

Eternally Secure In Christ

(Romans 8:31-39)

Intro: Paul concludes this section of his letter with a beautiful and climatic song of praise, in which he rehearses the believer's eternal security in Christ. He will show that nobody or nothing can stand in God's way of completing His work of salvation resulting in our ultimate glorification in the future. The reason believers are guaranteed ultimate victory over all the forces of this fallen world is because we have God on our side: **God is for us**. To drive this point home, Paul asked and answered a series of rhetorical questions in verses 31-39.

The first question in verse 31 is general in nature.

I. General Question (v. 31a)

v. 31a—What then shall we say to these things?

“**These things**” refers to the numerous blessings Paul had just enumerated in the immediately preceding verses, 1-30. God promises to move believers from present groaning to eternal glory. Though sinners by nature, God has adopted us into His family and made us co-heirs with His Son, Jesus Christ. As a result, there is now no condemnation for believers in Christ (v. 1). We have received God's Spirit as a guarantee or pledge of our final redemption (Eph. 1:13-14). What is more, our future glorification is so certain that God speaks of it as having already taken place (v. 30).

II. Specific Questions (vv. 31b–39)

Paul continues with a series of five specific questions. They are actually rhetorical questions, and while they don't require an answer, in each case the answers are implied. The answers are very clear. The questions are designed to assure believers that no matter what might come in the form of trials and tribulations, they are eternally secure in Christ. And in each case the questions, along with their implied answers, reveal some great truths about God. Paul reveals that God is our Protector, Provider, Defender, and Keeper.

The first question describes God as our Protector, v. 31b

A. God is our powerful Protector (v. 31b)

Question 1, v. 31b—If God is for us, who can be against us?

Even though this sentence is worded as a condition, it is actually assumed true for the sake of argument. “God is for us.” There is no question about this. **God is for us**. Paul wanted his readers, and by way of extension, you and I, to know that regardless of what might come against them/us in the form of troubles, trials, or persecution, **God is for us!**

What He has done for us in the past by justifying us through His Son, and what He is doing for us in the present through His Holy Spirit, who is conforming us to the image of Christ, provides us with tremendous confidence. And since God is for us, no one can prevent us from realizing our ultimate glorification.

Now, we all know that Satan and his demonic hosts are against us, but they cannot ultimately prevail against us (Eph. 6:11-13; 1 Pet. 5:8). You may have a family member, friend, or employer that is against you. No matter what troubles, trials, or persecution might come against us, God is for us. Since God is for us no one can be against us. He will see every one of us safely home in glory. This is one of the greatest truths in Scripture! This question reveals that God is our powerful Protector.

The second question reveals God as our bountiful Provider, v. 32

B. God is our bountiful Provider (v. 32)

Question 2, v. 32—He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

The fact that God delivered up His own beloved Son for our sin, assures us that He will also freely give us all things needed to complete our sanctification. The word “spare” is the same word used in the Greek Septuagint translation of Genesis 22:12. Abraham you recall, offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, but God intervened and spared/prevented him from completing the sacrifice. However, in Christ’s case there was no Divine intervention. God did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up to die for the sins of us all (John 3:16). God allowed His Holy Son to die on the cross at Calvary to take upon Himself the penalty that our sin deserved. This is a favorite form of argumentation among Hebrews, where one argues

from the greater to the lesser. In light of the fact that God has already given the greatest Sacrifice of all for us, His own Son, He will most certainly freely give us all things needed to accomplish our glorification.

For example, “If you buy your wife a very costly watch from an exclusive jewelry store, and it comes in a lovely case, and your wife wants the case to put her watch in when she isn’t wearing it, you wouldn’t deny her the fancy case the watch came in would you? **Of course not.** Why? Because having done the harder thing, purchasing the expensive watch, you will certainly do the easier thing, give your wife the case the watch came in.

