
Overview

Biblical Passage Romans 5:6-11, 5:15

Supporting Passages 1 John 4:9-10

Memory Verse Romans 5:8

Biblical Truth God took the initiative to provide the way of salvation so that everyone can be made right with Him.

Context This lesson in Crux focuses on the death of Jesus and how He made salvation available for all people. Jesus' death was the payment for sin that justifies us and reconciles our relationship with God. His death also demonstrates God's love and grace. Believing these truths will cause us to rejoice and give Him glory. This lesson also helps students frame a biblical answer for the problem of sin that can be shared with others.

Learning Goals

- **Explore:** Students will understand that only through Christ's death on the cross could the power of sin be broken.
- **Transform:** Students will practice the skill of conveying the problem of sin and the solution to sin found in Christ.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand that God loves them so much that He sought them out to save them.
- Pray that your students will become joyful in their salvation.
- Pray that your students will experience the power of the Holy Spirit as they live their lives each day to the glory of God.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

When writing to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul set forth his most comprehensive, logical, and closely reasoned explanation of the gospel. In systematic fashion, he declared that the sin of humanity is the barrier excluding people from right standing and relationship with God. All of us have sinned, and we keep on falling short of God's standard of righteousness (Rom. 3:23). God's solution for our problem is the death and resurrection of Jesus. God Himself has undertaken the work of redemption. Our only proper response is to choose to trust Jesus.

Why was it so important for Paul to write such an extensive, systematic explanation of the gospel when his intention was to soon visit Rome? According to Frank E. Gaebelin's *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, there could be at least two possible explanations. The first is that Paul could have been thinking strategically, believing that it was time to make Rome the second city from which to dispense missionaries. Antioch already existed in the east, but Rome would serve to be the headquarters of the west. Perhaps Paul wanted to send the message ahead of him that he had preached for so many years. Then, once there, he could expound further upon his teaching.

The second possible explanation is that Paul had encountered enough threats and attempts upon his life that he might have considered that it was necessary to document his message concerning the gospel so that others would know his systematic teaching concerning sin and grace in the event of his death. It is believed that maybe a copy of his letter to the Romans was also sent to Ephesus to lessen the risk of loss.

Importance

This lesson lies at the heart of the gospel. These verses explain the significance of the Essential Truth that **Salvation is by Faith Alone**. **salvation** rests not on what people can do but on what Jesus has done on the cross and in His resurrection. Human activities, merit, or performances do not provide salvation. It is God who has taken the initiative in providing the way of salvation so that people can be declared to be right with God. Sinful people—all of us—need to turn in faith to Jesus. He Himself is the only Savior, the rescuer. Trusting Him is the only means of rescue (Acts 4:12).

This passage also reveals the Essential Truth that **Jesus is God and Savior**.

Interpretation

Romans 5:6-8 The apostle Paul turned to explaining the depths of God’s love, declaring it to be found in the cross of the Lord Jesus. These verses stress that the way we know that God loves us is that Jesus died for us.

Paul noted that the expression of God’s love occurred precisely “at the right time.” Jesus’ death was not an unexpected tragedy. It was not an event turned into a theological statement by the imagination of men. At the proper time determined by God Himself in His eternal plan (1 Pet. 1:20, Acts 2:23), Christ died. It was at the time appointed by God for Christ to accomplish His work of redemption (Gal. 4:4).

These verses also show the utter spiritual bankruptcy of the human race. Apart from God, we possess no spiritual or moral value. We have absolutely no capacity for God. We are filled with complete hopelessness. Three words in these verses highlight the tragic spiritual condition of people: “powerless,” (v. 6), “ungodly” (v. 6) and “sinners” (v.8). “Powerless” means “weak” or “sickly” and denotes the incapacity for producing any righteousness for ourselves. “Ungodly” means a lack of proper reverence for God and actions contrary to God. “Sinners” are those who continually miss the mark of God’s holy standard. Verse 10 uses an additional word to describe our hostility toward God: “enemies.” Yet it was for just such people that Christ died.

The point is that Christ died for us when we were incapable of helping ourselves; we were sinful rebels against God and could do nothing to improve our condition. God’s love, revealed in the death of Christ, displayed His freedom in taking the initiative on behalf of undeserving people.

