

Romans 5:6-8

"The Kind of People God Loves"

Romans 5:6-8, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Introduction

"Turn now to the book of Romans, chapter 5, Romans chapter 5. And we'll just be looking at verses 6, 7, and 8, Romans 5, verses 6, 7, and 8. As we look at the kind of people God loves. **"For while we were still helpless"** Paul says in **verse 6, "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man, but perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."** Ever kind of wonder what kind of person God really loves? I heard David in the Old Testament spoken of as a man after God's own heart. I hear that Abraham was "a friend of God". But you know, I don't know if I'll ever make it to be a man after God's own heart. I don't know if I'd ever be classified as God's friend. But you know what I want to know? I want to know whether or not he loves me. God reveals the kind of love that he has for us here in these verses. The first thing I see in verse 6, is that God's love for us is unconditional. Look at **verse 6** again, **"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly."** Who qualifies to be loved by God? Good, respectable and moral people? No. That might be what you'd expect to hear, but instead the Bible tells us that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly." Jesus (Yeshua) didn't just die for the goody-goodies, the good people. He died for ungodly people. And that means you and I can qualify to be loved by God.

God's Love, Incomparable To Man's Love

God's love for us, secondly, is incomparable. Look at **verse 7, "For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die."** You can't compare God's love to human love. I mean, he tries, he says, 'Well, you know, maybe you could comprehend somebody dying in the place of someone else [*Tale of Two Cities*], if that person was really a good person. I mean, for lack of a better illustration, he's been the number one most admired, most trusted American for what, 20 years, and that's Billy Graham. Let's say, hostages had him, and they said '*Look, we're going to kill someone, and it's either going to be Graham or someone else. And unless someone steps forward to let us kill them in his place, he's dead.*' Well I know and you know, somebody would. Right? But what if it wasn't Billy Graham held hostage, what if it was Adolf Hitler? And they said, '*Look, it's life for life. Either someone steps in and takes his place or we blow him from here to eternity.*' Man, I know I'd struggle with that, wouldn't you? I wouldn't have my hand up '*Oh me, oh me, I'll take Hitler's place.*' (Maybe he deserves it, Lord.) He's a creep, Lord. Human love is always conditioned by a person's behavior and intrinsic goodness. That's why it's so easy to love the people that get along with you. Don't you just love people that like the things you like, and like to do the things you like to do, and think the way you think? I just love those kind of people, don't you? I like to be around them. They agree with me, and I agree with them. But there's some other people that I have a hard time being around, people that don't think like I think, people that disagree with me -- people that don't like what I like. Man, it gets harder to love them, doesn't it? Human love will always let you down. Some of you are banking, and you're doing it mistakenly, you're banking on human love. Well, my spouse loves me, I'm getting my fulfillment in life and security in life out of that. She loves me, he loves me. Hey, I talk to broken hearted men and women all the time, who never expected that their spouse would step out on them. Human love will let you down. I know my Daddy loves me, I know my Mommy loves me. Yes, but you know, human love will let you down. I know people who have been hurt and wounded by well-meaning parents. But no parent is perfect, they're going to let you down. '*Well my friends will stick by me!*' (chuckle) You haven't lived long enough [if you think that], that's all (if you say something like that). Human love will let you down, I don't care who it is. But Jesus Christ [Yeshua haMeschiach] will **never** let you down. He's the friend, the Bible says, that sticks closer than a brother. [David said that of Jonathan, Saul's son and his best friend-but they were both believers] Human goodness is conditioned always, human love, I mean, is conditioned always by a person's goodness and their good behavior. When I was growing up, the philosophy I was taught as far as God's love for me could be summarized by just half of the song "*Jesus loves me, I know.*" Actually this is a verse I never heard until I was a Christian a few years. But there's a verse that summarizes my whole experience in what I thought it was to be a Christian, and it starts out by this verse, "*Jesus loves me when I'm good, when I do the things I should.*" And that sort of summarized my whole walk with the Lord. In fact I just discovered some books that we had stowed away, they're little story rhymes for children, published by the church I

used to be part of. Oh, what horrible stories, man. These little kids did something bad, and the angels were frowning and crying, but that's what I was raised on. I read it and thought, *'Man, this is nice stuff growing up to, Jesus loves me when I'm good, when I do the things I should.'*

“What a tragedy, that the world doesn't understand that the kind of people God loves are the very people who think God doesn't love them.”