In the same way, God who gave the greatest Sacrifice of all, His own dear Son, will surely provide all things needed to see us through to glory. **You can be sure of it! What a marvelous promise!** We have nothing to worry about! God will provide everything we need to see us safely home to glory.

Let me just say this verse is not a blanket promise to the religious “Name it and claim it crowd.” God is not here promising to provide us with material things. Jesus you recall said, “One’s life does not consist of the abundance of the things he possess.” God does promise to provide our every need, but Not our greeds. What Paul is talking about here is God’s promise to provide everything we need to complete our salvation, and to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus. He promises to complete our glorification.

J. I. Packer in his monumental book “Knowing God,” made this comment concerning this verse: “One day we shall see that nothing, literally nothing which could have increased our eternal happiness has been denied us, and that nothing, literally nothing, that could have reduced that happiness has been left with us.”

Shall not God, who has given us His beloved Son, not also with Him freely give us all things? This second question reveals that God is our bountiful Provider.

The next two question, 3 and 4, reveal God as our Defender. These two questions take us into the courtroom where we stand before the Divine Judge, God. The accuser who brings the charge or accusation against us is Satan. He is identified as the accuser of God’s people in Revelation 12:10 and Zechariah 3:1. The good news is we have a Defender, God Himself. Look at God as our Defender in verse 33

C. God is our Defender (vv. 33 and 34)

Question 3, v. 33—Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?
 God is the one who justifies.

This is describing the filing of a formal accusation, the bringing of a charge in a court of law. Satan is always bringing charges against believers. Do you remember how he came before God and denounced Job? He accused Job of being one of God’s paid lovers. The Lord allowed Satan to afflict Job in order to prove that he loved Him, and would not denounce or reject Him. The Apostle John identifies Satan as the accuser of the brethren in Revelation 12:10. The sad truth is that his accusations against us are valid. They are based on our sinful thoughts and actions. However, Satan’s accusations against us will be thrown out of court, because God is the one who justifies.

God Himself is the Judge who declares us righteous on the basis of faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21; 5:5:1). Paul stated at the beginning of this 8th chapter that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). As a result, all accusations against us are dismissed, because God is the One who justifies. Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? When it is God Himself who declares us to be righteous? The answer is No one can challenge God’s verdict of justified in Christ.

Paul follows up in verse 34 by showing that the reason no one can condemn us is because it was Christ Jesus who died for us, and he has risen, and is at the right hand of God, where He also makes intercession for us.

Question 4, v. 34—Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

You see, since Jesus Christ is God’s appointed Judge (John 5:22, 27), He is the only one who has the right to condemn us. But Jesus is the One whom the believer has trusted in for salvation. Furthermore, Jesus is the very One who died for our sins at Calvary, who arose from the grave, and is at the right hand of God, where He also makes intercession for us. The One who paid for our crimes is Himself our Defense attorney. Rather than condemn us, Christ receives everyone who comes to Him in faith. As believers in Christ, we share in His resurrection life, and He intercedes to the Father for

us.

It might be good for us to remind ourselves where this chapter began. Paul stated in verse 1, There is now, no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. **No condemnation.** These two words sum up these first four questions. **No condemnation.**

Two words that nicely sum up the final question in verses 35 are “**No separation.**” Paul is going to present seven disasters a believer might experience, none of which can separate a believer from the love of Christ. This final question reveals God as our Keeper, v. 35

D. God is our Keeper (vv. 35-37)

Question 5, v. 35—While Paul asks, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? He really begins talking about what. What can separate us from the love of Christ, v. 35

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword separate us from the love of Christ?

1. *Shall tribulation* separate us from the love of Christ? This word means pressures. Can the pressures of every day life separate us?
2. *distress* this word refers to inner turmoil and stress. Can stress separate us from the love of Christ?
3. *persecution* was a constant threat to the Christians in the early church.
4. *famine* lack of food cannot separate believers from Christ’s love.
5. *nakedness* like *famine* depicts destitution and need. Both are unable to separate believers from Christ’s love
6. *peril* danger, which we all face at times, cannot separate us from Christ
7. *sword* refers to execution for the name of Christ. The threat of death loses its terror in the presence of Christ, in whom we find peace.

