

Who Can Be Against Us?

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] Let me read to you from God's Word, Romans chapter 8, beginning in verse 31.

! 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 gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who is indeed interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword, as it is written, For your sake we are being killed all the day long.

[1 : 24] We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Knowing all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure or persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I will tell you up front, we are not going to cover every one of those verses tonight. Or this month. Maybe not next month.

But we are going to cover them all. This is not only a portion of Scripture that speaks of the preservation or perseverance of the saints, but in my view, it is the most powerful in the Word of God.

Now that's personal. John 6, which we study, is powerful. John 10 is powerful. But this is powerful. And let me say, we're Baptist folks. We tend to like eternal security of the true believer.

So I would interchange all three of those with perseverance and preservation. But the thing about preservation, that really takes it right to God.

[2 : 58] Only God can preserve us. I can't preserve myself for five seconds. But God can do that. These passages are what Dr. Boyce called a soaring pinnacle of revelation and leaves us nearly breathless by the content.

Excuse me. Now, over the years, Bible commentators have come up with a number of descriptions for these truths that are contained in the verses that I just read.

They have been referred to as a hymn of assurance. They've also been called the song of triumph. Another theologian described them as the highest plateau in the whole of divine revelation.

Now, there is a problem in handling out or handing out such accolades as these concerning these verses. In my opinion, these accolades are weak and don't go far enough.

These are God's words. The Spirit of God wrote these. This is a mountaintop paragraph on perseverance or preservation.

[4 : 28] It is the Mount Everest of Romans. And again, in my view, makes it the highest Himalayan range in the Bible, because I think that's what Romans is. Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is brilliant in this autograph.

Absolutely brilliant. Of course, we already know that the Holy Spirit, the ultimate author of the Word, is brilliant.

That goes without saying. He cannot lie and is without any mixture of error. You'll find no error in these words.

Now, beginning in verse 31 and going to verse 39, which closes out chapter 8, we actually find seven questions.

You will see in your Bible, there are seven question marks at the end of seven different sentences. These are found in the following verses. Two questions in verse 31.

[5 : 34] Two questions in verse 35. One question in verses 32, 33, and 34. Now, we looked at the first question last time, and we're going to get even deeper this time.

We're going to plumb some of the depths there. And Paul uses the two questions in verse 31 to move us from exposition, which is what's been going on in Romans 8, to the conclusion of this chapter.

We can, kind of like when you're getting near the ocean, you can smell the ocean. We can smell the end of chapter 8 here. We're that close. It is a form of saying, in light of what has been taught, what conclusions should we arrive at?

How should we conclude all this? The last two questions that are found in verse 35 we look at, we will look at in some detail in subsequent lessons.

So we're going to explore five fundamental questions beginning tonight. We won't get through all those, I can assure you.

[6 : 53] We can boil these down this way. Who can be against us? That's Romans 8, 31b, the second part of that verse. How will he not also, I'm cutting these short, Romans 8, 32b, who will bring any charge?

Romans 8, 33a Who is to condemn? Romans 8, 34a And who shall separate us from Christ?

Romans 8, 35a I really like what Dr. John R. W. Stott said about these questions. And this is a quote from him.

The Apostle Paul hurls these questions out into space as it were defiantly challenging any creature in heaven or earth or hell to answer them or to deny the truth that is contained in them.

But there is no answer. For nobody and nothing can harm the redeemed people of God. Can't be done.

[8 : 12] Certainly not for eternity. Now Christians die every day. We know that. Some are persecuted to death. But in light of eternity nothing will hurt us.

I've said many times if I could walk through that door and be in heaven through death I'd do it in a heartbeat. Dying bugs me. You know, is there going to be pain? You know, that bothers me a little bit but I'll make it through.

Death can't be that bad, guys. Everybody's doing it. If it was that bad surely someone would figure out how to prevent it, right? Earlier I said this section of Scripture was a mountaintop experience. These questions make it a mountaintop experience. So we're going to look at the first question who can be against us?

Now the verse we're dealing with which contains this question reads as follows. If God is for us who can be against us?

[9 : 19] And there's an interesting answer to that. Very interesting. There is an answer. Most people are against us.

