

Much More - Assurance and Perseverance

Romans 5:9-11

These verses are beautiful. They are precious stones which adorn the minds of believers this side of heaven. They are sweet as honey, yes sweeter than the honeycomb. These words are salve to our eyes as we read them, for they are the very words of life. They are the highest point of assurance in the entire Bible.

Paul begins verse 9 by saying the words, *much more*. Let us be reminded of what is at stake here, by looking back to what he is saying here is greater than what he has said before.

Last time, we looked at the incredible statements made in verses 6-8. That the love of God has been demonstrated to us in the past, and continues to be demonstrated to us today, in that Christ died for the ungodly. God's love for us is this....that when we had no strength, no ability within ourselves to redeem ourselves (as we were still weak), nor any quality within ourselves worthy of being redeemed (for we were ungodly)....God's love for us was such that He sent His Only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. The love of God for His own is measured by the price that He has paid to redeem us, that price being the death of His Son, without any measure whatsoever of our worthiness.

Not only was God's love toward us so great that He sent Christ to die for us while we were completely helpless, He sent Him to die for us when we were helpless and ungodly. Not only were we helpless and ungodly, but Paul also reminds us that while we were still sinners...actively rebelling against Him, in fact, when we were enemies of God, Christ died for us who now believe. Christ died for helpless, ungodly sinners. These who were helpless, but now have been helped; these who were ungodly, but now have been given the Spirit of God; those who were sinners, but now have been given the righteousness of Christ and the desire for obedience.....to these are directed the precious words we read here in verses 9-11. These are great words...indeed, this is the pinnacle demonstration of the love of God to the elect.

Paul's is an argument of logic. It is not wrong to apply logic in the defense of our faith. In fact, here is a perfect example of doing just that, defending the clear teaching of Scripture of the perseverance of the saints, in which is created great assurance. A believer with the proper understanding of the character and nature of God can employ such logic as this. And here is exactly what Paul does. He argues from the greater thing to the lesser thing. The greater being the demonstration of the love of God in the death of His Son for us, the lesser being the future grace of perseverance to the end. If God has done the greater, then how much more shall He do the lesser. Let's dive in!

Verse 9. *We have been justified by His blood*. It is not by perishable things that we have been redeemed, like silver and gold, *but by the precious blood of Christ*. What did the shedding of that blood accomplish? It justified us who believe. It made us righteous. Not that we had any righteousness of our own, but it took that righteousness which was Christ's and imputed it to our account. Christ's righteousness became ours, and our sin became His. The just for the unjust.

How did that death accomplish this justification? By enduring the full wrath of God. We often hear and often even say ourselves that people need to be saved, but it is important that we never lose focus on exactly what it is that they need to be saved from. If you are without Christ today, if you are still in your sins and love your sin more than you love Christ, then it is not your sins that you need to be saved from. For Christ did not endure sin for you, nor is it sin that is cast into the lake which burns with fire. It is not primarily the place called Hell that you need to be saved from, for Christ did not descend there to save you from a place. Hell is simply a place....not a place where you are simply separated from God, but a place in which the furious wrath of almighty God is poured out eternally and infinitely. You don't need to be saved from your sins....you don't even need to be saved from Hell....you need to be saved from God. For if you fall into the hands of the living God, what a fearful thing that is. At that time, you won't be thinking about being saved from sin,

or even Hell....you will think about being saved from the infinite almighty God. Specifically, saved from the righteous, just anger of God on all those who break His Law, **which the Bible calls His wrath**. For all murderers and thieves and adulterers and fornicators and idolaters and blasphemers shall endure the wrath of God for eternity, but not only those, but even all liars, dishonorers of parents, covetous, lustful, angry people shall surely perish in the same way. For because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the disobedient, and upon these the wrath of God abides.

Christ did not suffer merely the cross....He suffered **wrath**. It pleased the Father to CRUSH His Son, the just for the unjust, and having crushed with infinite fury and power the One, that He might pardon with infinite grace and mercy, the many. And this justice is holy, perfect, being completely balanced such that Christ once suffered wrath for all who shall be saved, and for none who shall be damned. Such that, if Christ suffered infinite wrath once for you, then you can never suffer wrath, for you who have faith in Christ *shall be saved from wrath through Him*, according to our text today!

Furthermore, our text says that Christ suffered this wrath not for those who were His friends, but for those who were His enemies. Now think of a General in an army. This General sees an enemy detachment being slaughtered by another army. The General, having compassion on the poor soldiers, orders his troops to destroy that enemy army, such that by doing so, he saves the detachment that were his enemies. Now that detachment of enemy soldiers must have a good deal of confidence in the kindness of the General. Surely they would come to revere him, even to leave their ranks of rebellion and join forces with him. So some measure of assurance is given to these who have been saved by the General....but how much more assurance of the love and kindness of the General exists now in the troops of his own army? They have seen the kindness he has shown to those who tried to kill him, how much more kind shall the General be to those who now serve him and fight with him?

My friends, you were the enemy of God, the detachment of soldiers allied against Him, and Christ died for you to save you from His wrath. Now that you are no longer His enemy, but His child, how much more shall you **not** endure wrath? What great assurance it is to know that the One who redeemed us as enemies shall much more hold us as redeemed friends!

