

ROMANS 8:31-39
IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US ?

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

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.

Who 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 Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”?

*Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

Did you ever play a team game and quickly figure out that the sides weren't fair? Nearly all the good players were on the other team; your team was getting smoked. Does your life seem that way sometimes? Two steps ahead, but three steps back? Do you start to think “you” are the only one in that spot? Life was already like that when Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Christians. In fact, life was like that since the world entered into sin. After sin, God said to Eve, in pain you will bring forth children; and to Adam, by the sweat of your brow you shall eat until you return to the dust. Death! You a sinner are going to lose; Death comes knocking. The sides aren't fair.

But hold on!--there's more--sure hope and victory! Paul writes, *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us!* In other words, what should we make of all this—just give up? No! With God Himself on your side, it doesn't matter who or how many come against you, or how they come. Even if you are the only one on your team; with God, you win, always! In “voting” terms, “One plus God makes a majority.” No one can overcome you, defeat you, or destroy you!

Do you ask, “How do I know that God is *for me*? Maybe He's *against me*?” Look at the facts. *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?* He did not “spare” or “hold back” His own Son. We talk about a person who is in a hurry “not sparing the horses—holding nothing back.” To be “sparing” is also being “thrifty.” Why buy a \$100 pair of shoes, when you can get by with a little less flash and pay \$80? God spared nothing. God did not cut corners. *He who did not spare His own Son*—His dearest treasure.

The word for “His own” in Greek is “*idios*,” from which come our English word “*idiot*.” It seems strange—to talk about God's Son in terms of “idiot”? The root meaning of “*idios*” is “something that is one's very own, different from all else, unique to self.” God gave up His very own Son, different from all others, His one of a kind Son, **for you**. He “handed Him over” to death-on-the-cross to pay for **your** sins. Jesus' enemies and the devil in hatred thought they were getting rid of Him, but God sent Him to save and rescue you. Therefore, even in the midst of all the unfair sides against you in this devil-driven world, how do you really know that God is “for” you? the sinner? Look at the cross. God gave Him up at all costs to save you, to keep you safe for heaven!

With these facts in your heart, take comfort now in life. *How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?* God is on your side! He is leading you to heaven through all the pitfalls of life. No matter who or what confronts you, God draws you closer to Himself and gives you the victory. In Jesus He gives you forgiveness, versus sins that disqualify; He gives you the glorious resurrection at the last day, instead of decay in the grave; He gives you eternal life in heaven, for the pangs of hell! In Jesus, you hear, “Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!” (Matthew 24:34).

Do you feel like you are barely hanging on in this life--maybe today? That you are outnumbered and all is going sour? He spared not His Son for you; therefore, *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns?* God has “elected,” chosen you to be His own. God has! It was not a freak accident of the universe. God has “justified” you, has pronounced you the guilty sinner “Not Guilty” through Jesus blood spilled for you. This is God's edict, God's decree, God's judgment. Who or what will possibly be able to bring bitter charges against you? Who can possibly condemn you? Who outranks God? No one!

Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, is even at the right hand of God, and also makes intercession for us. If it's not enough knowing what God has done, then know that Jesus, who willingly died for you and powerfully rose. is there at the throne of God, at the "right hand"—a figure of speech for the position of favor and honor (not that left-handed people are somehow bad). There at the right hand Jesus "intercedes" for you. He "hits the mark with the arrow," "meets-up with" the Father's heart, and appeals, petitions, and prays for **you** to His Father. **The team against you is not unfairly packed!** With God on your side, through Christ, you prevail!

This means in **your** life, even when the hurt is great and the battle seems impossible, there is great news! Paul presents a tremendous list of realities. *Who 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 Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter"?*

- tribulation—to be "closely squeezed and compressed." What is putting the squeeze on you? Prices, weather, breakdowns, sickness?
- distress— to "draw the rope tight"; to be in "straits," as the Straights of Gibraltar," a very narrow passage for ships, in which they can't go to the left, can't go to the right. Are you in dire straits? Trying to please two very opposite people, meeting a deadline, starting out a new venture, undergoing surgery and/or treatments, seriously injured, critically ill?
- persecution—to be "pursued, chased, and hindered"—for one's faith, for one's skin color, for one's fatherland and mother tongue, for an overdue bill, for refusing to go along with the crowd. It's like being an escaped prisoner tracked by dogs—they just keep coming
- famine—have you actually been without food or have had no prospects for food? Likely not. But there's also inability to eat due to throat, nerves, or digestive track problems; so that one gets thinner and thinner.
- nakedness—likely you have never had only a tattered garment to your name. But have you been cold night or day in the house or out? Have you been without clothing to protect yourself from mosquitoes, rattlesnakes, snow; or without a facemask when in the midst of contagious airborne bacteria/virus?
- peril—danger! from icy roads, brutal tornados, flood waters, prairie fires, car wreck or horse wreck?
- sword—instruments of death. Hunting arrows? Bullets from rifles or guns fired deliberately, or in carelessness, or by misfire

Life is so fragile. Paul quotes a verse from Psalm 44, which states we are as helpless as "sheep for the slaughter." Can any of these foes ruin our life and separate us frail people us from God's hand of love and rescue—eternal rescue—in Jesus? No. Whatever physical or non-physical forces are working against you right now, in Christ the final victory, in the most blessed way, is yours!

Paul presents another striking list of foes that cannot harm us. *In all these things we are **more than conquerors**—super-victors, with not a chance of losing—through Him who 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!* God in Christ beats all things against you, hands down! They cannot win.

- death nor life—whether the End of your days is inescapably at hand, or whether life is so inescapably bad that you can't take it and wish for death, does that separate from God's love and eternal care?
- angels, principalities, and powers—whether it is evil angels ("messengers") of Satan; or two other types of evil spiritual foes to which we seldom refer—evil "principalities" ("authorities") of Satan, and evil "powers" ("leaders") of Satan's kingdom—also referred to in Ephesians 6:12. Do not dread; God out-wrestles them all!
- things present nor things to come—conditions or forces right now, or in the future, so bad that you contemplate suicide. All such are *non*-forces compared to God who has elected and justified you in Jesus.
- height nor depth—are you paranoid of heights—being on top of a 200 foot radio tower; or of depths--being at the bottom of a 200 foot shaft? Shall you freak out and think God won't help you? Trust Him! And even if your life shall end in such a seemingly undesirable fashion, calmly go forward, trusting Him for heaven.
- or any other created thing—any physical or spiritual things—all of which have been created by God—are not superior to God's and His Son's love and will for **you**.

None shall do you real harm. None *shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!* The teams are not unfairly divided against you. With God in Christ at your side the teams are divided against **them**. The LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST -- FOR YOU is insurmountable! You have forgiveness, resurrection, and life everlasting! Not even in this life, will you be beaten and snatched away from God!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---