When you look at the world including the United States of America most people are against us. millions millions and perhaps billions we don't know the number of fallen angels who are now demons are against us.

Closer to home our own flesh is against us. It wars against us. Christians everywhere on earth are in a war.

The Bible speaks of three great enemies of the true believer. Those three enemies are the world the flesh and the devil.

We know that. That's the three enemies. Why are these three entities against us? Well boil it all down they're against us because they are against Christ.

[10 : 28] Christ. And we are in Christ. And none of these things the world the flesh and the devil none of these things can get to Christ to harm him in any way whatsoever.

He's at the right hand of the Father. He's interceding for us right now. None of these can get to Jesus so they try to get to us.

The people he died for the people he loves the people he has saved is saving and will save. Well okay why is the world against us?

True Christianity is an offense to the world of unbelief because that world is in continual rebellion against the true God.

God. And I think the greatest rebellion we find today not only in the world but across our land is denial that God even exists.

[11 : 36] A denial that he even exists. But there is a continual rebellion against the true God that encompasses the world of unbelief. That encompasses the world of religion.

And I've said to you many times religion the original meaning of the word religion was from Latin and it meant a return to bondage. Remember Christ fought organized religion the whole time he was on earth.

And religion is man's efforts to reach up to God. So we devise systems to do that. Adam and Eve devised fig leaves. If we can just cover ourselves with fig leaves we'll again be acceptable to God. We'll walk in the cool of the garden with him. Everything will be okay. That was fig leaf religion. Every religion on earth is a man's effort to reach God and I'll tell you something about them they all fall short.

Christianity or Christ is God reaching down to mankind. And it will succeed. It will succeed. And also it encompasses the world of the occult.

[12 : 47] the world wants us to conform to its beliefs. Boy, the world wants that desperately.

And you see that unfold every day somewhere. Failing at that world at that the world would say next well let's do them in.

Let's get rid of them. shut them up in the church. Don't leave your church. Don't spread the gospel. You can talk about anything you want to in there and then they'll make other rules if we ever give in to that.

It's COVID. Shut down your churches. Threaten to arrest no less a person than John MacArthur. I'm going to be prophetic here tonight. I think before this year's out John MacArthur will be in jail. I don't think he'll be there long. I think there'll be such an outcry. But I look for John MacArthur to be arrested because he's very outspoken and he's ignoring that California order to close down.

[13 : 58] But they'd like to get rid of us. You know there's all kinds of scenarios concerning the rapture of the church. That's when the Lord comes back and takes the church out of here. The rapture actually has been made into a number of movies and I've watched several of them.

Some are real brief. Others are long like Left Behind series. Stuff like that. But they have something in common. There is when they're made they always show panic and chaos.

What's happened? Where'd everybody go? And there's all this panic and chaos. I don't think it's going to be like that. It may be like that for 24, 48 hours.

People wondering where grandma went or their wife went. Children wondering where their parents went. Older children. But I think most people and certainly governments are going to suddenly realize you know there's a lot of people gone.

There's a bonanza out there. We've got some things we can lay hold of. Empty houses. Parked cars. Bank accounts.

[15 : 13] Stock portfolios. Farms and ranches. And so on. I think it's going to shortly become a time to divide up the spoils.

And that's going to make a lot of people happy. That'll make a lot of people happy. Well, that's the world. Our flesh is also an enemy.

I would say the flesh is our biggest enemy. It's certainly mine. In it are the seeds of sin that we are unable to totally escape from in this life.

When Adam and Eve chose disobedience, we inherited a sin nature from them. And we see that played out every single day. That's part of the sin nature we inherited from our original parents.

And if that were not enough, then you've got Satan. Now, we don't want to give him too much credit here.

[16 : 22] He's one person. He's not omnipotent. He's not omnipresent. He's not omniscient. He's one person. But he's got millions and maybe billions of demons in his army lurking in the shadows.

He also has false teachers, false prophets, false witnesses. And Jesus said that's going to increase as we get near the end. And we see them all over.

I was in the FBI whenever Jones down in South America poisoned all those people, talked them into committing suicide, 900 and something. I almost went down there.

