

Romans #20
No Separation for Christians
Romans 8:31-39

At the core of every human being is the desire to be approved, to be liked. We often set our self-esteem on the opinions others have of us. Why is it that so many of us feel so badly about ourselves? Is it because deep down we have a sense that we have failed in some way, failed either to please those around us, our selves, or even God?

In our last study of this epistle we looked at the fact of God's foreknowledge as it relates to salvation, as seen in Isaiah 46:9-10, "I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And in 1 Peter 1:2, our attention is directed "...to the...elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father..." We need to be careful to remind ourselves that although God has infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, salvation is still offered to all whom believe, as seen in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This week, we are going to look at the fact that there is no separation for the *children of God* from the *Father*.

Paul begins in verse 31 with the question, "What then shall we say to these things?" Once more, let me remind you that it was not intended for the Bible to be studied a few verses at the time, but it must be looked at in its whole scope.

With that thought in mind, Paul looks back to what has been brought to light concerning God's purpose for the saints, as seen in verses 29-30, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." **Remember, God looks at our situation from a divine viewpoint as it deals with eternity, and because of that fact you will notice that the wording in verses 29-30 is in the past tense.** In other words, from God's viewpoint, we have already been called with an effectual calling; we have already been justified because of our faith in Christ; we have already been glorified because of the promise of the rapture of the church.

"What shall we say to these things?" To question them is to imply uncertainty, therefore, Paul continues by asking another question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Please do not misunderstand the question, for the word

that has been translated “if” could have better been translated “since,” and would have read thusly, “Since God is for us, who is against us?”

Then troubled minds and hearts faintly reply, “What about Satan?” It is true that we have been told in 1 Peter 5:8 to “Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” **But suppose the devil is against us? Suppose all the forces of hell are allied against us? Suppose the mass of humanity is against the cause of Christ? Satan is powerful, but certainly he is not the most powerful. Satan is strong, but is far from being the strongest! Listen, God is “for” us! God, the Creator of the universe, the Upholder of all things, and the Redeemer of lost souls - He is “for” us!** And because He is for us, we have been given authority over the devil – past tense! And that, my friend, amounts to victory.

Notice then, the obvious conclusion, as seen in verses 33-34, “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” **Oh, how we need to learn the great lesson that is found in this passage of Scripture.** Today we are running around finding fault with everybody that does not think and feel just like we think and feel. We sit back and criticize the preacher, the deacons, the Staff, and members of the church, and all the while we are doing nothing for the cause of Christ. I am reminded of the words found in Romans 2:1, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” In other words, their sin is no greater than yours!

My dear people, the Word of God tells us that judgment belongs to God, and even He will honor His Word, and there is no cause for condemnation, because the child of God has been called, justified, and glorified before the Lord God of all! The “order of the day” for the present-day church should be for us to spend more time making sure of our own calling and election, instead of gripping and complaining about what someone else ought to be doing.

Look at the results of Paul’s finding in verses 35-39, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This passage of scripture is another of the questions that has already been asked, as seen in verse 31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” And in verse

33, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” And in verse 34, “Who is he that condemneth?” And now the question comes, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

There are some things in life we cannot change. We say we can’t do anything about the weather and perhaps this is so, but we can do things to make it easier to live with the weather we have. When it’s cold, we can put on a coat. **When it rains, a raincoat helps.** These things don’t change the weather, but enable us to survive and carry on our activities. Jesus recognized this in His intercessory prayer for His disciples recorded in John 17:15, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.”

Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 that says, “Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” **That quote in Romans 8:35-39 indicates that Christians have always lived in the midst of trials and sorrow, but there is not need to be overcome by them.** Why? Because “we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

I want to take just a moment and look at "these things" that we have victory over. Verse 35 gives us a very comprehensive list. Let’s look at the words:

1. "Tribulation." The Greek word here is actually, “trouble,” and it means, “pressure that burdens the spirit.” In today’s language we call it *stress*.
2. "Distress." The Greek word here is actually, “hardship,” and it literally means, “a narrow place.” The world closing in on us.
3. "Persecution." This word implies, “pursuit by the enemy” or active opposition.
4. "Famine." This word implies, “deep physical need with no relief in sight.”
5. "Peril." The Greek word here implies, “danger threatening one’s very life.”
6. "Sword." This word implies, “violence, dissension.” It implies the threat of death or even death itself.

And if those things were not enough, verses 38-39 list the most powerful ideas and forces we could face in this life. Look at the list.

1. “Death.” **The word here implies physical death.** You and I know that death is far from being the end of it all.
2. “Life.” The indication is life with all of its problems and multiple failures.
3. “Angels.” This might seem a little strange, but the indication here is any other heavenly body.
4. “Principalities.” This word implies “any other authority in heaven or on the earth.”
5. “Powers.” This word is very close to what we have already seen, but the indication absolutely no one has authority over the things of God.
6. “Height, nor depth.” There is no power in the heavenlies, nor from the underworld that can divert the love of Christ.
7. “Any other creation.” Just in case Paul might have missed something that you might have in your mind, he uses the term, “any other creation.”

But the truth of the matter is, we don’t need the Bible to tell us we have problems, we already know that. What we need the Bible to tell us God knows and cares.

We have all known Christians who suffered terrible disasters. The greatest danger is not in being hurt or killed, but in being separated from God.

Now look at verse 37, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” The word translated “conquerors” is a word that means “victorious.” **In other words, the victory is in Jesus!** In other words, we win by a landslide!

Listen to what we have been told in 2 Timothy 1:12, “...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” **No man has ever found victory because of his relationship to some church or religious order.** No man has ever found victory because of his “turning over a new leaf,” or by doing good.

I like what the poet wrote when he said:

“A Rock that stands forever is Christ my righteousness,

And there I stand unfearing in everlasting bliss;
No earthly thing is needful to this my life from Heaven,
And naught of love is worthy, save that which Christ has given.
Christ, all my praise and glory, my Light most sweet and fair,
The ship wherein He saileth is evident everywhere.
In Him I dare be joyful, a hero in the war
The judgment of the sinner affrighteth me no more.
No angel, no heaven, no throne, nor power, nor might,
No love, no tribulation, no danger, nor fight,
No height, no depth, no creation that has been or can be,
Can drive me from Thy bosom, can sever me from Thee.
My heart is joy upleapeth, grief cannot linger there –
While singing high in glory amidst the sunshine fair!
The source of all my singing is high in heaven above;
The Son that shines upon me is Jesus and His love.”