But you know the truth of the Scripture goes way beyond that. The next stanza says "Jesus loves me when I'm bad, even though it makes him sad." Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes! Jesus loves me! 'Yes, Jesus loves *me*, the Bible tells me so.' God loved us when we were helpless, ungodly, sinners, who were living their lives in opposition to him and to his will. We were his enemies. And God has proven his love for us. Look at **verse 8**, **“But God demonstrates his own love toward us.”** The word "demonstrates" could be translated **“God shows”** or **“God proves his own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”** God wasn't content with merely mouthing the words *“Oh, I love you,”* you know. He knew we needed a little more to hang on to than that. Talk is cheap, especially knowing that we would go into situations where we might wonder, *‘Does God love me?’ ‘If God loves me, then how could I be going through what I'm going through right now?’* [that question was just answered in the preceding sermon *“Assurance in Suffering”*] *‘If God loves me, how could I be told by the doctor that I'll never be cured of the disease I have? How could I be told that I've lost my savings? How could I be told, that I'm going to be laid-off next week if God's a God of love?’* God knew he needed more than words. And so God proved it, he backed it up, he demonstrated it. Because, how else do you prove or define love? You can talk it, but you have to show it, don't you. **“God so loved the world that he”** -- what? -- **“he gave.”** He backed it up with action. Look at 1st John. Keep a marker here in Romans. Near the book of Revelation. **1st John chapter 4, verse 9, “By this”** -- John tells us about God's love and how God's proven his love and demonstrated it -- **“By this the love of God was manifested (or shown) to us, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through him.”** In this is love. You want to know if God loves you? -- you have to look at the cross. You have to look at what happened when Jesus (Yeshua) died on the cross. **“In this is love.” “Not that we loved God”** he says in **verse 10, “but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for the propitiation for our sins.”** The result of that is **verse 19, “we love him, because he first loved us.”** Oh, God help us to begin to comprehend just how much we're loved by God. A lot of times you hear people saying, *“If I were living a better life I would come to Christ.”* Or *“I'm just too bad for God to*

love me.” **What a tragedy, that the world doesn't understand that the kind of people God loves are the very people who think God doesn't love them.** Isn't that incredible? Think of it, when Jesus was on the earth and the proud Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders of the day, they walked around, and Jesus actually said they strutted around in their robes and they had tassels and fringes on their garments, and they loved to swing around and the tassels would fly, you know. And they loved to pray long prayers, and they'd pray prayers like “God, thank you, oh thank you God, that I'm not a sinner like she is,” you know. And there you are, sitting there thinking ‘Guess God doesn't love me. This religious person thanks God he's not a person like me.’ And yet, who gave Jesus the hardest time? His whole ministry, who fought him-tooth and nail, and nailed him to a cross? These religious goody-goodies, who outwardly were so right, and inwardly were so wrong. But who was drawn to Christ (Yeshua haMeschiach)? Who did Jesus love? **He loved the people who needed help. He loved the people who needed a saviour, he loved the people who were sick in sin, who were “hopeless cases,” who were at desperate ends. Those are the people Jesus loves.** And he loves those people today, he loves me, he loves you. How can you be too bad to come to Christ? How could you be too gross for Jesus (Yeshua) to love you? Explain it to me. The death of Christ, you see, doesn't become effectual for you when you become **good enough**. There's nowhere in this book where you can see that it's stated that God will love you as soon as you become **this good**. Nowhere in the Bible do you see God telling you, ‘That in this book, he says, that if he looks in you and finds a particle of goodness, he'll love you.’ You won't find that in the Bible. Instead, you'll find that the only reason why God loves you, and the only reason God loves me, is not because he looks in and he sees a speck of goodness in us, but because he is love, and he just chooses to love us, period. It is not based on anything emanating from us - - not based on anything in us. That has tremendous implications, because that would mean that he couldn't stop loving us either. [Now here is where the theology of various parts of the body of Christ have different interpretations. Some very real Scriptures say, Jesus' own words, **“that unless our righteousness far exceeds that of the Pharisees, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”** Only way to square this with what Pastor Martin is saying here about Romans 5:6-8 is to realize that God even loves those he's forced to throw into the Gehenna fires of hell, which is true. It's hard to imagine, but God must still love Satan and the demons, which must infuriate Satan. So don't confuse God's love for a license to do as one pleases with total disregard for God's laws of love. And I'm not talking about some legalistic guilt-trip here. As we shall see when we get to Romans 7 and 8, the only way to fulfill the Holy Law, which James calls the royal law in James 1, is by the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit who dwells within believers of Jesus, Yeshua. Then as Jeremiah 31:31-33 and Hebrews 8:6-10 bring out, God's Holy Law is written in our hearts and minds (by this same indwelling Holy Spirit).]

