

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ 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! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (NIV84)

Them: Love Speaks Unconditionally.

1. Christ died for sinners.
2. Christ reconciled his enemies to God.

“You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.” That is the way we operate by nature. I'll do something nice for you, if you do something nice for me. But if you don't do something for me, there is no way I'm doing anything for you. “Tit for tat” we say. You mistreat me; I'm going to mistreat you. You do something bad to me; I'll retaliate and do the same to you. Our actions are conditional—we treat others how they treat us. Our love is often the same. We only show love to someone if they show love to us.

But today we see that love speaks unconditionally. For Christ died for sinners and he reconciled his enemies to God.

Paul starts off our text by talking about how powerless we were. To be powerless means that you are unable to do something. You are physically or mentally unable to accomplish a task. That is us by nature. We are powerless to obey God's will. We sin against him constantly. Numerous times a day we fail to obey his commands. If we are powerless to obey God's will, that means we are sinners. That is why Paul said in verse 8 that God showed love to us **when we were still sinners.**

So we are powerless sinners. Sinners who deserve God's wrath and punishment. Sinners who deserve to suffer with the devil forever. Not

only are we powerless to keep God's commands, we are also powerless to save ourselves. We can't earn our own way to eternal life. And we can't do enough good things to please God. We can't convince him of to save us by what we do or how good we are. So in God's eyes, we are all the same. We are wicked and miserable sinners—powerless sinners.

So God showed love to us. An unconditional love through his Son, Jesus Christ. Paul in verse six, **You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.** And in verse 8, **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Christ died for those who sinned against him. Christ showed love for those whom did not deserve his love. It is an unconditional love. It is a love given to him us of his grace. It is a love that we can't earn nor do we deserve. And since Christ died for us we are saved from our sins. They have been paid for by the blood of Christ.

And since Christ died and saved us, that means we are justified. That means that God has declared us not guilty, as in a court of law. God, our righteous Judge, did not see us as sinners. That is because Christ took our sins upon himself. He suffered the punishment and condemnation we deserved. So when God looks at us he doesn't see sinners. He sees those who are pure and innocent in his eyes, just like his Son. So he justifies us, declares us not guilty. We are declared not guilty of his sin and deserving of condemnation in God's eyes because Christ suffered the condemnation for us.

And remember for whom God did this. He did it for powerless sinners. He did this for the ungodly. We were ungodly in the fact that we were sinners. We were impious. We didn't know God, nor care about him. And it is for us—these ungodly powerless sinners that Christ gave up his life. He showed us unconditional love. And if Christ did this for the ungodly, that means he did this for all people. He died for all people—he justified all people through the shedding of his blood on the cross.

That Christ did this for the ungodly, the most amazing part. Paul makes this point in verse 7, **Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly**

dare to die. If your kid trips in the middle of a busy street with a large semi bearing down on him, you might run onto the street and push him out of the way. You might risk your life for someone you loved. Or take a soldier for example. He might jump on top of a grenade to protect the lives of his fellow soldiers. But that is rare occurrence. It is just as much of an act of love as it is an act of bravery. But would they jump on a grenade for their enemies? Would they jump in front of a moving car for someone they have never met? What about if it was someone who just stole your purse, and was trying to get away when they tripped—would you jump in front of a car for him?

Christ did—he died for those who sinned against him. It is an unconditional love. Do you love unconditionally? Will you help anyone—in any situation? What about the little girl who needs help washing her hands? Or the grumpy old man who fell down and isn't able to get back up? Or the bully who is now getting picked on by someone else? What about the teenager who stole from you but has now falling on hard times? Or your co-workers who have been mistreating you, but may now lose their jobs. What about the drunk driver who ran into your sister and took her life? Or the relative who abused you when you were younger? Would you show love them? Is your love unconditional? Or is it conditional? Most likely it's the later. Often how we treat someone depends on how they treat us. Or it is dependent on their reputation—who they are and what they have done in the past. For this we go before God and confess our sins. And we plead for his forgiveness. And then we are reminded of God and his love. And we thank him that he doesn't show love to us depending on what we do. We praise him because his love is unconditional.

