meet all these many needs you have to stay faithful to him. No! *In comparison with giving Christ Jesus, it's a breeze! It's a cake walk! Giving you all things is easy. This is the unbreakable, unshakeable logic of heaven!*

This illustration worked much better before there were cell phones! Do you remember pay phones? Telephone booths (like those into which Clark Kent would go to change into Superman)? Think of those days. Now, imagine that Bill Gates just gave you a \$5 billion cashier's check, and made arrangements that you wouldn't have to pay one penny of tax, and drafted a legally binding document that guarantees that you can do with this money anything you please, . . . Are you getting the picture? Now, suppose you wanted to call your spouse to tell them the good news, and said: "Mr. Gates, may I borrow a dime to make a phone call?" Would it make any sense at all if he were to say, "No"? If Mr. Gates was happy and willing and joyfully generous in giving you \$5 billion, how much more will he be willing to throw in a dime that you might share this great news with your spouse! Such is the reasoning or logic of Paul in Romans 5 and 8!

Let's stay with v. 32 and Paul's argument a bit longer. Look at what he says.

Negatively, God did not "spare" his own Son. Parents, we "spare" our children when we refrain from inflicting on them all the discipline that their disobedience calls for. Judges "spare" criminals when they reduce or suspend a sentence. But this is precisely what God did **not** do with Jesus! He did not withhold one stroke of his holy wrath in punishing Jesus for what we have done! No mitigation of the judgment, no lessening of the penalty, no suspension of the sentence, no leniency at all.

Positively, he "gave him up" for us all, or better still, he "delivered" him up. *Who* delivered up Jesus, and why? Was it *Judas Iscariot*, and did he do it for 30 pieces of silver? No. Was it the *Jewish religious leaders* and did they do it out of jealousy? No. Was it *Pontius Pilate* and did he do it out of fear of the crowds? No. It was God the Father, and he did it because of love for you and me!

Therefore, . . . pause and saturate your soul with the glorious logic of love . . . therefore God will do what is by comparison infinitely easier. He will give us all things we need for spiritual success. Whatever is necessary for you to make it to the end of life still faithful and still trusting Christ, God will give you. Whatever is necessary for you to be conformed to the image of his Son and to resist temptation, he will give you.

One more thing needs to be said about v. 32. What exactly does Paul mean by "*all things*"? There are things we may not receive that we mistakenly think God ought to give us: better health, better job, better husband, better wife, longer life, more respect from peers, more fame, etc. By "all things" Paul means everything essential to knowing him more and loving him more and adoring him more and enjoying him more. Everything you need to find complete satisfaction for your soul in God, and joy for your heart in God, he will most assuredly supply. He has in mind everything you need to retain your faith and trust in him, everything that is required so that you won't apostatize from the faith.

God will not withhold anything from you that is essential for your eternal enjoyment of him!

Think about what kind of person you would be and the kind of life you would live if you really believed v. 32. You know that Jesus calls on us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him daily. You know that he calls on us to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven and not upon earth. You know that he warns us that if we follow him we will suffer persecution, whether slander or gossip or injustice or mockery or imprisonment or death. You know that we are called by our Lord to embrace humility and meekness and gentleness and to pursue purity of life.

*So why don't we do it? Biggest reason: **fear!** We are afraid of being stranded and left to ourselves and being trampled upon and exploited and taken advantage of and left with nothing. The bottom line is that we are not persuaded that God really will provide us with all that we need to live the life that he's called us to live. ***Our fear is fueled by unbelief.****

And if all that weren't enough, don't overlook the word "graciously" in v. 32. Let me tell you why this is so important. People think: Yes, he'll give me what I need so long as I work for it, so long as I pay him for it, so long as I promise him I'll never screw up again, so long as I live a perfect life, so long as I never doubt him or deny him.

If that were the case, then whatever God gives you in return for what you've given him would be the payment of a debt, not a gift of grace! When he says that God "graciously" or "freely" gives us all we need to stay secure and safe and joyful and peaceful in our salvation he means that it has nothing to do with what we do or give or say. This "giving" of "all things" is not God reimbursing you for your having made the payment. This is not God fulfilling an obligation that he owes us. This is God in sovereign freedom freely and graciously and with no strings attached giving you and me what we don't deserve.

That doesn't mean that upon receiving "all things" we shouldn't live good and godly lives or that we shouldn't be appreciative and thankful and that we shouldn't seek to honor him in all we do. Of course we should. But again these are the fruit of his graciously giving us all things, not the condition on which it is suspended!

*Conclusion: Do logic and love conflict? Must we choose between one and the other? No! This is a truth that virtually *pulsates with passion!* This is logic, ***unbreakable, unshakable, irrefutable logic that ought to send spiritual and emotional and even physical shock waves through every fiber and cell of your being.****

If you can hear Paul say this and it doesn't ***rattle your bones*** with a spine-tingling, joy-filled, heart-felt assurance of your salvation now and forever in eternity, I don't know what else I can say to you. I don't know what else Paul can say to you.