Paul emphasized the extraordinary quality of God’s love by a comparison from ordinary life. It is an extraordinary thing for one person to die for another person, even if it were for an honest person. Theoretically, someone might die for a truly good person. But God displayed a profound and unique love for us by having Christ die for us even though we are not only not good but actively, wickedly sinful.

God loved; Christ died. His love is distinctive, unexpected, unheard of, and wrapped up in a historical event: Jesus’ death on the cross.

Paul used the phrase “died for” four times in these verses. Twice he used it in reference to Jesus’ death, designating it as vicarious, that is, a death on behalf of another. This was a [substitutionary] act, a death suffered in the place of another. The New Testament makes it very clear that Christ’s death was both vicarious and substitutionary. Jesus died for our benefit, and He died instead of us.

Romans 5:9-11 Having established the fact of God’s love, Paul then turned to the principal theme of this lesson’s passage. Since God has already done so much for us, we can look forward to the future and be confident about our final salvation. God’s love refuses to stop short of bringing about our final and everlasting salvation.

By means of Christ’s death on the cross, we have been accepted and approved by God. Therefore, we will be guarded from God’s righteous anger against sin. We are now in God’s safekeeping. Our assurance comes from the fact that Christ’s atoning death was for us.

Furthermore, not only did Christ die—He also rose from the dead. He died on earth to save us; He lives in Heaven to give us power to live rightly. God made peace with us on the basis of Christ’s death. Yet something in addition to friendship is ours. Christ’s death results in one thing: **justification** with security. His resurrection results in something else: power to live a life that honors God.

Now that we are at peace with God, we will be delivered daily from sin’s dominion by His Son living His resurrection life in us. Without a living Christ there would be no evidence of salvation because there would be no salvation.

It is noteworthy that Paul did not write that “we have been reconciled” but rather that “we have now received reconciliation.” He avoided saying that we have done anything to deserve **reconciliation**. It was God’s work alone.

Romans 5:15 The contrast in this verse is between “the one” and “the many” in **Adam** and “the one” and “the many” in Christ. The “much more” tells us that we receive more in Christ than we lost in Adam. The work of Christ is superior to the sinning of Adam. Although Adam brought sin to the human race, Jesus brought life. Adam’s one sin brought death to many people. Yet in a greater way, the Lord Jesus Christ brought an abundance of God’s gracious gift to many people.

Implications

The book of Romans uses and implies some pretty big words, such as “justification,” “righteousness,” “redemption,” “reconciliation,” “substitutionary sacrifice,” etc. But the bottom line is that none of it began with us or came from us. The one thing that people of this generation don’t seem to get is that we are lost. The only hope that we’ve ever had is that God stepped into our eternal darkness and brought light—Jesus Christ. If we lose sight of the fact that we can ever do anything to save ourselves, then we do not have a right picture or understanding of who God is and why it was necessary to give up His only Son for us.

In this day, when we have just come through the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, students need to know that they are spiritually bankrupt. They bring nothing to God that has any eternal value. They have only their sin. We have a message to share with them that could change their lives and the lives of their friends. How can we bring them to the place of understanding that we possess nothing and that God has everything—and He’s offered it to us?

Teaching Plan

Connect Activity

Drama: In the Nick of Time

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will watch a drama that illustrates the timeliness of God's plan of salvation.

(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist three students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, say: **Just as Nick was there at just the right time to save the baby, so Jesus was there at just the right time to save us all.** Ask: **Can you imagine what life would be like had Jesus not come at just the right time? Then say: We're going to consider His timeliness today in this third lesson of the Crux series.**

Media Option: Late Rescue

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

Your students will watch a video highlighting a very important truth: A late hero is no hero at all.

(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the "Late Rescue" video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the "Media" tab.)

Show the "Late Rescue" video to your students. When you have finished, have someone summarize the video for you. Then ask students for their reactions.

Ask: **Did this video depict a hero? (Yes.) Was the hero able to save the girl? (Yes) Did the hero get there in time? (No)** Explain that a hero with a bad sense of timing is really no hero at all. Explain that today's lesson will examine God's perfect sense of timing and the effect it has on saving our lives.

Explore Activity

Master Teacher Key Study: Who Are We, and Who Is He?

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Romans 5:6-11 and 5:15 to understand that God's solution to humanity's sin problem.

(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Romans 5:6-11 and 5:15.