God died for sinners. When we were sinning against him and powerless to save ourselves from eternal damnation Christ died for us and saved us. That is unconditional love. But Christ did more than that. He also reconciled us to God.

When God created Adam and Eve he created them in his own image and likeness. They were perfect and holy and knew God's will. But then they doubted God and his love. They were convinced by the devil that God lied to them. And so they ate the forbidden fruit. They

lost the image of God and became sinners. And then they had a son in their own image and likeness. Their children, and every single child born after them were sinners—us included. We were born as God's enemies. We didn't know God, we didn't want anything to do with him—we hated him.

We were at one time, at-one with God. But our sins separate us from God. That is what sin does—it moves us further away from God. It's following the ways of the devil. It's going after the ways of the world. Our sinful nature and our sinful actions turn us away from God. And so we are his enemies.

But then there is Paul in verse 10, **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!** We have been reconciled to God. That means we have been brought back to God. We are no longer his enemies. We are no longer distant from God because of our sins. But we have been brought back to him. We are now at-one with him once again. Through faith we are once again belong to him—just as we were created. This is accomplished through the shedding of Christ's blood. Our sin separates us from God. But on the cross Christ paid for our sins and took away their guilt. Through his death our sins—which separated us from God, have been removed. And so through his death we are now reconciled to God.

But if that's the case through his death, how much more is this is the case through his life. For Jesus didn't just die—he also rose from the dead. And because he rose, we know that we too will rise from the dead. And as believers we will be taken to live with him in heaven. And there in heaven we will live with our Father. We won't be afraid of his wrath, for we have been reconciled to him. Reconciliation really demonstrates the new relationship we have with God. Yet, that relationship is an old one. For it was a relationship we enjoyed at one time long ago—when he first created us.

In his unconditional love, Christ reconciled his enemies to himself. And he calls on us to do the same. To be reconciled to each other. But is that what we always do? What about your spouse who cheated on you, or beat you? Or your child who said some awful things about you before storming off and vowing never to return home? Or your

brother or sister, who manipulated and used you again and again—or lied to your face, stole from you, and turned your other family members against you? Or your boss who chewed you out or fired you for something you didn't do? They separated themselves from you because of their sins. Would you be reconciled to them? Or would you hold a grudge. Would you refuse to forgive them?

Too often it's the later. They hurt you. They mistreated you. They made you feel bad, so you want to get even. You want them to feel exactly how you felt. So you refuse. They come crawling back to you, pleading for your forgiveness. But you shut them out. You want none of it. Because, for you, love is conditional.

But it wasn't for Christ. No Christ's love is unconditional. He died for sinners. He saved the powerless. He justified the ungodly. He reconciled his enemies. Christ's love is truly unconditional. And because he first loved us, we strive to show love to others. On our own love can't speak unconditionally. But in Christ we can. In Christ we can forgive others just as he forgave us. In Christ we can love others no matter how they treat us.

We have many opportunities to let love speak unconditionally. It start with forgiving others. It means to share the gospel with them. To assure them that Christ has paid for the sins of the whole world—theirs included. It is not holding their sins against them. It is being reconciled to them. It is showing love to them. Doing nice things for your enemies—even to the point of putting your life on the line. There are many great opportunities we have to show love to others. We have a great opportunity during the season of Christmas. Show someone love by inviting them to Worship on Christmas Eve. Or invite their children to Kids at Christmas. There is no better what to show someone love and forgiveness than to encourage them to hear the gospel of their Lord, born to save them.

Tit for tat. “You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.” That's the way the world operates. That's the way we used to operate when we were still sinners. But back when we were still sinners, when we were God's enemies, Christ died for us. He reconciled us back to God so that he declared us not guilty. That is true unconditional love. And as we bask in that love we try to follow Christ's example and let love speak unconditionally. Amen.