

June 14, 2026

Romans 5:6-15

“Much More: The Overwhelming Grace of God!”

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The old unofficial motto of the United States Coast Guard was this: “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back.” Those words capture something striking about old rescue work. The Coast Guard would not first evaluate whether the person in danger deserved to be rescued. They did not calculate whether the one stranded had made wise decisions or foolish ones. They did not ask whether the situation was their fault. The call goes in, and the rescuers go - into storms, into darkness, into terribly dangerous waters - because that is what it means to save, knowing that they might never come back. They are more concerned for your safety than for their own. This was a rare way to think about things.

And it is rare precisely because it runs against our instincts. We are natural measurers who measure things carefully. We believe effort deserves reward. We weigh what is given and what is owed. Small gifts call for small returns. Great expectations demand great work. We risk ourselves for others - but only if they seem worth it. And because we live this way with one another, we assume God must see it this way as well. We imagine his love rises or falls with our loveliness, that his mercy must match our effort, and that if we stray too far or fail too often, we cross a line from which there is no return.

But Romans 5 dismantles that way of thinking entirely. It does not present a God who portions out grace in measured amounts. It reveals a God whose grace overflows beyond all expectation. The key to seeing this clearly is found in a phrase that the apostle Paul repeats again and again: “much more.” If we are to understand the heart of God and the certainty of our salvation, we must understand that phrase - not as a passing expression, but as the driving force. God’s grace is not measured. It is “much more.”

Paul begins by stripping away every illusion we might have about ourselves. “While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6), and again, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8), and still further, he names us as “enemies” (Rom. 5:10) - hostile to God. This is not rhetorical exaggeration. It is a sober diagnosis. We are weak, unable to fix what is broken between us and God. We are ungodly, not merely failing occasionally, but fundamentally misaligned with God’s will. We are sinners, not only in what we do, but in who we are. And we are enemies, set against him in a false love that curves inward, loving self for self’s sake rather than for the sake of God and neighbor.

This is the clarity of the law. It leaves us with nothing to offer and nowhere to stand. It exposes the deeper reality that lies beneath every broken relationship in this world, namely, that humanity’s relationship with God has been severed since the fall into sin. As Paul goes on to say, “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men” (Rom. 5:12). In Adam, the rupture began, and ever since, death has reigned. It is not merely present. It rules. It stands at the very end of every human life, a constant reminder that something is terribly wrong with us, and that the wrath of God against sin is not an abstract idea but a lived reality - even forever.

If the story ended there, it would be a story without hope. But it is precisely at that point - when the diagnosis is complete and the situation appears beyond remedy - that the Gospel speaks. And it speaks not as a suggestion or an invitation to try harder, but as a declaration of what God has already done. “God

shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). That statement alone overturns every human expectation, for it tells us that God did not wait for change, did not wait for repentance, did not wait for worthiness. He acted when there was nothing in us to commend us to him.

Here is where Paul introduces the phrase that carries the entire argument forward: “much more.” He writes: “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, *much more* shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God” (Rom. 5:9). God’s grace overflows! This is not a small step forward. It is a great leap. If God has already done the greater thing - if he has justified the ungodly by the blood of his only Son Jesus - then it follows with certainty that he will do the lesser thing, which is to rescue those who are now justified. Paul presses the point further: “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” (Rom. 5:10).

This is grace (undeserved love), and it is meant to give absolute assurance. If God reconciled you when you were his enemy, what will he do now that you are his child? Here is a way to say it plainly: if God has already done the impossible for you, he will certainly finish what he started. That is what Paul means when he says “much more.” He is not speaking in measured increments. He is declaring that God’s saving work moves forward with overwhelming certainty. He has us in his hands! What a comfort!

At the center of this is the assurance of the cross. When Paul says, “Christ died for us,” he is not speaking hypothetically. He is proclaiming an accomplished reality. On the cross, Jesus took to himself the full weight of our sin, the full burden of Adam’s fall, and the full force of God’s wrath. He stood in our place as the enemy, bearing what we could not bear, so that we might stand before God as those who are justified and reconciled. This is not something that waits on human completion. In Christ, it is finished. As our Lutheran confessions have always emphasized, this reconciliation is objective. In other words, God has acted in history, once for all. In the resurrection, he has declared the verdict over the world: the price has been paid, and the work is complete.

And now, through faith created by the Holy Spirit in the means of grace, this objective reality becomes personal. What Christ has accomplished is received. You are justified. You are reconciled. You are at peace with God. And this peace is not fragile, because it does not rest on your effort but on his finished work. That is why Paul can say, “*More than that*, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).

This rejoicing is not superficial. It arises from the certainty that the “much more” of God’s grace governs your entire life. When your sins trouble your conscience, you do not minimize them, but neither do you allow them to have the final word, because God’s grace is *much more*. When death casts its shadow, you do not deny its reality, but you face it with confidence, because Christ’s life is *much more*. When the brokenness of this world weighs on you, and you feel you’re not going to make it, the same God who reconciled you as an enemy will not abandon you now, but will bring everything to completion.

This also reshapes how you live with others. The grace you have received is not measured - it overflows. If God has given you much more than you deserve, then the pattern of your life is shaped by that

same abundance. Forgiveness is no longer something calculated or rationed, but something that flows from the reconciliation you have already received. In a world that counts wrongs and keeps score, the Christian life bears witness to something entirely different: grace that exceeds, mercy that surpasses, and love that does not depend on your worthiness or what you do.

And so the phrase “much more” becomes not only the strength of Paul’s argument, but the very heartbeat of the Christian life. It is the answer to our fear, the answer to our doubt, and the answer to our sin. Paul does not merely say “more,” he says “much more,” that is, far more, beyond all comparison. God’s grace is not measured - it overflows.

And therefore, when everything presses in on you, when your sin accuses you, when death seems to have the upper hand, you return to this unshakable truth: while you were still weak, while you were still a sinner, while you were still an enemy, Christ died for you. And if that is true - and it is - then this is also true: *much more* will he save you, *much more* will he keep you, and *much more* will he bring you safely into life everlasting!

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott