

GOD'S UNBELIEVABLE LOVE (PART 2): THE GREAT DEPTH OF JUSTIFICATION ROMANS 05:06–11

Introduction: Love (Agape)

This passage discusses God's unbelievable love. It shows the great depth of justification. The passage also gives one of the clearest definitions of *agape love*. It actually shows the meaning of *agape love*. Agape love goes much farther than *phileo love*. Phileo love is brotherly love, a love that gives itself for a brother. But *agape love* is a new kind of love: it is a godly love, a sacrificial love, a love that gives itself for those powerless (Rom. 5:6), for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6), for sinners (Rom. 5:8), and for enemies (Rom. 5:10) (see Jn. 21:15-17).

- I. We were ungodly and powerless, yet Christ died for us (vv. 6-7).
- II. We were sinners, yet God demonstrated His love for us (vv. 8-9).
- III. We were enemies, yet God reconciled and saved us (vv. 10-11).

I. Romans 05:06–07 Death of Jesus and the State of Man

We were ungodly and powerless, yet Christ died for us. God's great love is seen in this unbelievable act.

1. We were "powerless" (asthenon): weak, worthless, useless, helpless, hopeless, destitute, without strength. We were spiritually worthless and useless and unable to help ourselves.

Job 10:1 "I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul."

Psa 31:10 My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.

Psa 42:6 My God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon — from Mount Mizar.

Psa 69:2 I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me.

Psa 73:2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold.

Psa 73:16 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me.

Jer 2:25 Do not run until your feet are bare and your throat is dry. But you said, 'It's no use! I love foreign gods, and I must go after them.'

1 Th 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

Eph 2:12 Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

2. We were ungodly (asebon): not like God, different from God, profane, having a different life-style than God. God is godly, that is, perfect; man is ungodly, that is, he is not like God; he is imperfect.

Rom 1:28-32 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

1 Tim 1:9-10 We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine.

Jude 1:17-19 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

3. It was at "just the right time" (kata kairon) that Christ died for us. It was in God's appointed time: His destined time, appropriate time. Men had to be prepared for Christ before God could send Him into the world. Men had to learn that they were without strength and ungodly, that they needed a Saviour. (This was the purpose of the Old Testament and the law, to show men that they were sinful. See Rom. 4:14-15.)

Mark 1:15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Gal 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

1 Tim 2:5-6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

Titus 1:2-3 *A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour.*

Heb 9:26 *Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

4. Christ died for us. The word “for” (hyper) means for our benefit, for our sake, on our behalf, in our stead, as our substitute. (See Mk. 10:45.)

- a. Christ died as our sacrifice.

1 Cor 5:7 *Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

2 Cor 5:15 *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Eph 5:2 *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Heb 7:26-27 *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*

Heb 9:13-14 *The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

Heb 9:25-26 *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Heb 10:12, 14 *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God....because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

Heb 10:10 *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

- b. Christ died as our ransom (see Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13-14).

Rom 3:24 *And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Col 1:14 *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 9:12 *He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Rev 5:9 *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

- c. Christ died as our Atonement (see Rom. 3:25. See 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

Rom 3:25 *God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.*

1 John 2:2 *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

1 John 4:10 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

5. God's love is an uncommon and unbelievable love. Think about the illustration given in Scripture:

=> Rarely would a person die for a just and upright man (righteous).

=> A few might dare to die for a good man.

A very small number of people would sacrifice their own lives in order to save others or to represent a cause or a leader they believed in.

But this is not what Christ did. Christ did not die for the righteous and godly man or for the good and pure man. He went well beyond what men do. Christ...

- died for the ungodly, for those who were the very opposite of righteous and good.
- died for those “powerless”: the useless, destitute, worthless and those without value to society and men.

Christ died for those for whom no man would die, for those who were of no value and of no good. He died for those who were diametrically opposed to God, the very opposite from all that He is. Such is the unbelievable love of God; such is the depth of justification.

II. *Romans 05:08–09 Jesus Christ's Death was for Sinners*

We were sinners, yet God proved His love to us. The word “demonstrates” (sunistemi) means to show, prove, or exhibit. It is the present tense: God is always showing and proving His love to us. The word “sinners” (hamartolon) refers to a man who is sinful, the man who sins...

- by disobeying God's Word and will (see Rom. 1:29-31).
- by living selfishly.
- by ignoring God's commandments.
- by doing his own thing.
- by the cravings of sinful man and the lust of the eyes.
- by boasting of what he has and does.

The point is this: it is “*while* we were still sinners” that God proved His love to us. This is the unbelievable love of God, that He stooped down to save sinners. We would expect Him to save righteous and good men, but it catches us completely off guard when it is stated that He saves sinners. Such is the unbelievable love of God.

Now note how God proved His love.

1. God proved His love by giving up His only Son to die *for* us. Some earthly fathers would be willing to give up their sons for a “good” man or for a great cause. But how many would be willing to give up their sons for a man who committed treason or for a man who murdered one of the greatest men living? Think of the enormous price God paid in proving His love: He gave up His Son to die for the unworthy and useless, the ungodly and sinful, the wicked and depraved — the worst sinners and outcasts imaginable. Just think what God Himself must have gone through: the feelings, the suffering, the hurt, the pain, the terrible emotional strain. Just think what is involved in God giving up His Son:

⇒ God had to send His Son *out of* the spiritual and eternal world (dimension) *into* the physical and corruptible world (dimension).

