

# While We Were Enemies

Lent 2

Pastor Josh Frazee

Romans 5:1-11

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Listen to the Second Psalm: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ‘Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ‘As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.’ I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him.”

God has given His Son the ends of the earth as His possession. For His enemies, things will not go well. God Himself laughs at them and holds them in derision. His Son will break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces. This will be the end for all sinners, and for all who are unrepentant.

## Verse 1

But “since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

It is faith that justifies us and brings us peace with God through Jesus. Faith is the means by which we receive the benefits that Jesus earned for us on the cross. But faith is not a work that any of us might boast. It is the gift of God given through His Holy Spirit. Before He called us, we had been enemies of God. You had been God’s enemy. But God called you through the washing of baptism and the hearing of His Word to become a new creation. That new creation is His child in and through the work of His Beloved Son, Jesus.

Now we stand as God’s children in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we dare not leave that grace. If we venture outside of Christ, we choose to become enemies of God once more. Safety and love from God come only in the grace of His Son. It is not Jesus plus anything that saves. We do not go back to our old sinful ways. Jesus has made us—you and me—new creations through His death and resurrection.

But we have not been called out of the world yet. Jesus Himself told us in the Gospel of Matthew chapter ten: “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles...Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

So “we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

### Verse 2

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Now we have faith; but before we were brought to it by God’s Spirit, we were weak. The Greek term for weak that is used here is for an illness that renders one completely powerless—the person is not able to lift a finger to help him- or herself. We had to be helped by someone else. And the only help that could save us was death.

How often does it happen that someone is willing to die for someone else? Maybe...MAYBE if they know the person and they have been in a good relationship with that person. Maybe. But who would die for a stranger? Who would die for an enemy? Paul wrote that “one will scarcely die for a righteous person.”

“(B)ut God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “(W)hile we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” At the right time, Christ died for you, when you were still ungodly. When you were still an enemy of God.

That’s what we’re hearing about this Church season, isn’t it? That Jesus, God in human flesh, is making His way to the cross of Calvary to pay for the sins of sinners—of enemies of God. He did this for everyone though no one is righteous, no not one. Not me. Not you. Not anyone. No not one.

Jesus was going to die, and He knew it was not going to be an easy death—if such a thing even exists. He was going to be betrayed by His disciple, deserted by the rest of them, tried unfairly before the courts, nailed to the cross through His very flesh, and hung to die. And that’s only the physical aspect. He was going to face hell itself, separation from God the Father. And Jesus didn’t deserve that. He didn’t deserve any of it. He did it for you and for me. Not because we deserved His mercy. We didn’t. But He did it anyway. He did it for us, His enemies.

### Verse 3

“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

At the end, God will be laughing at His enemies, for rejecting Him and the free salvation He has offered through His Son. But you will not be rejected. You have been justified by Jesus’ blood and much more you shall be saved from the wrath of God. More than that, you have been reconciled, that is, you have been restored to a loving relationship with God and with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

While we were once enemies of God and strangers to one another, in Jesus’ death and resurrection at just the right time, we have been made family with one another, with God as our dear Heavenly Father and Jesus and each other as our brothers and sisters. We still live in a world of sin, but we are not of this world. We

have been set apart as new creations by our baptism. Though we are but sheep in a world of wolves, we do not give up Jesus' Word. Jesus has told us that sufferings may come on His account, but God will bring good through them. And finally, when the time is right once more, Jesus will come again, to bring us, His brothers and sisters, home with Him for life eternal. In Jesus' Name. Amen.