

The Guiltless Sinner.

Text: Rom 5:6-10

Suggested Hymns:

317, 173, 170, 320, 327

- 1) God Loves Him In Christ
- 2) God Died For The Ungodly
- 3) He Is Justified By Faith
- 4) Being Justified, He Is Fully Reconciled With God

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 5:6–10, *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.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Can a sinner be declared guiltless? No, says the world. You cannot go into the courts and prove that a man has committed a crime and then acquit him. That would not be just and would be rather dangerous to society. If the criminal is released without a change of heart, we would all be afraid of him.

Can the sinner be declared guiltless? Yes, says God. In the cross of Christ on Calvary justice and mercy met. God is just, for sin is punished. God is merciful, for sin is forgiven.

That is the keynote and the theme of Paul's Letter to the Roman Christians, the most monumental document ever written. This Letter to the Romans reaches new heights when Paul declares in Romans 5:1, *¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* The

sinner is acquitted. The guilty is set free. Let us consider as the theme for the sermon *The Guiltless Sinner*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. God Loves Him In Christ

The sinner is guiltless in the sight of God because God loves us in Christ. We read in Romans 5:8, *⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* God in Christ proves His love toward us.

God's love in the beginning of time created man. This love created man perfect. Adam was created in the image of God, righteous and without sin. This love of God created a perfect world in which man was to live. When God had finished the creation, He saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

Besides this, God planted a garden in Eden that was pleasant to the sight and good for food. Into this beautiful Garden God placed man to enjoy the grandeur of His creation. This world was made for man, and God's love made it.

This perfection of man and of creation was ruined by the wilful disobedience of Adam and Eve. Eve believed Satan rather than God and because Adam accepted the forbidden fruit from Eve he brought death, sorrow and tears, drudgery and pain into the world. Not only did man become sinful, but all creation was marred, and everything became subject to death.

But even though creation is no longer what it was, nor serves man implicitly, still sinful man is, in a measure, master of the world. True, the sea and the storms do not always obey him; the beasts of the field resist him; the sting of the serpent poisons him; and the fields produce thistles and thorns in place of grain.

Nevertheless, man has harnessed the animal, the waters, and the air. But time and again man fails, and the ship sinks, the aeroplane comes down, and storm and fire destroy the works of man. Sin made this possible.

Although man sinned, the heart of God ached as man went away — estranged and separated — and God's love did not want man to perish, to be lost. It grieved God to see man foolishly going to destruction. But man could not do anything to lift himself out of his sin. The heart is desperately wicked. We are *without strength*, Paul says in our text. The Scriptures tell us that we are dead in

trespasses and sin. As far as you and I are concerned, we cannot save our souls. Destruction and damnation follow our transgressions.

God, therefore, had to find a way if man is to get out of this sin. God's love found that way. We have a saying which says: *Love finds a way*. Although parents put every obstacle in the way for their daughter to meet her lover, love will find a way. So God's love found a way in Christ, says the Apostle. God proved His love by sending Jesus into the world.

Therefore John exclaims in 1 John 3:1, ***¹ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*** It is amazing to think that God would do this, send His Son. But because of this act it is possible for the guilty sinner to be saved — and how?

2. God Died For The Ungodly

The sinner is guiltless because Christ died for the ungodly. The Apostle declares in our text, ***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.*** Such a thing is scarcely conceivable, exclaims the Apostle. In wonderment and awe he ponders upon this amazing fact that Christ died for the ungodly.

Some people have been willing to die for the good. The Greeks have a story which tells of the devotion and loyalty of Damon to Pythias. Dionysius of Syracuse had condemned Pythias to death. Pythias begged and pleaded to be set free for a short time that he might arrange his affairs. Damon pledged his life for the return of his friend. And Pythias faithfully returned before the appointed hour of execution, as he had promised. The tyrant was amazed at the devotion and loyalty of these two and begged to be included in their friendship. They were good men, and each was ready to die for the other.

Men have idolised heroes and then have died for the ideal of their heroes. All Greece went to war to win back Helen of Troy. The Trojan had kidnapped this beautiful woman, and the entire manhood of Greece arose to come to her rescue and return her to her lover. She stood for the ideal of womanhood and all were willing to go to war and free her.

But seldom is a person willing to die to free a person who is not important or for a worthless or good-for-nothing type of fellow. No one wants to identify

himself with a criminal, with the ungodly. Man seldom is willing to die for those who are not deserving. Would you?

Perchance parents would be willing to die for their worthless offspring. David was ready to die for Absalom. At the gate of Jerusalem we hear him exclaim with a sobbing heart, "*O my son Absalom — my son, my son Absalom — if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!*"¹ But David could not die for Absalom.

Christ, however, did die for the ungodly. God's love made that possible. Christ's love was willing to do this. That is amazing because the ungodly, as God sees them, are really worthless. Still more, they are unlovable. There is nothing good that God sees in the ungodly.