And the FBI at that time estimated there were 1,200 men in America claiming to be the Messiah, like Jones was. There's a guy in Chicago that bypassed Jesus.

He claims to be God the Father. It's interesting, he's from Puerto Rico, he's got a Puerto Rican accent. I guess God the Father can have a Puerto Rican accent. He's God.

[17:33] Anyway, Satan and his demons are always lurking in the shadows. In fact, sometimes he's not lurking in the shadows. He's out front. Peter told us this, 1 Peter 5, 8, be sober minded, be watchful.

your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

He's like a roaring lion. One of my officers, when they shut down that zoo up in Independence, he asked what they're going to do with all those animals.

He said, we're going to put them down. And he took them. He's got a farm a mile north of me. Every morning I would wake up to a roaring lion for 20 years, and then he died.

He died just the other day. And he didn't roar anymore. The truth here, though, guys, is there are plenty of enemies out in the world waiting for us.

[18:42] There is a very powerful enemy inside us, always ready to pounce. and then we read, if God is for us, who can be against us?

That's powerful. That's powerful. Don't worry about all those others. If God is for us, who can be against us? And you know, I don't know why Bible translators leave certain words in the Bible that were misquotes really from antiquity.

the word if used in this passage is better translated since. Why they didn't just write that, of course, a lot of that was King James.

If he didn't like a word, they took it out. But this gives a whole new meaning to that sentence. Listen to it now. Since God is for us, who can be against us?

Boy, that resonates to me. That just resonates. Since God is for us, who's going to successfully be against us? Nick, do you know anybody?

[19:53] I caught your eye. Cameron, do you know anybody? Since God is for us, who is going to be against us? Since the God of the universe is on our side, nothing and no one can defeat us.

Why? Because of the victory of the cross. Jesus won. Jesus won. In fact, the only support we have to sustain us through every temptation and every sin is the God of the universe who is for us.

Since God is for us. And remember, God is a trinity. It's important to remember that. He is a trinity of three persons, not three gods, one God, three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That is the true God. The three persons of the Godhead are for us. Three persons, one in essence, one in being, one God, just one God.

Can't wrap our minds around that, can we? I don't know that we'll wrap it around us when we get to glory. Now, we don't use, let me back up, if God is not propitious to us, then we have no confidence in our earthly existence.

[21:22] And we don't use that word propitious much in our everyday conversations, do we? To be safe, I looked up the definition, and I love Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary, he was a brother in Christ.

And in the 1828 dictionary, I have a reproductive copy, not one of the originals, but he would say, see Ephesians whatever, or see Romans, that's how he defined, backed up his definitions.

This is what our brother Noah Webster said about propitious. propitious. If a human is propitious, he is said to be favorable and kind toward others.

Well, that sounds pretty good. There's a lot of you in here that are propitious. If God is propitious, he is disposed to be gracious and merciful, ready to forgive sins and bestow blessings.

I like that. That's propitious. That's what it means. God's favor alone is adequate to get us through every sorrow and is the strongest protection against the storms of life.

[22:46] I should have put that passage which says, you know, God's never going to give you more than you can bear. But I'll tell you, there's been times, probably in all our lives, when you just say, no, Lord, that passage can't be true.

I can't handle this. I'm not going to be able to handle this one. But you know what? We do. Six weeks later, six months later, we've handled it.

We've handled it. God will get us through every sorrow and is the strongest protection in the storms of life. The writer of the Psalms understood this very well.

Consider these passages. Psalm 36. I will not be afraid. Well, that sounds good, but it continues. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

Does it come as a shock to you that David wrote that Psalm? He had armies coming after him. He had the army of Israel coming after him. King Saul wanted him dead.

[23 : 57] And he says, I'm not afraid. There's thousands coming at me. And I'm not afraid. Go back to when he was a little boy. The whole Philistine army was after him along with Goliath.

And remember how many stones he picked up? Five. Why? Goliath had four brothers. Psalm 23 4. You know who wrote Psalm 23, right?

David. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. You're with me.

Now, I've been in that valley a few times in law enforcement, and my problem was I left God out of it and I was afraid. I kept going, but I was afraid, and then I realized, wait a minute, and I remember that passage.

