

Grace to you and peace ... from Jesus Christ, ... who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when 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. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Text: Romans 5:6-11 A 8/20/17 Gen. 28:10-17 Mt. 9:9-13 Ps. 25 Resp. Ps.: 118:1ff.
Hymns: 545, 342, 371, 32 (tune #473)

REJOICE IN WHAT GOD DOES FOR US THROUGH JESUS!

Redeemed, restored, forgiven,
Through Jesus' precious blood,
Heirs of His home in heaven,
Oh, praise our pardoning God!
Praise Him in tuneful measures
Who gave His Son to die;
Praise Him whose sevenfold treasures
Enrich and sanctify. (TLH #32:1)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

The Apostle Paul says, *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing"* (Ro. 7:18-19, ESV). Paul's frustrating, disheartening battle is one that we all go through. Our text says that by nature we're *"ungodly."* We don't have the strength to stop sinning and save ourselves from our sins. But our text has wonderful news: *"When we were still without strength"* (literally from the original text, *"When we ourselves continued to be without strength"*), *"in due time Christ died for the ungodly."* *"Christ"* is emphasized in the original text. **We** deserved eternal death in hell because of our sins, but **Jesus** died for our sins on the cross in our place. Sometimes we're deeply troubled by our *"ungodly"* sinful nature. But our text assures us that *"Christ died for the ungodly."* So each of us can say, "Jesus died for **me!**"

We're told, *"Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die."* Someone **might** be willing to sacrifice his life to save the life of a good person. *"But,"* we're told, *"God demonstrates"* (literally from the original, *"God keeps on demonstrating"*) **"His own** love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Even though we are sinners and don't deserve it, God shows *"His own"* love for us in sacrificing His Son to save us. Jesus shows His love for us in His willingness to be sacrificed to

save us. Jesus says, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends”* (Jn. 15:13-14a). Jesus knows how sin-sick we are, and how sin-sick this whole world is. Jesus didn’t sacrifice His life for us because we were so good and we deserved it. Jesus sacrificed His life for us because we were so bad and we desperately needed Him to save us. *“God is love,”* the Bible says. *“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation”* (the atoning sacrifice) *“for our sins”* (1 Jn. 4:8, 10).

Sometimes the devil and our conscience hound us: “You are a sinner. Look at how much you sin. Look at how bad your sins are. Why should God forgive you? You don’t deserve God’s forgiveness!” All of that is true. We’re guilty as charged. We **don’t** deserve God’s forgiveness. We deserve to have God punish us and forsake us forever. When we’re struggling with these kinds of thoughts we need to open our Bible and read words such as these in our text: *“While we were still sinners”* (literally from the original, *“While we still kept on being sinners”*), *Christ died for us.”* *“Christ”* is emphasized in the original, strongly contrasting us who kept on being sinners, and Jesus who nevertheless gave His life to save us. We all have to confess, “I am a sinner.” But God assures us in His Word that *“while we were still sinners Christ died for us.”* Therefore each of us can say, “Jesus died for **me!**” Paul rejoices, *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (1 Tim. 1:15).

We’re told that we *“[have] ... been justified by [Jesus’] blood.”* The repentant tax collector in the temple kept hitting himself on the chest, he felt so bad about his sins. He cried out, *“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”* Jesus said, *“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified”* (Lk. 18:13-14a). The Bible assures us, *“The blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 Jn. 1:7b). We’re told, *“Having now been justified by [Jesus’] blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”* Cleansed of all of our sins by Jesus’ blood, God declares us to be righteous in His sight, and saves us from His anger and punishment now, and eternally. One commentator states:

“Having now been justified” ... is an established fact. God did it for us through the death of His Son for ungodly sinners. Since this fact has been established, we can be absolutely certain that we will also be saved from God’s eternal wrath. When Judgment Day dawns we have absolutely nothing to fear. We are safe in Christ Jesus. (Sermon Studies On The Epistles, Series B, p. 108, © 1993 CPH)

By nature no one is neutral toward God. By nature we and everyone else are, as our text says, *“enemies”* of God. The original depicts our being enemies of God as an on-going condition of our human nature. Unless and until the Lord brings someone to faith in Him, that person is and continues to be an enemy of God. By nature our sins stand between us and God. Isaiah told unbelieving Israel, *“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you”* (Is. 59:2). Praise God, we’re told that *“when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.”* Being *“reconciled”* to God means being at peace with God – being brought into a right relationship with God. During the time of the Old Testament there was a long, high, thick curtain in the temple separating the main part of the temple from the Most Holy Place. The curtain represented the separation between us sinful human beings and the holy God. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place through

the curtain once a year on the Day Of Atonement. He had to bring with him blood from the animal that had been sacrificed for his sins and the sins of the people. He confessed his sins and the people's sins to God. He could then assure the people that God had forgiven them and him. We read in the ninth chapter of Hebrews, "*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood [Jesus] entered the Most Holy Place*" ("*into heaven itself*") "*once for all*" (vv. 12, 24). When Jesus died on the cross that curtain in the temple tore completely in two (Mt. 27:51). In this way God made it clear that Jesus' death has removed the separation between us and God. As our text says, "*We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.*" Jesus' death on the cross made peace between us and God. Our text adds, "*Much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by [Jesus'] life. And not only that, but we also rejoice*" (literally from the original, "*we also keep rejoicing*") "*in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*" Thank God for sending us Jesus! Jesus' resurrection is the 'guarantee' that our sins have all been forgiven, that God is at peace with us and so we can be at peace with God, and that we are saved.

We began with the Apostle Paul lamenting his sinfulness – how he so often failed to do what's right, and so often did what was wrong instead. Paul says, "*Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" Then Paul turns to his comfort and ours: "*Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ!*" (Ro. 7: 24-25). Christian friends, **REJOICE IN WHAT GOD DOES FOR US THROUGH JESUS!**

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which at the mercy-seat of God
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me – even for my soul – was shed.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me,
For me, and all Thy hands have made,
An everlasting ransom paid. Amen. (TLH #371:1, 4, 7)