

“...at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...” – Romans 5v1-11

(Read Romans 5v1-11)

All of us have known the experience of being reluctant to admit to our mistakes or failings, whether that's due to the shame of not meeting the expectations of others or due to the consequences of what we have done. Some of these consequences can be totally life-changing and could lead us in directions that we do not want to go.

As Christians, we are not protected from making mistakes. We still have failings. We sin. Also, we are not now immune from the consequences of those mistakes and failings. So, how can we, as Christians, deal with these realities without fear and with joy?

Firstly, we must remember that God called us in Christ knowing these things are true. *“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly”* (Romans 5v6). *“...while we were enemies, we were reconciled...”* (Romans 5v10). Jesus came *“not to call the righteous, but sinners.”* (Matthew 9v13)

God didn't send Jesus to die for us (the ungodly) so that he could find a way to love us. He loved us (the ungodly) first. In response, he sent his Son to die for us. *“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5v8).

The steadfast love of God is better than life itself (Psalm 63v3). So, this is our foundation. Our greatest treasure in life is to be the recipients of the love of God, above all other circumstances, dreams or desires we might have. Jesus is the demonstration and assurance that this is the case. If we find ourselves doubting the love of God, our response is to fix our eyes on Jesus and understand Who sent him, why he was sent, to whom he was sent and why. The proof of God's love for us is not in what we feel, but in a person - God incarnate.

Secondly, we must remember that God did not call us to himself into a chaotic world, tossed backwards and forwards by ungodliness. God's sovereignty is a mystery that has often perplexed God's people, sometimes leading them to reject it. No matter the troubles we have understanding it, the truth of it is to reassure us, to give us solid ground under our feet and, by doing so, glorify His name. The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 27, asks “What do you understand by the providence of God?” Its answer is:

The Almighty and ever-present power of God<sup>1</sup> by which God upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures,<sup>2</sup> and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—<sup>3</sup> all things, in fact, come to us not by chance<sup>4</sup> but by his fatherly hand.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Jer. 23:23-24](#); [Acts 17:24-28](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Heb. 1:3](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Jer. 5:24](#); [Acts 14:15-17](#); [John 9:3](#); [Prov. 22:2](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Prov. 16:33](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Matt. 10:29](#)

Of course, this doesn't mean that everything turns out the way we want them to. But it does mean that, whatever happens, we are within the loving care of God, who has the power and ability to intervene for our good and for His glory. So, when we make mistakes that change the course of our life, we can be sure that God is in the driving seat.

The following question in the Heidelberg Catechism asks "How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us? It answers:

We can be patient when things go against us,<sup>1</sup> thankful when things go well,<sup>2</sup> and for the future we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing in creation will separate us from his love.<sup>3</sup> For all creatures are so completely in God's hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Job 1:21-22](#); [James 1:3](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Deut. 8:10](#); [1 Thess. 5:18](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Ps. 55:22](#); [Rom. 5:3-5](#); [8:38-39](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Job 1:12](#); [2:6](#); [Prov. 21:1](#); [Acts 17:24-28](#)

Finally, our response is to confess our failings, weakness and sins to God through Jesus. This might be difficult, due to our natural fear and shame. But we've already seen that Christ died for us, and to be sin and weakness in our place that we might be reconciled to God.

Have you ever had the experience of admitting a failing to a family member or friend, terrified at what might be the outcome – perhaps rejection - only to be told "It's OK" and to discover that what we feared would not come to pass? It's a wonderful moment.

When we confess our sins (as the Lord's prayer teaches us to do as a normal part of the Christian devotional life) we have nothing to fear. We already know Christ died for these things, that we might be forgiven and accepted, before we even open our mouths. We confess our sins not to persuade God to love us again, but to hear Him say "I love you; you are justified (declared righteous); you are saved from my wrath; you are reconciled to me.". Confessing our sins to God is primarily for our benefit.

So, how do we respond - not just now, in our current circumstance but in any circumstance of life? Romans 5v8 says "...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

In God, through Jesus Christ, we always have a reason to rejoice. Firstly, because he loves us. Secondly, because his fatherly hand is upon our lives at every moment. And, thirdly, we have been reconciled to Him forever.

Blessings to you all!