The Kind Of People God Loves

In this section of Romans chapter 5, Paul reveals the kind of people God loves. He loved, proved his love, by dying for those who deserved it the least. He died for us when we first of all, verse 6, when we were helpless, or NIV says what? – “powerless.” Do you see that? When there was nothing we could do to help ourselves. When we were absolutely helpless, Christ (Yeshua haMeschiach) died for us. And if you're helpless this morning, and somehow by the grace of God you stumbled in here, and it was all you could do to stay, but you're listening -- listen, if you're helpless, he died for you. There's a little story Jesus told in the gospel of Luke where he's talking about the kind of people he came to save. And one of the stories he uses was, he said, **“A certain woman lost a coin”** and he was talking about in those days, and still you go over and look at the Bedouin who wear their riches on their forehead and around their necks. And many women, when they became engaged, they weren't given a big hunk of rock on a ring, instead they were given a chain of coins, and they would wear them around their heads. And it was very precious to them, just like ladies, your engagement rings are precious to you. Now he says, **“What woman among you, if she lost her coin, and it fell into the dust somewhere”** -- because they had dirt floors -- **“wouldn't sweep that house and search diligently until she found it?”** He says, *‘It's that way with me.’* There are people he's saying today are like that lost coin. They are stuck and can't do anything to help themselves. What could the coin do to help itself get found? *‘Here I am. Whoa, here I am.’* Roll out a little? No, I mean a coin is a perfectly helpless object, isn't it? The only way it could be found is if somebody else did all the finding. When you were helpless, Christ died for you. Christianity, Messianic Judaism, is not a self-help religion. But some people, you know, they look at Christianity, like here's a guy drowning, and they start getting out the life-saving manual and saying *‘Lesson # 1 of swimming is kick your feet.’* There's no time for that. You see, Jesus, Yeshua has got to be the Savior that pulls you out. And he is.

Jesus Died For The Ungodly, The Sinners

Secondly, the kind of people Jesus, Yeshua died for, **verse 6** says, for the ungodly, **“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”** An ungodly person is someone who's living like God doesn't even exist. That's what ungodliness is. It's just living like *‘There isn't a God.’* Just living like a dog lives. You know, just for yourself, for your own pleasure, for your own gratification, sniffing around the world, looking for something to get

into. *'Oh, here's a piece of dead meat. I'll eat the road-kill. I'm a dog. I don't know it's not good for me, I'm just a dog.'* And there are people today who are living like there isn't a God, they eat the road-kill of this world. And they wonder why their lives are so miserable, and they're so sick. **I'll tell you why you're sick. It's because you're living like there isn't a God, when there is a God.** And there's a God who loves you, and a God who has prepared a place for you, and a God that you can never be happy until you know.