Transform Activity

Deeper Discussion

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss how sin has changed humanity's relationship with God.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Use the following questions to lead a discussion on sin:

- **While keeping in mind that not everyone understands what sin is, how would you describe it?**
- **What would you want people to know about how destructive sin is and how it will ruin their lives?**
- **How does sin affect our relationship with God?**
- **What would you want people to know about Christ's ability to break the power of sin?**
- **What would you tell people about your own experience with sin and how you have been forgiven?**

Creative Prayer

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will pray about their sinfulness before God.

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Gather students to stand in a circle. Stand in the middle to direct the time of prayer. Instruct students to complete the following sentences as you begin in a prayerful spirit:

- **God, my sin has . . .**

- **God, my life is . . .**
- **God, your salvation from sin is . . .**
- **God, thank you for . . .**
- **God, every day I need your . . .**
- **God, I want to let it be known that . . .**

As you conclude, voice a prayer over your students that they would be able to effectively communicate what sin is, its destructive nature, and the hope of Jesus Christ over sin. Pray that they would daily choose to turn from sin and walk with Christ.

Reverb Student Book: Guided Prayer

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

Students will complete an activity about confessing one's sinfulness before God.

(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on page 217. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

As students work through pages 214-219 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10-15 minutes and work through the “Guided Prayer” activity on page 217. Then say: Through prayer we worship God. Confession is a part of prayer, and it is also a part of worship. We need to worship God because only in this way do we encounter who He is and who we are not. We rediscover our need for Him.

Crux 3, "In the Nick of Time"
Drama

In the Nick of Time

Characters:

Nick
Lisa
Mother

Props: watch, baby doll

Costumes: Everyone can all be dressed in normal clothes.

Creative Note: This drama takes a weird turn at the end. Play it very melodramatically. You might want to consider using sound effects like a baby cry when the baby flies in and a superhero fanfare when Nick pronounces who he really is.

(NICK is standing on stage. He looks up in the air as if searching for something. He checks his watch, then examines the sky once again. He takes a couple of steps over to a different position. Checks the sky. Checks his watch. Checks the sky, then firmly plants himself in place as if preparing for some kind of onslaught. His friend LISA enters.)

LISA: Hey, Nick.

NICK: Oh, hey, Lisa. How's it going?

LISA: Good. You?

NICK: Fine.

(NICK checks his watch and checks the sky.)

LISA: What are you up to?

NICK: Me? Oh, nothing.

LISA: Come on, you're obviously doing something.

NICK: No. Not really.

(NICK checks his watch and checks the sky.)

LISA: Are you waiting for someone?

NICK: Not exactly.

LISA: But you are waiting.

NICK: Kinda.

LISA: You're not giving me much here, Nick.

NICK: I guess that technically I'm waiting and technically I'm waiting for someone, but . . .

(NICK checks his watch and checks the sky.)

NICK: It's not at all what you might think.

LISA: Look, Nick, I've been meaning to talk to you about something, and this seems to be the right time. A lot of us are getting concerned about you.

(NICK is only barely paying attention to what LISA is saying. He simply keeps checking his watch and examining the sky.)

NICK: Uh, huh.

LISA: I mean, you keep disappearing at the weirdest times.

NICK: Yeah.

LISA: It's like, one minute you're there and the next you're not.

NICK: Right.

LISA: No one ever notices you leaving.

NICK: Sure.

LISA: And no one ever knows where you've gone.

NICK: Really?

LISA: And then you show back up as if nothing's happened.

NICK: Well . . .

(LISA waits as if expecting NICK to go on with an explanation. He doesn't.)

LISA: Well, what?

NICK: Huh? Did you say something?

LISA: Nick! Are you even paying attention to me?

(NICK checks his watch one last time. Recognizes that it's time and looks up and offstage.)

LISA: Nick!

NICK: Lisa, I'll be with you in just a moment.

(All of a sudden a baby doll comes flying through the air from the direction offstage in which Nick is looking. He catches the baby in his arms and cradles it to his shoulder. The baby's MOTHER runs onstage.)

MOTHER: Oh, my goodness! My baby!

NICK: Don't worry. She's fine.

(NICK hands the baby over to the MOTHER, who hugs it tightly.)

MOTHER: Thank you so much.

NICK: It's no problem. Really. Just be more careful next time.

