

Romans 5:9-11

Assurance in God's Action and Attitude

Introduction

Would you like to live in confidence, full of love and joy and peace, free from anxiety and empowered to love God and others? We heard last week, in vv5-8 about what we called then a "love transmission," but that was really only one third of the argument that ends in v11 today with "we *exult* in God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ!" Last week's text ended with the recognition that God does His love pouring in v5 through the substitution of Christ for sinners at the cross, v8. If you don't have the doctrine of v8, whatever you're experiencing is not the pouring of v5; if v5's pouring is strange to you, and something you don't know as your consistent experience when dwelling upon the cross, then you have never really grasped the doctrine of v8.

God the Holy Spirit intentionally uses this doctrine to produce this experience in order to assure believers so that we may *right now* exult in the hope of the glory of God without any anxiety that this hope would put us to shame. Verses 9-11 tell us how that works: God assures us by fixing our eyes backward upon God's action for us in the blood of Christ and upward upon God's attitude toward us in His reconciled state, so that when we look forward to the judgment and the outpouring of wrath on the last day, we look forward with confidence and joy.

v9, Backward upon the Blood of Christ, God's Actions for Us

Justified *in His blood* is slightly different than justified *through faith*, a focus on the ground of God's declaration more than the declaration itself, upon the cross two thousand years ago more than my heart during my lifetime. Assurance looks at the legal, historical fact of Jesus Christ, with His blood, accomplishing everything I need to be right before God, two thousand years before I was born. It takes its eyes off of self and fixes them on the cross and says, "if Jesus has done *that*, I *know* I'll be safe at the judgment."

Notice that we are building towards v11 in which we are going to hear that we exult in—we are full to bursting with joy in—God Himself, and that the great obstacle to this *isn't* our circumstances. The great obstacle to joy in God is not, "but what about this difficulty in my marriage, this financial pinch I'm in, this injury or illness that I'm enduring, this disaster that has happened?" Those are minor obstacles compared to the great wickedness of my sin and the reality of God's wrath. The divergent emergents of the world who would have you believe that sin isn't so bad and God isn't so angry do not have the mind of Christ or of the Bible. If you think circumstances and providences are the great obstacles to your joy, you have not yet begun to consider how grave and offensive your sin is or great and awful the wrath of God is.

This is why what actually happened matters. The history of it matters: Jesus really, historically bled and died on that cross. The nature of it matters: His blood wasn't just spilled for show of how He felt, wasn't just an example of how we should live, but was really satisfying the legal requirements for God to declare us righteous. This is an historical fact; this is a legal fact. This is a *bloody* fact. And it is a real, concrete fact to which the believer looks and says: "yes, God is full of wrath toward sin, but I see Christ's blood on the cross, and I am confident that Jesus has emptied His wrath toward me... how much more shall I be saved!"

v10, Upward upon a Reconciled God, God's Attitude toward Us

"while we were *enemies*." This is not describing what we were doing to God, though certainly in our sinful nature we were hostile to Him, but what we were in God's eyes at the time He sacrificed His Son for us. Were we in good standing with Him, right relationship to Him? Certainly He loved us, for it was from love that He sent His Son, but what were we to Him at the time? We were enemies.

I was God's enemy, and yet He loved me. Do I love my enemies? He did; I was the enemy! How much did He love His enemies? He sacrificed His Son to bring them near. Do I love my enemies that much? He loved us that much that He treated us like that when we were His enemies. How then do you think He will treat you now that He considers you to be His friend?

We were reconciled; we are reconciled. Be careful here. Just like being His enemies in the first part of the verse describes not how we were treating God (though we were) but how God saw us, so now in this contrast *reconciled* describes how God sees us.

How do we know that God who considered us to be enemies before the cross considers us friends after the cross? Our answer is in the end of v10: we shall be saved by His life. God joined us to Jesus, and *He still* raised Jesus from the dead. Dear believer, after considering in Christ the sum total of all your sins—the worst and filthiest of them included—and all my sins—the worst and filthiest of them included—and all of the sins of all of His people from all time... God raised Him from the dead anyway. The forsaken One is the resurrected One to show that we are forgiven ones.

Now, here's the argument at the end of v10: look forward to the last day; if in consideration of His dead Son God changed His consideration of you at the cross from enemy to friend, then what will happen to you on the last day when already He considers you a friend and will then be taking not a dead but a living Son into consideration?

God has already considered those in Christ to be His friends; *how much more shall we be saved!*

Conclusion, v11: We Exult in God Now.

We learned in v2 that we exult in the hope of His glory—that we are full to bursting with joy now, already, just from the certainty that we will have His glory to enjoy face to face in the future. But though we may have to wait for His glory, we do *not* have to wait for Him. Jesus has made us right with Him, changed how He considers us. When we live in light of the fact that right now, already, God's attitude toward us is one of friendship, we exult in God. Not in the *hope* of God, but in God.

Now there have been other applications in this sermon, and I trust and pray that you will not harden yourself against the Spirit as He applies them to you, but don't miss this one: do you exult in God? If your circumstances are your obstacle, you haven't yet begun to consider the filthiness of your sin or the terror of the wrath of God. But even considering your sin and His wrath you can be full to bursting with joy in Him right now if you would take your eyes off yourself and consider instead God's action for you on the cross and God's attitude toward you as a friend already in the living Christ.

Know your sin. Know God's wrath. But keep your eyes on Jesus and remember God's action for you then and God's attitude toward you now, and you will know that you have absolutely nothing to fear from Him later at the judgment. Let us rejoice, exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation!

PRAYER

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