You've Got To Admit Your Sin Before You Can Be Released From The Bondage Of That Sin, Because Until You Need A Saviour You Can't Be Saved

The third kind of person that Jesus died for are those who are still sinners. **Look at verse 8. "that God demonstrates, shows, proves his own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners"--or still sinners--"Christ died for us."** In other words, right now. You walked in here, you're still sinning, maybe this very minute -- I don't know what you could be doing, but you're sinning. Christ died for you. Sometimes we get this idea that he might have died for us right up to that point. The verse says he died for us while we were **still** sinners. You know, before you can really appreciate the love of God and experience his salvation, you've got to admit that you're a sinner. Many people today aren't interested in doing that. We call sin any name except sin. Don't we? The sin of adultery *'Awh now, we call it a fling, just a fling, an affair.'* Oh that sounds so nice, come sit in my office and listen to the broken hearts and the broken homes. Listen to the cries of someone who's messed up his marriage, or someone who's messed up her life, and you call it an affair and a fling. Sodomy, the sin of homosexuality, by an interesting twist of words, is now being gay. Explain it to me, I don't get it. I'm really bugged by it, every Christmas I'm so bugged, because I used to love *"Deck the Halls,"* but I can't sing it. How can you walk down the street singing *"Don we know our gay apparel???"* They'd think we were a bunch of perverts wouldn't they? We have to sing now, *"Don we know our happy apparel"* now, I guess. But we don't want to call it sin. Drunkenness, it's a disease. Give me a break, a disease? They why doesn't a stay in a hospital cure it? Where's the drug. It's not a disease, the Bible calls it sin. Infanticide, killing babies, we call a choice today. Isn't that clean and antiseptic sounding? And now if you're in favor of murdering babies, ripping them apart, limb by limb and pulling them out of a mother's womb, you're pro-choice. It sounds better than pro-murdering babies, doesn't it? *"I'm pro-butchering babies."* That just wouldn't sell. You wouldn't get public support. So let's dress it up, let's call it pro-choice. Rebellion has become low self-esteem. Oh, that's the problem for everything, isn't it? Oh, no, the real problem is, your parents did something wrong. Amen? Man, that's

got all the bases covered. Right there, *'Mon and Dad messed up and that's why I'm the nerd I am today.'* *'My parents, they dropped me.'* *'My mother, when she was pregnant with me, burped wrong, and I've never gotten over it.'* *'You know the prenatal influence, well I've been taken back into my mother's womb.'* I hear Christians getting into this [modern psychology] garbage, regressing. **Watch out, gang, don't get involved in counseling that takes you back in your past. That is wrong. It is metaphysical, it's part of the whole New Age deal. You don't have to go back.** Paul said, **"Forgetting the things that are behind me, I press on, I go on to the goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, I press toward that mark."** I don't go back and, *'Oh, let me see, it was in the delivery room.'* *'Oh, it was the bright light in my eyes, that was it! That's made me the person I am today.'* Give me a break. And then I think the funniest of all is when your kid is hyperactive. You got to change all the labels nowadays, I got to be so careful of what I say. Because we don't have hyperactive children anymore. Did you know, there aren't any more hyperactive children anymore, there isn't a hyperactive child to anyone who belongs here. Did you know that? They are attention-deficit children [attention-deficit disorder]. Now if you have a child with attention-deficit, aren't they hyperactive? But I mean, it's like, give me a break. Call sin by it's name, it's sin. [There really are a few children who truly are hyperactive, where proper treatment with a drug has made them normal. But not the huge numbers of misdiagnosed ones by school systems and state agencies who only want to drug "problem" kids as a temporary fix to solving a far bigger discipline/child-rearing problem they chose to ignore.] The story is told, that one day Frederick the Great, King of Prussia visited a prison and talked to the inmates, and as he interviewed each of the inmates, they began to tell him these long drawn-out sorry-stories, endless tales of how they were innocent, and their motives were misunderstood, or a miscarriage of justice has taken place, or they were the wrong person in the wrong place, at the wrong time-and this was all a terrible miscarriage of justice. Finally the king stopped at the cell of a convict who remained silent. He didn't volunteer anything [like] *'Oh, your majesty, I need to talk to you, it was my attorney that did me in, he was in collusion with the other person'* you know. The king looked at this guy who hadn't said a word yet, and says *"Well, I suppose you're an innocent victim of a miscarriage of justice too."* And he said *"No sir, I am not."* *"I'm guilty and I deserve my punishment."* Turning to the warden the king said, *"Hey! Release this rascal before he corrupts all the fine innocent people in this place."* [laughter] It's interesting, his release came when he admitted *"I deserve this."* That's why I just talked about sin. It wasn't to rile you. It wasn't to make you mad at me. It wasn't to pick on you. It was to tell you, **'You've got to admit your sin before you can be released from the bondage of that sin. Because you see, until you need a savior you can't be saved. Until you know you are in trouble, and you deserve it, that's when Jesus Christ (Yeshua haMeschiach) is right there to pull you out.'** But until then, I tell you, you don't have a chance of being saved, until you're ready to admit your sin, and call it sin in the sight of God, and stop justifying it. The Bible says that while we were his enemies, we