Far from weakening the bonds of love and dependence on God, troubles, distress, and hardships actually strengthen our love for Christ. It should be noted that Paul experienced all of these hardships (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

Paul concludes in verse 36 that suffering has always been experienced by God’s people. He quotes the psalmist’s words from **Psalms 44:22** to show that the troubles we all face as Christians are nothing new.

v. 36—Just as it is written, At every moment of the day we face death. We are considered no better than sheep to be slaughtered.

I am not sure where we modern-day Christians got the idea that we are not supposed to suffer. Suffering, sickness, and death are all a normal part of life in this sin-cursed world. As noted last week, we believers join with creation in groaning for God to release us from the effects of the curse He placed on this creation when Adam and Eve sinned against Him. However, in the mean time, we know that we will be victorious through Jesus Christ. Trials are our means for greater triumph, v. 37

v. 37—But in all these things we will prove to be *super-overcomers* through Him who loved us.

Paul says, that no matter what God might permit to come into our lives, we will prove to be *super-overcomers* through Jesus Christ. Trials help us to mature and trust in Christ. So no matter what might come our way, we know that God loves us, and He will empower us to overcome all the troubles, distresses, and hardships that come into our lives.

Paul concludes with a climatic song of praise for the believers' eternal security in Christ, vv. 38-39

E. Paul's climatic conclusion (vv. 38-39)

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** 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.

Paul was convinced that nothing can separate believers from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He moves from physical dangers, through a hierarchy of angelic powers, to the very extremities of creation, and shows that neither height, nor depth, nor any other created thing can diminish God's love for us, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Conclusion: While life often contains hardships, God is at work in all of life's circumstances to conform those whom He has chosen into the likeness of His own dear Son. No matter what may come into our lives, we can rest assured that God

loves us and is going to someday deliver us from our present groanings to enjoy His eternal glory. Remembering this can help you to live triumphantly even in times of deep stress and trial.

One that came to embrace this truth was Horatio G. Spafford, a name familiar to many of you. Spafford was a prominent American lawyer who lived in Chicago in the mid 1800's. He and his wife Anna were committed supporters and close friends of D. L. Moody. Spafford's only son was killed by scarlet fever at the age of four. But it never caused him to doubt God's love and goodness towards him. He was blessed with a godly wife and four beautiful daughters, and a comfortable income. Most of his wealth, however, was invested in Chicago real estate holdings along the shores of Lake Michigan. And then came the devastating Chicago Fire of 1871, which destroyed most of his holding and wiped out much of his wealth. But in spite of this tragedy, Spafford never stopped believing that God loved him.

Feeling a need to get away and rest for a while, he booked passage for him and his family on a ship to England. It would be a combination of rest, and assisting D. L. Moody on an evangelistic campaign in Great Brittan. Just before their departure from New York, last-minute business caused Horatio to remain behind. He persuaded his wife and daughters to go on ahead as planned. On that voyage, there ship was struck by another and sunk in 12 minutes. His wife Anna was rescued, and when she arrived in England she sent him a telegram with only two words in it, "Saved alone!" And he realized that his four daughters were home with the Lord. Spafford left immediately to be with his grieving wife in England to comfort her.

As he crossed the Atlantic, the captain informed him when their ship reached the approximate location where his wife's ship had sunk. Leaving the captain on the bridge, he went below to his cabin and began to write down his feelings. These words were later arranged into a hymn . . .

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Sorrows my friends cannot separate us from the love of Christ. The Spaffords knew that God was not their source of trouble. They knew Jesus was their hope in trouble and received His grace to be able to respond so marvelously! We can also know that this same grace is available to us so that no matter what circumstances

God may allow in our life, we may we be able to say with Horatio Spafford, ***It is well, it is well with my soul.***

Closing song: It Is Well With My Soul!