- => God had to humiliate His Son by stripping Him of His eternal glory and insisting that He become clothed with corruptible flesh and die as a man.
- => God had to watch His Son walk through life being rejected, denied, cursed, abused, arrested, tortured and murdered. God had to sit back and watch His Son suffer being murdered by the hands of men; He had to sit back when He knew He could reach out and deliver Him.
- => God had to destine His Son to die upon the cross for the sins of men.
- => God had to lay all the sins of the world upon His Son and let Him bear them all.
- => God had to judge His Son as the sinner and condemn Him to death for sin.
- => God had to turn His back upon Christ in death.
- => God had to cast His wrath against sin upon Christ.
- => God has to bear the pain of His Son's sufferings eternally, for He is eternal and the death of His Son is ever before His face. (Just imagine! It is beyond our comprehension, but the eternal agony is a fact because of the eternal nature of God.)

As stated, God proved His love. He has given up His Son to die for us. We do not deserve it — we never have and we never will — but God loves us with an unbelievable love. Therefore, He has given His Son to die *for us*, as our substitute, in our behalf.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

1 Cor 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

2. God proves His love by justification through the blood of Christ (see Rom. 5:1; 3:25).

Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Col 1:20 And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

3. God proves His love by saving us from *wrath* (see *God's Wrath*, Rom. 1:18. Also see Rom. 5:1.)

John 3:16-17 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Gal 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*

III. Romans 05:10–11 Reconciliation of Enemies of God

We were enemies, yet God has reconciled and saved us. God reconciles and saves us by doing three things.

1. God reconciles us by Christ’s death (see Rom. 5:10).
2. God saves us by Christ’s life. “His life” means the life of the *living Lord*. Christ stands before God as our great Intercessor and Mediator. Standing before God, He stands as the Sinless and Righteous Son of God, as the Ideal and Perfect Man. When we believe in Christ, God takes our belief and counts it as righteousness. The Ideal Righteousness of Christ covers us, and God accepts and saves us because we *trust* Christ as the living Lord, as our Intercessor and Mediator before God.

Rom 8:34 *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

Heb 7:25 *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

Heb 9:15 *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Heb 8:6 *But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

Heb 9:24 *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

Heb 12:24 *To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

1 John 2:1-2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

3. God gives us joy through the reconciliation of Christ. A person who receives so much from God is bound to be filled with joy and rejoicing (see *Joy*, Ph. 1:4).

John 15:11 *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

John 16:24 *"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

1 Pet 1:8-9 *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Psa 16:11 *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

Psa 126:2 *Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."*

Isa 35:10 *And the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

Isa 12:3 *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Isa 61:10 *I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ■*

ROMANS 05: 10
RECONCILE, RECONCILIATION (KATALLASSO)

*For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **Romans 05:10***

To change, to change thoroughly, to exchange, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had something between them are restored and reunited.

Three points should be noted about reconciliation.

1. The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin. Men are said to be enemies of God (Rom. 5:10), and the word "enemies" refers back to the sinners and the ungodly (Rom. 5:6, 8). The "enemies" of God are the sinners and ungodly of this world. This simply means that every man is an enemy of God, for every man is a sinner and ungodly. This may seem unkind and harsh, but it is exactly what Scripture is saying. The fact is clearly seen by thinking about the matter for a moment.

The sinner cannot be said to be a friend of God's. He is antagonistic toward God, opposing what God stands for. The sinner is...

- rebelling against God
- cursing God
- disobeying God
- denying God
- rejecting God
- ignoring God
- fighting against God
- refusing

When any of us sin, we work against God and promote evil by word and example.

- => When the sinner lives for himself, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because God does not live for Himself. God gave Himself up in the most supreme way possible: He gave His only Son to die *for* us.
- => When the sinner lives for the world and worldly things, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because he chooses the temporal — that which passes away — over God. He chooses it when God has provided eternal life for him through the death of His Son.

This is the point of God's great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we

were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. As stated above, it is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.

2. The way men are reconciled to God is by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Very simply stated, when a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him...
 - God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death of the man.
 - God accepts the sins borne by Christ as the sins committed by the man.
 - God accepts the condemnation borne by Christ as the condemnation due to the man.

Therefore, the man is freed from his sins and the punishment due his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man. The man who truly believes that God loves that much — enough to give His only begotten Son — becomes acceptable to God, reconciled forever and ever.

3. God is the One who reconciles, not men. Men do not reconcile themselves to God. They cannot do enough work or enough good to become acceptable to God. Reconciliation is entirely the act of God. God is the One who reaches out to men and reconciles them unto Himself. Men *receive* the reconciliation of God.

2 Cor 5:18 *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: (see vv. 19-21)*

Eph 1:6 *To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*

Eph 2:16 *And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

Col 1:20 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Heb 2:17 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

1 John 4:19 *We love because he first loved us. □*