

## Holy Wednesday Meditation

Jesu Juva

Text: Romans 5:6-11

St. Paul uses three words in this reading to describe us: weak, sinners, enemies.

The word **weak** is misleading; it is actually a much stronger word than that. It means to be without strength, helpless. Weak, as in someone in a coma who can do nothing. Weak, as in someone with Lou Gehrig's disease, whose sickness has taken away their ability to do anything. That is how we are spiritually. That is how the disease of sin has made us.

But that's not all. **Sinners**, he also says. Those who have inherited the sin of our parents, going all the way back to Adam. Those who have deviated from the path of virtue to follow our depraved and detestable vices.

And finally, **enemies** of God. The un-godly. Persons not just not *for* God, and not even neutral, but working for ourselves against God.

Certainly, not three very good words.

But now notice this: all three of these words are *in the past tense*. They are what we *were*, but no longer *are*. Because three times also Paul says this: Christ died for us, for people like this.

That is what makes the Gospel so amazing. For a person everyone considers righteous or good - someone who donates a lot of money to charity, a philanthropist, a heroic or virtuous figure - yeah, that's a person worth dying for. But what is there in us that makes us worth dying for? Nothing. There is no reason in us why God should want anything to do with us. The answer is all in Him. It is all because of His undeserved, unlike-anything-else-in-all-this-world love.

Or as Paul said: *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

And the result, Paul says, is that we are now **reconciled** to God - no longer enemies, but at peace with God. We have been **justified** - saved by Him from the wrath of God against our sin and sinfulness. And we have been **saved** by His life, His rising from death, that we too might live a new life and rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has done all of this for us.

It is important to know both sides of this truth. The three ugly words and the three good things. For if you don't know your condition, then Christ's sacrifice for you really isn't

that great and doesn't really matter all that much. If you don't know what Christ has done, then knowing your condition means hopelessness and despair. But to know your condition and to know what Christ has done exactly for people like us - then the love and mercy of God is transforming. Giving hope to the hopeless, joy to the downcast, and life to the dead.

That is what we were. This is what we are now. But we are not yet there in fullness. There is more to come. More life, more joy, in Christ, when He comes again in glory and we are taken to His glory, glorified ourselves. Glorified in Him who gave Himself for us.

That is why this week is so special - we get both truths, in spades. The darkness of sin on Good Friday, but also the unequaled light of Easter. What we were, what we are, and what we will be - ponder that, and rejoice.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.