The sinner is unclean, and nothing unclean shall enter the Kingdom of God. The sinner is wicked, and God is perfect in His holiness. The sinner is defiant and resists the love of God. Yet Christ died for the ungodly that the sinner might be saved.

Such a thing is scarcely conceivable, says Paul. But it is true, and because it is true, it is glad news to every human being who realises that he is lost unless Christ comes to his rescue.

3. He Is Justified By Faith

The guilty sinner is guiltless in the sight of God because He is justified by faith through Christ's blood. The Apostle says, ***9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*** To justify means to pronounce free from guilt.

But the sinner is guilty. He is guilty by nature. We are born sinful into this world. The Bible teaches that in many places. And experience shows that this is true.

Take a little baby, separate it from every other child, let it never see anyone steal, and yet it will take the cookie when the mother is not looking. It will lose its temper if it cannot have its own way. All this shows the sinfulness of its nature. So we are born in sin.

The sinner is also guilty by conduct. We do not think straight. Our thoughts are often impure. There is rebellion in our hearts against God. Our tongue is slanderous, malicious, vile, and foul.

Our actions are not above reproach. Not one of us would want everything that we have ever thought and said and done to be made public. There are some things we carefully conceal. We are sinners by conduct. Therefore we are by nature children of wrath — and that means you and me.

If guilty of transgressing the Laws of God, of sinning, then it is reasonable, fair, and just to condemn us. Every country of the world must condemn the guilty. If justice is to prevail, then the evildoer must be penalised. Even the guilty admit that this is right. The thief on the cross said, “*We receive the due reward of our deeds.*”² He is not accusing the courts of being unjust. The guilty always have admitted that justice must prevail and that they must take their medicine.

However, God takes the sinner and sets him free. How can He be a just God and do that? The Apostle says, *Through His blood.* There is the answer. Christ substitutes for the sinner. He takes his place and suffers the penalty.

But not every sinner is pronounced free. We are justified by faith, that is, we believe and accept these terms of God. That does not give us any glory. That is humiliating to the unregenerated heart. But God justifies or sets free those who believe. Those who believe accept the statement that Christ has paid the penalty for them.

When God does this, He is fair. Justice is not trampled under foot, for Christ pays the penalty. Even my conscience concedes that this is just.

That is the only possible way that the guilty sinner can be freed. You and I cannot free ourselves by trying to run away from God. Nor are we going to escape by running away from our problems. Neither can any philosophy or science of man make the sinner guiltless. Only God can do this by sending Christ to the cross and by accepting us who believe and stake our all upon Christ.

By faith we are justified. As I come into the courts of God and find myself accused, God asks, *What have you to say for yourself?* The believer answers: *Only one thing: You say in Your Word that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all sin, and I believe that.*³

Such a sinner goes out free. And so the guilty is made guiltless through Christ's blood by faith.

4. Being Justified, He Is Fully Reconciled With God

The guilty sinner is guiltless because, being justified, he is fully reconciled. This is the clinching argument made by Paul in our text when he says, "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.*" The acquitted person goes free. He cannot be held. But does he not become a menace to society?

No. The sinner who is acquitted by faith lives no longer in rebellion against God. He loves his Lord who loved him first. He is deeply appreciative of the mercy and goodness which God has shown him. He goes out free, a changed man at heart. Therefore he is no longer a menace to society and to the community. He is reconciled with God and loves God.

So the justified sinner cannot find pleasure in sin nor live unto sin. That is why the believer, the Christian, walks the Christian way, resisting sin, overcoming temptation, living to the glory of His God.

This reconciled state makes for peace and joy and security. So the guilty sinner is saved. That is the Gospel of the cross.

Only in the court of God is such a procedure allowable, because God is not trampling under foot justice and righteousness but is substituting someone else, His own beloved Son, who dies for us, and by faith we go out free.

Only where this is done, is it just and right to set the sinner free. Such action does not offend against reason.

Unless you and I understand this process, that God justifies us because we believe that Jesus in our place died on the cross, we cannot be satisfied. Only if we are sure of this, are we sure of salvation. If this did not happen on Calvary, you and I would still be convicted by our sin. A sense of guilt and a hopeless outlook would be ours for eternity.

The only reason that I need not be afraid of God in my guilt is that His love found this way of removing all my guilt from my shoulders and my conscience.

God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. Believing this fills our hearts with peace and makes life everlasting certain.

It is this justification that makes Holy Communion a Sacrament of great worth. Jesus tells us that He has given us His body and His blood with the bread and the wine.

He has gone down into death on Calvary, shed there His life blood, and that is why Holy Communion is a Sacrament that offers forgiveness. Without this way of the cross Holy Communion has no value. It has worth only because of the great sacrifice on Calvary.

This is also important for you to know, that without this justifying faith that you believe that Christ died for you, this Holy Communion is of no good to you.

You must believe that Jesus' sacrifice was for your redemption and that He is sealing the forgiveness of all your sin to you in this Sacrament. Then alone you have forgiveness and can depart in peace. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Samuel 18:33

² Luke 23:41

³ 1 John 1:7