MOTHER: I sure will. Thanks again.

(The MOTHER exits. LISA stands there, shocked and amazed.)

LISA: What just happened?

NICK: I caught that woman's baby.

LISA: Yeah. But . . . how . . . what . . .

NICK: Lisa, calm down. It's okay. This is just what I do.

LISA: You mean?

NICK: That's right.

(NICK quickly jumps to the front of the stage, strikes a heroic pose.)

NICK: I am the "Nick of Time."

LISA: My hero!

(LISA runs up and jumps into NICK'S arms.)

(The End)

Master Teacher Key Study WHO ARE WE, AND WHO IS HE?

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Intro: What did God do to make our relationship with Him possible?

Description: God saw humanity in its powerless and unGodly state, and He made a way for us to be in a relationship with Him.

Illustration: The Power Team travels from numerous churches displaying their great physical strength and power. But even these guys know that if it were not for God making a way for them to relate to Him, they would be powerless.

1. God showed His love for us (Rom. 5:6–8).

Description: Before we ever knew that God loved us, He was at work making a plan to bring us back to Him. That plan was carried out through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Illustration: In the book and movie *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis wonderfully illustrated Christ's sacrifice when the Great Lion, Aslan, was willing to lay down his own life in order to pay for the betrayal and misdeeds of the young boy Edmund. The White Witch had required Edmund's death, but she agreed to Aslan paying the penalty, believing that this was an even better plan. Only Aslan knew that his own death would break the spell of winter and destroy the power of the White Witch forever.

Application: It's an incredible thing that anyone would choose to give up his life for someone who didn't know him and by his actions showed that he didn't like him or want to know him. That's what Jesus did. He died for us while we were wallowing in our sin.

2. God provided a way of reconciliation for us (Rom. 5:9–11).

Description: Sin broke the relationship that God had made with humanity. So He sent Jesus to die for us, breaking the power of sin in order to restore the relationship between Himself and us. Reconciliation means that we were brought back into a right relationship with God.

Illustration: Bring a stick or a dowel rod and some tape with you. Break the stick and hold it up. Use tape to bring the ends of the stick back together. But explain to students that even though you've taped it together, it's still broken and does not have the strength that it once did.

Application: God is able to take something that is broken and restore it to its natural state. That's what He did with our broken relationship with Him. He fused it together using Christ, and our relationship with Him stands as good as new.

3. God provided His grace for us (Rom. 5:15).

Description: Grace is a magnificent gift that is like no other. It is the gift of God that displays His

complete love and forgiveness, and God will continue to give it throughout eternity. Grace was wonderfully displayed and provided for everyone through Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

Illustration: In the movie *The Ultimate Gift* (2006), which starred James Garner and Drew Fuller, the grandfather, 'Red' Stevens, gave his ungrateful, self-serving, unruly grandson a long list of things that he had to accomplish before he would bestow his inheritance on him. The list would take a while to complete, and the grandson had to do many things that he didn't like. Most things on the list were humbling. In the end, the grandson received the inheritance, but he received something even greater—he received a transformed life—something that money couldn't buy. He became a loving man who was far more interested in the needs of others than his own needs

Application: God calls us to show grace to others in the same way that He has shown grace to us. Consider expressing grace to the next person who wrongs you.

Conclusion: God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the one and only solution for our sinfulness. This act of grace is how God provided a way for us to know forgiveness and a relationship with Him.

Application: God has done everything for us—something that we could not do for ourselves. He has broken the power of sin and restored our relationship with Himself. The only thing that we must do is open our hands and our lives and receive it in faith.

REVERB::CRUX::lesson three**IN THE NICK OF TIME****biblical passage:** Romans 5:6–11, 5:15**memory verse:** Romans 5:6–11, 5:15 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**WHO ARE WE, AND WHO IS HE?**

1. God _____ His _____ for us (Rom. 5:6–8).
2. God _____ a way of _____ for us (Rom. 5:9–11).
3. God _____ His _____ for us (Rom. 5:15).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- While keeping in mind that not everyone understands what sin is, how would you describe it?
- What would you want people to know about how destructive sin is and how it will ruin their lives?
- How does sin affect our relationship with God?
- What would you want people to know about Christ's ability to break the power of sin?
- What would you tell people about your own experience with sin and how you have been forgiven?