

Parson to Person

RESURRECTION SUNDAY (Romans 5:6-11)

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 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. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Romans 5:6–11 NKJV).

Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ all over the world. This is the day set aside each year to remember that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world: *“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world”* (1 John 2:2). But not to leave the subject of His death alone, we also remember that Jesus conquered death and physically rose from the dead.

It should be understood by all that we as sinners are fully incapable of saving ourselves or offering anything to the Lord in exchange for our souls. This is what Paul communicated when he said *“we were still without strength”* in Romans 5:6. Moreover, those whom he suggested were *“without strength”* are referred to as the *“ungodly,”* thus *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* *“Ungodly”* is a reference to the impiety with which men are identified.

Apart from the work of grace there is no care or concern for God—no desire to see, know, or reverence Him. Therefore, we must understand that when Christ died for us, it was apart from man’s request or desire. In fact, we were said to be the *“enemies”* of God. When we were *“without strength,”* there was no care or concern for Him—or for what He could offer. Nonetheless, *“Christ died for the ungodly,”* His *“enemies,”*—you and me—and has provided us all we need to desire and access Him.

Jesus’ death was *“for”* the *“ungodly.”* The word used for *“for”* in Greek means *“on behalf of.”* This shows, without a doubt, that Jesus did not die as the result of any fault within Himself. Jesus had and has no shortcoming or insufficiency. This would include loneliness or the need for fellowship with those He created. (This is an oft erroneous reasoning for why God created man.)

Jesus died *“for”* man, for the same reason He created him—To show us who He is, and to share His love with us: *“for”* mankind, *“God demonstrate[d] His own love toward us while we were still sinners”* (Romans 5:8). The vicarious propitiatory sufferings and death of Jesus was for us, apart from us, and in our place: a fully appeasing and satisfactory payment *“for”* our *“impiety”* and the *“wrath”* we deserve. Thus, in Jesus, we who trust God for salvation are *“saved from [that] wrath through Him.”* Our sinful debt has been paid; we are accounted as debt free, thus *“reconciled”* (see Romans 5:6–11).

All this being said, if Jesus had died *“for”* our sins, apart from any good in us and/or any desire for God in us, but had remained in the grave, we would all be without hope. For Christ’s death in our place may have satisfactorily met the need for justice against our sin, but His resurrection documented the satisfactory mediatorial work of Jesus. His resurrection guarantees that we who are *“in Him”* will, like Him, be raised up to live with Him—forever.

Paul addressed this to the Corinthians when he wrote, *“And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”* (1 Corinthians 15:14–20).

Today we celebrate the *“power”* of His resurrection: a resurrection that would have never occurred if Jesus had not *died* in our place for our sins. We are *“saved by His life.”* *“And... we... rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”*

May the Lord be praised!

I love you all, Pastor Paul