were saved by the death of Christ. Look at **verse 8 "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."** The kind of people God loves, believe it or not, are his enemies--the people who might shake their fist at God, the people who at one point in their lives would love to tear God off his throne, they hate him so much--do you know God loves you? God loves you, you rebellious person. God died for you. Think of the crowd at the cross as Jesus (Yeshua) is hanging there on cross. Think of it. As he hangs there, there are people who have spit on him, there are people who have beaten him, bludgeoned him almost to death. There were people who had taken him by the beard and yanked his beard out. They hated him so much! He hangs there as they mock him saying **"You claim to be the Son of God. Well if God takes delight in you, let him deliver you."** And Jesus cries out **"Father, forgive them, forgive them."** God loves you.

The Kind Of Love God Has Toward You

During the Revolutionary War a pastor by the name of Peter Miller -- I bet you didn't get this in the history class last year, you won't get it this year either--but during the war, the Revolutionary War, Peter Miller, a pastor in a little town, had been harassed for years by a guy who didn't live too far from him. This guy was a scoundrel, he was a creep. Today you might be able to get an order of protection from the guy, but back then this man breathed out threats, he did mean things, he constantly harassed Peter as well as his congregation. If ever, ever Peter Miller had an enemy it was this old man. One day troops came to town, a big commotion, everybody went out to the square to find out what's going on, and here was that terrible creep of a man in shackles being led away. *"What's going on? What did he do?"* He was accused of treason. He was arrested and he was to be tried. Word got to Peter Miller that this man had been tried for treason. If he were to be convicted, he would be hanged. So he began to walk and walk and walk, sixty miles he walked [that used to be considered a day's walk in those days, how unhealthy we've become!] He walked until he got to the camp where General George Washington was stationed. He'd gotten there too late to see his enemy, he'd already been taken away, they were getting ready to hang him. Peter Miller began to use all his persuasive skills to try to get General Washington to grant a pardon for the man. After listening a long time, Washington told him, *"Pastor Miller"* he said, *"I'm sorry, even though I've heard everything you can say, I just don't feel I should pardon your friend."* *"My friend!?* *Let's get one thing clear General, he **is not** my friend! Why, he's the worst enemy that I have on the whole face of the earth. He hates my guts. For years he's been harassing me. Look, call him anything, but don't call him my friend."* Washington said *"What???* *You walked sixty miles, and you begged this hour for this man's*