Now let us look at the phrase, *through the death of His Son*. Let us ponder this for a moment. Now imagine that each of us were trapped in a room that has one door. Waiting at that doorway for the first person to come out is a vicious, deadly beast that will most certainly tear apart the first person who exists the door. The whole company of us sit looking at each other, for someone has to go first if anyone will get out alive. When the first person goes out, he will certainly die....but while the beast tears apart his flesh, the rest can escape. We decide that it is fair to cast lots to determine which family will be the one to provide someone to go first to be the victim, and the lot lands on my family. Someone from my family must die so that the others can live.

Now, without question, I would give up my life before I gave up the life of my wife or children. My life is precious to me, but the lives of my family are infinitely more valuable to me than my own life. So to sacrifice my own life for the multitudes is a great price, but not nearly as great as the price of sacrificing my son or my daughter or my wife. They are precious to me beyond any value.

God is a God of love, and the greatest love that He can show is to love and hold as precious that which is perfect, and holy, and pure, and lovely, and righteous. The One who exhibits all these characteristics in complete perfection is God Himself. So God loves God, in perfect harmony. The Godhead exists in perfect triune harmony, three Persons yet one God, in each other. The Father, Son and Spirit. And perfectly in the love of the Father is His love for the Son. No greater price could be demanded, and no greater price could be paid, than a Father give the life of His Son. I can love you so much that I would give my life for you, but by no means can I love you enough to give you the life of my son.

But such is the love of God....in that our language strains and groans to express such love....that God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son....He gave that which is infinitely beyond infinitely precious to Him....that He gave

Him who knew no sin to become sin for us.... That He who was the Word in the beginning, the Word that was with God and was God, through whom all things were made and in whom was life itself.....that Word became flesh...even the Son of God....for the very purpose that was ordained from the foundation of the world, that of being the full pardon for sinners, by payment of the highest price ever paid, the offer of that which is most precious....precious not to man, but to God....**God gave His Only Son**. He came to His own, and His own did not know Him, and received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them and only to them, He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh....but of God.

Now let's look at the phrase **"saved by His life"**. When someone comes to die, the appointed time comes to take a look at that person's will. The heart desires of that person for those who are left behind are manifest in that written will, and it is up to the family to see that those wishes are carried out. Nowadays, in particular, the wishes of the deceased are becoming less and less attended to, as the materialism of this world increases, selfishness and greed reign supreme, siblings fight over things that will not matter in eternity, as the executors of the will dissent and forget what the person who died wanted altogether in their will.

But this is not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes indeed, Jesus died, and even died with a will for what was to happen after His death. Now today, there are many who fight and squabble over what His will is, and how they interpret it, and what they think He would have wanted. But our Lord Jesus Christ did not leave this world with a will and a hope that His children could carry out that will for Him. No, according to the Scriptures, Christ has died. He was buried, according to the Scriptures, and according to the Scriptures He was raised. So unlike those who squabble over wills today, our Lord Jesus did not leave us to carry out His will on our own.....but He lives to carry it out Himself. For the resurrection is proof of His faithfulness, in that He has the authority to lay down His life, and He has the authority to take it up again!

The will of God in Christ Jesus is that not one of His own perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). So you can know that as you go about preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to every person who has breath, not one of the elect of God will perish. His will is to redeem His people, that none be lost. We need not question our Lord as to what He wanted in His will! *Go, and preach the Gospel to every creature....*He will surely draw them unto Himself! And if the Christ who shed His blood in death for His people now lives for them, you can be sure that not one drop of His blood will be shed in vain, because if His blood be shed for you, then that holy blood that was shed for you in the horrors of His death shall be vindicated in the beauty of His life!

The will of God is to deliver us from the evil of this present age (Galatians 1:4). Dear friends, you can know that the God whose will it is that you be delivered from evil, will surely do it, for He died to justify you from it, and He lives to sanctify you from it! Your sins, though they be as scarlet, yet shall they be as wool. Your cross may look heavy and burdensome, your flesh though it be ever so weak, if it be the will of God for all of His children to be delivered from evil behaviors and sins, then you shall indeed be delivered if you are in Him. For it is furthermore the will of God....your sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3)...and this will is not left to sinners to carry out, but to the Sinless One, the One who died and now lives shall see to it that every jot and tittle of His will be carried out to the letter. You who struggle and fight this sinful flesh today, you fight in the strength of the Son of God, for if it were not for Him you would not fight. For your strength to fight against sin is not found in a cold dead body underneath a cold dead tombstone in a graveyard, but if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, you come not to a cold dead stone, but:

"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

(1 Peter 2:4-6, NKJV)

The will of God is that Christ makes intercession for the saints (Romans 8:27). Folks, I know that there are many times that I need more prayer than I can utter, for the Scripture is true, that I do not know how to pray as I ought. But the eternal will of God is this....that the Spirit of God intercede for us....even the Son....who lives, and now stands at the right hand of the Father. And He that became sin in death for you becomes righteousness and sanctification in life for you, and it is He who lives and pleads for you at the Father's throne. And if He who is infinitely valued and loved of the Father pleads for you, you shall surely never be lost!

And dear friends, if today you have no assurance that you are His, but your desire is to come to Him, in repentance for breaking His Law, and in childlike faith knowing that you are without strength, then come to Him. You who are weary and heavy laden with sin....come to Him. You who are estranged from Him, be reconciled to your God. Come to Him. For He is gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find peace for your souls. For His words are these:

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:36-40, NKJV).