

**Romans 5:6-11**

What makes you feel loved? If you are sitting next to your spouse right now, or your boyfriend/girlfriend, and they reach over and hold your hand, does that give you a gooshy, tingly feeling of love? If you are a parent or grandparent and you have a little child sitting next to you and they snuggle up to you and you put your arm around, does that give you a warm and fuzzy feeling of love? What makes you feel loved? Hugs? Puppies? Chocolate chip cookies? A lot of things make us feel loved.

We all want that. We want to feel important and valued and loved by someone else. And ultimately, we want to feel loved by God. These words of Romans 5 are some of the most beautiful in the Bible, which communicate to us the love that God has for us.

**THIS IS REAL LOVE**

- 1. Jesus died for me, his enemy**
- 2. Jesus give me confidence for life**

Joe Delaney was a star running back for the Kansas City Chiefs. On June 29, 1983 he was at a park in his native Louisiana when three boys went into a nearby pond to swim. The boys didn't realize there was a dangerous drop-off and quickly they were in big trouble. Even though he was not a good swimmer, Joe Delaney rushed into the water to save the boys. He saved one, who was named LeMarkitts Holland, but two of the boys died that day. And so did Joe Delaney. He died, giving his life for people he did not know. He left behind a young widow, Carolyn, who never remarried because she said no one could replace her beloved Joe. He left behind three daughters who grew up without their loving father.

A sad part of this story is that, for many years, LeMarkitts did not seem to appreciate the sacrifice that the heroic Joe Delaney made to save his life. He took to drug dealing, ended up being arrested and spending time in prison.

Here in Romans 5 Paul says: "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die." We, as a rule, do not want to be inconvenienced for strangers. We don't want to suffer pain on behalf of other people. We certainly don't want to die for people, unless we really, really love them. When people do things like Joe Delaney did, it becomes a big story. Because it's so rare. There were a lot of other people at that park that day. No one else jumped into the pond to save those boys. It's rare.

Now imagine your worst enemy. The bully who tormented you at school. The person who stole your boyfriend or girlfriend. The back-stabber at work. That insufferable relative of yours who always frustrates you. Roll them all together into one. Would you die for that person? I don't think so.

That person is you, in your natural state. Paul says that we were "...powerless...sinners...God's enemies..." God's enemies! That was us. We know what God wants from us: kindness, purity, devotion to Him and His word, etc. But we don't do it. We know what God forbids: pride, gossip, laziness, impurity, excessive fretting and worrying, etc. And we do it anyway. We spit in his face. We are thrashing in the water, trapped in the weeds, drowning in the lake of fire, facing a sure and terrible death.

But...“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” What beautiful words! You were his enemy, but he loved you so much that he died for you. That’s real love.

God wants you to feel loved. Even if you don’t have any one to hold your hand right now. Even if you don’t have anyone to snuggle up to. Even if no one gives you hugs or chocolate chip cookies, God loves you with a love beyond understanding. He loves you with real love. Don’t ever forget that.

## II

And this love gives us confidence for life.

At first glance, the second paragraph of our text may seem a little cumbersome, even redundant. It seems a little like Paul is saying, “Since we are saved, we will be saved.”

But there is a progression of thought. In verse 9, Paul is saying: since God loves us and Jesus died for us, we don’t have to be afraid of God’s wrath. There will be no drowning in the lake of fire for our sins, even though that’s what we deserved. In verse 10 he is saying: it’s not just that we will escape punishment, we will have the perfect life of bliss in heaven. LeMarkitts Holland was saved by Joe Delaney, but he didn’t proceed to have a happy life. God is saying: you don’t just escape death, you will have a perfectly happy life. And in the final verse Paul says, “Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

That doesn’t sound quite right. We’re not supposed to boast, right? But Paul’s point is that we can be confident. We do not have to live in fear and uncertainty. We can live in confidence, secure in our relationship with God, because Jesus has died for us and given us the status of God’s beloved children.

In the verses right before our text, he talked about the sufferings we experience in this life. And so the point here is: A lot of bad things may happen to us in life. People will disappoint us and hurt us. Pain and sickness will come our way. We might lose our job and face financial fears. All these and many more troubles might come our way. But we do not have to be afraid. We do not have to be anxious. We can face all this with confidence. Why? Because you know the love of God.

Every year at WLA, I teach a lesson on these words to the juniors. We begin by discussing: What makes you feel loved? Most of the students give a serious answer, or give a somewhat humorous answer. Every once in a while, a student says: Nothing. No one. Nothing makes me feel loved. Often, it’s a teenager who just being a little overly dramatic and gloomy, who might be having a bad day or bad week. But sometimes, I think, it’s really true. It’s a young person who just doesn’t have anything or anyone in their life that makes them feel loved.

Maybe some of you can relate. We probably all feel that way at times. That’s because human relationships, even the closest relationships we have, can often disappoint us and even bring us down.

God is reminding us today: You always have someone who loves you. Someone who loves you with real love. He proved it on the cross. He wants you to feel that love in your heart and never forget it.