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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
July 2, 2017
4th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Exodus 19:2-8a; Mathew 9:35-10:8

Hymns: 2; 384; 373; 50 (248:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Romans 5:6-11

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

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God my Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Impact!

The word can be used in different ways. When we think of a football field we think of the crash of the linemen as they block or tackle, as two athletes collide. When we think of the baseball diamond we may think of the bat coming into contact with the ball,

or the sound of a fastball striking the catcher's mitt at 96 miles per hour. Hard hitting impact!

But we also use impact in a more abstract way. There is a TV chef who is famous for throwing a powerful ingredient into the dish he is preparing and exclaiming "BAM!" That ingredient makes an impact on that dish that changes it dramatically, and he wants his audience to know it and take note.

Well, the Lord doesn't cry out BAM when He changes the life of a sinner, but the impact is powerful indeed. Sometimes we need someone to call out "BAM!" before we sit back and take note and marvel at the wonder of God's salvation. Today in our text the Holy Spirit led the Apostle Paul to open our eyes and ears to –

THEME: The Double Impact found in Our Salvation.

I. Salvation Now from the Power of Sin.

We don't like to admit it but what Paul says is true. Listen to the opening words of our text once again.

Romans 5:6-8 "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.

Like I said, we don't like to admit that we were without strength. Indeed what we like to think of ourselves is that we are strong and independent, and live our lives just as we please, and we are pretty good people when it comes right down to it. That is what is called self-deception. The truth is by nature we are without strength. By nature people serve the devil's ends and purpose, even when they think, or even when others think that what they are doing is pretty good. It all serves the devil's end and purpose because it is all self-serving. People do good because they want to feel good about themselves, and being nice or even generous makes them feel good about themselves. It helps them see themselves as good people. That is self-serving and that is the devil's lie.

Of course when it feels good to do evil people do that too. The world says, “If it feels good, do it,” especially if you can do it in the name of love. How did that old country western song go again? “*If loving you is wrong, I don’t want to be right.*” That is all part of the dominion of sin. The power of sin controlled us, and would still have its way with us, except for the exceptional power of the gospel of Christ who died for us.

Romans 5:6-8 “For when we were still without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.** ⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while **we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

He died for the ungodly. When we were still sinners Christ died for us. There are people out there who have laid down their lives for someone else, but there is usually a pretty strong reason for such an ultimate sacrifice. Who would you die for? Your child? Your spouse? If it was someone else they would have to be a very worthy person, wouldn’t they? Would you die for the murderer? Would you take a bullet for the drug dealer, or the child pornographer?

Christ did. Christ died for the ungodly. He died for you and me while we were still sinners. He died for us to free us from the power of sin, to deliver us from a tyranny that could bring only shame and suffering, shame and suffering that we well deserved. But God found no pleasure in that. He saw us in our dreadful plight, and Jesus gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God to pay our debt, to redeem us from the curse of the law, to set us free from that awful servitude.

The impact that this gospel that this salvation has is that we have been saved from the power of sin. Before we were without strength, but now the Spirit empowers us by this gospel of God’s love in Christ crucified so that by the power of Christ we can say NO to sin, and YES to righteousness. Paul wrote in the very next chapter of this epistle to the Romans:

Romans 6:10-12 “For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once **for all**; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God

in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Because we have been alive to God in Christ, I can live to the glory of my God and Savior Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! I can live as being dead to sin! I need not give in to its power, I have been saved from sin and its power by Christ, my crucified and risen Lord!

“Amazing grace – how sweet the sound – That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found Was blind but now I see.

“The Lord has promised good to me; His Word my hope secures. He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures.”

(Worship Supplement 2000; 777)

Those words of the hymn-writer lead us from the one impact of our salvation to the other:

II. Salvation Yet to Come Over the Grave.

In another epistle Paul also wrote, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable”* (1 Corinthians 15:19). While the salvation we have over sin is powerful, its end is even more amazing for this is the eternal impact of everlasting life. Paul continues in our text:

Romans 5:9-11 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For 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. ¹¹And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

The freedom from sin comes because God has separated us from our sin. *“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us”* (Psalm 103:11-12 ESV).

When God looks at us from heaven above He does not see our sin. He sees only the righteousness of Christ. The debt of sin and its

curse and its stain have been removed forevermore. You have been declared righteous and holy. You are justified. It is God's decree. That decree brings with it an absolute conclusion; we are no longer God's enemies. We have been reconciled, brought back to a relationship of peace and harmony. This happened because of the death of God's Son. And since Jesus did not stay dead but rose again to life, **we have life**. When our text says we have been saved by His life, it is referencing another marvelous impact of salvation that Paul speaks of in our text, eternal life in heaven. We have been saved from death and the grave. The grave has no power over us. On the last day we shall hear the Lord's gracious invitation, *"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matthew 25:34).

These impacts of our salvation are life changing impacts. The shroud of death, the dark cloud of guilt and condemnation that hung over us, that darkened our consciences, that robbed us of peace of mind and heart, has been removed. If the devil would attempt to bring that back into our hearts, if we feel that shame or guilt, or premonition of hell creeping into our consciousness, then remember these words of the Apostle John from his first epistle: *"If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God"* (1 John 3:20-21).

What is left but for us to rejoice in the Lord and sing praises to our God, for He has loved us with an everlasting love and saved us from sin's power in this life that we might live to His glory here in time, and to live with Him in glory forevermore! That is the double impact of the salvation with which God has blessed us in His amazing grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

*When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun."*

(Worship Supplement 2000:3,4; 777)

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)