Wait a minute. And then Psalm 56 11, In God I trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

[25 : 03] Ultimately, what can people do to us? I remember Lazarus, you know, when Jesus raised him from the dead. What kind of conversations would you have had with Lazarus?

Wouldn't that have been great? And I remember the stage play Lazarus laughing. And, you know, when Lazarus was raised, the Pharisees, they threatened to kill him if he didn't shut up about being raised from the dead.

And in the play, Lazarus laughing, he said, go ahead. I've already been dead once. It's okay. It's okay. And again, not surprisingly, all three of these passages were written by King David.

And let's face it, David knew a thing or two about spiritual warfare. He knew about the conflicts in this life, conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And he fought all three, didn't he? Don't leave the flesh out of that. We have Bathsheba lurking out there. David fought all those. He fought them all.

[26 : 12] Again, Dr. Boyce put forth these thoughts. Granted that nothing can be against us if God is for us, us. But then a question comes up, is God really for us?

How can we know that the great God of the universe is actually on our side? And then Dr. Boyce gives three statements to ponder. Perhaps God is too busy to care about us.

I mean, you know, he's pretty busy, right? I remember my youngest son Rob was just a little shaver, I mean a little bitty, and he wanted to say his night prayers, and it was gibberish. And I remember thinking, I'm sitting with him on his bed, and I'm thinking, you know, God, you're running the universe, do you have time to listen to this?

And boy, I'll tell you what, Willard, my heart is like he spoke to me and he said, I hear more of his than I hear yours. Now that will bring tears to your eyes and sore knees.

I'll never forget that moment. But, maybe we are too insignificant for God to give us even a second thought. Sometimes when I'm flying somewhere and I look down at a city, and you see cars, you see people, and I'm thinking, God knows the thoughts of everybody and every car and people walking, but he does.

[27 : 35] And then third, what if our sins have caused God to regret that he brought us into being in the first place? Now, I hasten to add, Dr. Boyce didn't believe any of those. He's just using it for argument.

He's using them really for dramatic effect. But we can be sure that Dr. Boyce did not believe in these things. And he sure does it today because he's with the Lord. Died in 2000.

More importantly, the apostle Paul has no doubts along these lines. Any such thoughts that any person, a believer or an unbeliever, might have along these lines is blown out of the water by the next question that God has.

How will he not also? Again, that's an abbreviated part of the question. Let me put it in the complete sentence. This is the 32nd verse of Romans chapter 8.

He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[28 : 52] And that's our next question. And I called Pastor Mike today and we talked about this because I'm now faced with a dilemma. and I had to make some decisions or a decision.

And I had to think through this afternoon a workable solution. Here is the dilemma. We've covered the first question.

I cannot possibly cover verse 32 in the time we have left unless we want to be here until 9.30 or so. I can't do it.

And I want to dedicate the next lesson in its entirety pretty much to this verse 22. Why? Paul is talking about the great and essential doctrine of substitutionary atonement. That's Jesus being your substitute and mine on the cross.

[30 : 03] I don't want to give that short introduction and then go to something else. We can't do that. This is not only an important subject, it is an essential subject and not one that we can spend five minutes on.

So with regret, I came up with the decision that I'm going to shut you down early because I really want to hit this one next time.

I really do. And that's where we're going to pick it up next week in verse 32. And quite honestly, I can hardly wait. I can hardly wait.

It's filled with great, great truths that we need to really impress on our minds and our hearts. So seeking your forgiveness for the early dismissal, let's close with a word of prayer.

Father, I thank you for the great truths of your word. This very weekend, Dr. MacArthur referred to that as the ark.

[31 : 10] It's where God dwells. He dwells in his word. And I thank you for that word, Lord. And we should not handle it flippantly, lightly.

You speak to us through the word. Often people ask me, Lord, if God would just speak to me. He's spoken to us in 66 books of the Bible. He has not been silent, as Dr.

Schaefer said, but he's spoken to us in propositional truth. And so, Lord, we're dismissed tonight, but we're eager to come back.

We want to learn more as we cover these questions concerning our eternal security. And I thank you for that in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.