pardon, and he's not even your friend, he's your enemy?? Why that sheds a whole different light on this." And Washington granted a pardon, gave it to Peter Miller. Peter Miller quickly took it to the scaffold. He got there just as his enemy was walking up the steps of the scaffold, the executioner there, you know, hanging onto him, taking him up. The crowd parted. Miller is saying "Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait!" His old enemy looked down and he said "Oh Peter Miller, you've come to see me die, this is your way of getting revenge, you've got to have a front row seat huh? Well you watch me die." And then he saw Miller come up to the top of the platform and hand the executioner a piece of paper, and he was told "You're a free man. Peter Miller has just delivered your pardon." While we were enemies of God, he sent his son to die for us. Not while we were good, not while we'd reformed, not after we got cleaned up and made presentable, but while we were his enemies. Obviously, this kind of love wasn't based on something God saw in us, get that through your head. Or better, get it into your heart. God's love for you, that sent him to die for you while you were helpless, ungodly, an enemy, was not because he saw anything good in you or lovable in you at all. God doesn't love you because you're lovable. He loves you because he is love. And he's chosen to bestow love on you. He's chosen to love you, and that's why he loves you, not because you deserve it, not because you're lovely, not because you're lovable. He was not loving us in response to something to love about us. I love my child. We were in the mountains the last few days. Beautiful up there right now. It is indescribably gorgeous in the fields around Flagstaff. The yellow flowers. If you were to paint it, someone would say "I think you're a little off here" with all this yellow. It's just spectacular. Anyway, we were going on this hike and I said, "Come-on let's go to the top of the mountain." Have you ever tried to haul two kids and an arthritic wife up climbing the mountains. Anyway it seemed to be a great idea until I started smelling something. I was holding Ellie in one of these packs where you can hold them in front of you and you sort of support them on your shoulder. And I thought, you know, these animals are very active, we must be tromping right through their bathroom. Boy, I can't get away from that smell. "Oh, gross, what's on my hand!?" She had pooped right through her diaper [laughter], and onto me! And we're in the middle of a hike! And there's no diapers and no wipies, and what am I going to do with this kid!? My wife can't carry her. (It crossed my mind. *Here Honey.*) Twigs, leaves, what do you do? I moved her to my back, and I stayed so the wind was blowing like this. The point is, my love for her was not in response to something to love about her. I mean, I was going to keep carrying her. I'm her dad. She's mine. And I love her, even when she's that way. **When we were spiritually bankrupt, when we least deserved God's love, that's when Christ died for us.** Christian assurance is all hinged on this point, gang. You know, it seems like things get simpler and simpler as we go together in the Word, and I think this is one of those things that's really gotten simple. **If you really believe God loves you unconditionally, then you're going to be sure of your salvation.** Because, this is really important because if you think that you somehow deserve God's love and favor, then you can never really be sure that God will keep on loving

you, because some day he might see something in you that doesn't deserve be loved, and he'll stop loving you. Wow, I just read the most incredible story in the Moody Monthly Magazine this month about a lady, she's now older, she was writing of an experience when she was sixteen years old. And she was a beautiful young girl. She'd always taken a lot of pride in her outward appearance and this beautiful physical stature. The family always referred to her as Daddy's sweet little beautiful girl, and she had a tremendous relationship with her Dad all the time she was growing up. Even when she was sixteen she still just loved her Daddy. They had a special relationship. In fact just two weeks before the accident she had won a contest. Her Dad had been standing there with his arm around her shoulder, so proud of her. *'Honey, you're so beautiful, I just love you.'* And then she had a terrible automobile accident. All she remembers is seeing the car coming towards her, she remembers like flying through the window and that's it. She woke up in the ambulance, her face burning. She started to reach up and touch it, the attendant said, *"No, no, no, no, keep your hands down, lie quietly."* Went into the hospital. For weeks she was in and out of consciousness. When she was conscious she kept asking for a mirror. *"I want a mirror."* She could hardly talk, her lips felt like they were huge. Her face felt just so tight. And she could hardly open her eyes, just little slits that she could see a little bit of light through. *"I want a mirror! Dad, I want a mirror! Let me see a mirror!"* And he says, *"No!, honey, and for the last time, I'm telling you, No."* And then she said some incredibly harsh words to him, she says, *"It must be because I'm so ugly now, and you don't love me because I'm so ugly."* And she said to this day she remembered perfectly her Dad's response. He just sunk down into the chair there in her room, put his face in his hands and began to cry. The next day, still set on getting a mirror (and you know how clever 16-year-olds can be) she pretended like she was taking a bath, had the curtains closed, and when the cleaning person came into her room she said *"Oh, you know, I've misplaced my mirror. Could you hand me that one out there please. I'm finished my bath."* *"Oh sure."* And the hand went in-between the curtain, you know, just an arm giving her the mirror. She took the mirror, looked at herself, and her heart almost stopped. She was so ugly, so hideous. Still pieces of gravel in her face. Still huge bruises. Her lips were swollen and cut and oozing. But she was staring at that mirror and didn't even hear her Dad walk in and said *"Oh honey, let me have that."* And he had to pry her fingers one finger at a time away from that mirror. And the rage and the anger just spewed force, and she said *"Now I see why you didn't want me to see, no wonder you don't love me anymore, I'm so ugly."* And he sat down on her bed and says, *"Honey, you are so wrong. Honey, I've always loved you. I've loved you in the beautiful times and the ugly times. Remember when you were a little girl and I was potty training you, I loved you then, it wasn't a pretty time. Remember when you were older and sick and bent over the toilet and I held your head? You weren't very pretty then, but oh I loved you."* He said, *"Honey, it's not what you are on the outside, I love you because you're my child."* And then in probably the most tremendous demonstration of love that I've ever read about, her bend down and he kissed her broken,

disfigured, bruised lips. There was no doubt in her heart, she says ***“I know you love me, if you could kiss me in all my ugliness I know you love me.”*** When you were at your ugliest, Christ embraced you. The picture here in Romans 5 is ugly. When you're at your worst Christ loves you. He doesn't love you because he looks in and sees *‘Oh, some day you're going to do this, oh, some day you're going to do that.’* He loves you because he's chosen to. And that has tremendous repercussions in a life. ***Because if you believe that, then you'll understand that even when you get ugly again, he doesn't stop loving you.*** Were you ugly last week? Has your life been disfigured and made gross by the sin in your life? Christ will accept you right where you are today. Jesus said, ***“Whoever will come to me, I will never, no, never cast them away.”*** It's not a chance that brought you here today, it was not coincidence, it was God. He wanted you to hear how much he loves you. He wants you to know that nothing can separate you from that love once you accept it from him. And you may turn ugly again. And precious Christian, you may be ugly right now. But it does not effect at all God's love for you, because that's not why he loves you. He has ***chosen*** to love you -- that's why he loves you. And that can never be changed. He can't love you more than he loves you now, he won't ever love you less. Some of you, because of the ugliness in your life, you've been staying away from God. Christians perhaps have been giving you the wrong idea about God. Maybe you were raised in a church where you got the impression that as long as you were lovely, you would be loved. But now you're not, your life is far from lovely. You've heard it for yourself. The kind of people God loves can be the ugliest. I want to give you an opportunity to let God love you. OK? I want to give you an opportunity today to ask Jesus Christ into your life, to accept his offer to love you. Human love will fail you, you know it, it already has. Today if you'll accept his gift of love, you will actually be finding what you are looking for, you'll find your guilt will be taken away. He died on the cross to take away your sins. He was punished in your place. The emptiness in your heart, you've been trying to stuff it with all kinds of things and you're still empty inside, that will be filled because there's a Jesus shaped vacuum in your life. And only he can fill it. And you won't have to fear death anymore. The Bible says that men and women are held captive through the fear of death all their lives. You don't have to fear death anymore. The Bible says, ***‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’*** If you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and you'll confess that with your mouth, you will be saved. You are the kind of person God loves. Now, pray with me, ***“Lord Jesus, please come into my life. I always thought I was too ugly, Lord, for you to want to have anything to do with me. I didn't know how much you love me. I'm so surprised. I need you so much. Please accept me, just like I am. Please forgive my sins and set me free. Take away my guilt. Kill the inside emptiness, Lord. I believe you died for me. And I believe you rose from the dead. I accept you as my Savior and my Lord right now. Come into my life, in Jesus name, Amen.”*** [transcript by permission of Romans 5:6-8, by Pastor J. Mark Martin, Calvary Community Church, P.O. Box 39607, Phoenix, AZ 85069.]