

Love and Security in Christ

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Date: 06 November 2011

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[0:00] Romans 8 and verse 31, and I'm going to read all the way to the end of the chapter, because that's how far we're going.

Even though, as we were singing a moment ago, the deep, deep love, we can't get all the deepness of this scripture out tonight. Okay, 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?

[1:17] 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.

Tremendous passage. Tremendous passage.

Tremendous passage.

First of all, we would go out on Saturday, every Saturday and go to the government housing projects in Memphis and just talk to people who were walking around.

[3:00] And we would share the gospel with them and also invite them to a free movie, outdoor movie that we would be showing later that evening.

The name of the name of the name of the name of the name of the movie was The Burning Hell. I chuckled because I didn't really advertise the name of the movie. You know, invite people to come. I want you to come to a free movie tonight.

It's called The Burning Hell. I want you to like to come and see it. And it was quite a hokey movie. But it had definitely a B movie. But it had a tremendous message.

And it was a great opportunity to then share the gospel with people. But anyway, that was the ministry I was involved in. And on one occasion, well, actually, this happened quite often.

We would meet people and God was gracious to save some of them. But on one occasion, I shared the gospel with a young black man by the name of Greg. That was his name.

[4:00] I'll never forget him because he was like, unlike most of the people I talked to. He was so ready. Just so ready. And ready to repent and to trust Christ.

And so we got on our knees there, right on the sidewalk. Right there in the middle of one of the largest government housing projects in Memphis. And people were walking around and all that.

And so we got on our knees and we were about to pray. And I looked at Greg and I said to him, I said, Greg, God loves you. And, which is a very, you know, simple thing to say.

A very common thing you would say. God loves you, Greg. But when I said that to him, he looked at me eye to eye.

And he had such a profound expression on his face. I mean, it was at that very moment that he became so transparent. It was like I could see right into him.

[4:59] And I was so astounded by that. So affected by that. That I said to him, I said, Greg, you probably were wondering if God even knew where you were.

Much less that he loved you. And he looked at me and said, yes, that's right. Now, I tell that story because I want you to know that Greg, that day, not the only person who felt that way.

And today is not the only person who has those kinds of feelings. That, you know, somehow God doesn't even know where I am.

Or that God doesn't really love me as I thought he did. And every day there are born-again Christians who are wondering if God still loves them.

I mean, seriously. And some of you may have had seasons in your life. Maybe in the midst of some event that has taken place, some occasion.

[6:08] And you have felt suddenly alienated from God, the love of God. And you've wondered, does he still love me? Does he still care about me?

Does he even know where I am? Does he know what's going on in my life? And, but here's the truth. And you know this. The truth. For Greg that day, some, I don't know how many years ago it's been now.

For Greg that day, nothing. And no one was going to separate him from the love of God in Christ. No one, no thing was going to do that.

And the same is true of every one of us here. You name the name of Christ. There isn't anything that can happen. No one can separate you.

No thing can separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ. And to know that and to have a profound confidence in that brings great victory in your life.

[7:18] Now, Paul then, in this passage that I read a moment ago, and it's a very familiar passage, he lays before us, I think, some wonderful truths. Truths for which he has already laid the foundation.

We've already been studying the foundation for what he is now saying to us here in Romans chapter 8. And his subject is very simple to understand.

It's simply this. The love and security of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. That's his subject. And it is his explanation and application of that subject that will bring us through those times in our lives where we might be tempted to think that God does not love us as we thought he did.

Or that God has somehow forsaken us. When we wonder if God is still there and we question whether we're still saved. Sometimes that is the issue.

All right, so Paul begins then where we really need to begin. And that is the source of all of this. The source of this love. And so I want to tell you, first of all, that Paul presents to us our unrivaled advocate.

[8:38] We have an advocate. And he is our God. And he's unrivaled. Verse 31, Paul said, what then shall we say to these things?

Paul's just full of questions. He asks a number of questions. He's been asking questions. Now he asks this question, what then shall we say to these things? You see, Paul is about to make an important conclusion.

One that we need to make. He's going to make it for us. And we need to enter in to that conclusion. And it's an exciting conclusion to which Paul has brought us after stating some incredible truths. Some incredible and important facts. In other words, Paul is saying, in light of all of the facts now set before us. In light of the fact that, first of all, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ.

That's verse 1 of chapter 8. Paul's saying, since it is true that I am free from the law of sin and death. That's verse 2 of chapter 8.

[9:52] Since we are children of God. Verse 16. Since we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Verse 17. Since the Spirit intercedes for us when we do not know how to pray or what to pray.

Verse 26. And we can go on and on. Since it is true that all things work together for good to those who love God. To those who are the called according to His purpose.

And finally, since God graciously foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us, glorified us. Verse 30. Since all of this is true. What is the conclusion?

What is the glorious conclusion? If God is for us, who can be against us? See, this is the conclusion He's coming to. Can we get a hold of that? Well, we ought to be able to.

It's pretty simple, isn't it? Pretty straightforward. Though we lose sight of it quite often based upon circumstances or other influences in our life. And sometimes we get away from God.

[10:51] Or sometimes we allow ourselves to break fellowship with God because of sin. And whatever the case may be, we lose sight of this. But it is nevertheless true.

If God is for us, who can be against us? But what does it mean God is for us? Have you thought about that?

I think we probably know. But let's just think about this for a moment. When I am for someone. And I was for you until you got the flashlights out here tonight.

But when I'm for someone, that means that I am on their side. Right? I'm on their side. It certainly means that. Or I'm with them.

I'm with you. I'm with you on this. And what I've done is, you know, consciously, sometimes subconsciously, intuitively.

[11 : 51] I have considered all the particulars about you that I know. And I have evaluated the positives and the negatives. And I've looked at the pros and the cons.

And I have considered what is right about you and what is wrong about you. And then I choose. I'm for you. All right? I'm for a certain person.

Or maybe it's a thing. And I've considered all these things in relation to a certain thing. Or idea. Or whatever it may be. And then I am pro this. Or I'm pro that.

Or I'm pro you. And that's what it means for me. That's what it means for you, I'm sure. But when I apply that same process to God, it doesn't work that way with Him.

Did you know that? I realize that God works differently in regard to this. I realize that God does not look at all the possibilities about me.

[12 : 49] I'm so glad that He has not considered that because I'm a dismal failure. I'm glad He's not looked at me in that way. And now He knows all of those things.

Knows them intimately. Knows them better than I know them. But praise His name. They do not enter into His divine choosing of me. And loving me.

It's unconditional with God. You see, God does not look at the pros and cons of Don Coleman. I don't know that there are any pros.

At least from a divine perspective. And God doesn't look at that. God doesn't look at the positives and negatives. What's right with me. What's wrong about me. God just chooses me.

And it's beyond my understanding. And I would not choose me if I were God. Really. I wouldn't do that. But God did. God did.

[13 : 48] And He is pro Don Coleman. God is for me. Who can be against me? Now I'm saying that of me.

And you can say that of you. That's the way God works. Let me give you an expanded translation. A greatly amplified translation.

This is not my own. So I'm going to read it to you. Based upon the glorious fact. That God has done all of these things for us.

I just recited them. And based upon the fact that God is God. Supreme. Sovereign. Based upon all of this. I could not possibly come to any other conclusion than this.

God is for me. Therefore. Who? Who? Just name one. Name one person. Who could rise above the greatness of God. And bring a charge against me.

[14 : 46] That would stick. Just name one. God is already for me. Now who can be against me? That's a tremendous amplification. Of this verse.

That is. When it comes to God. Who he is. What he's able to do. What he's promised to do. Who can rival him.

Paul's not through describing our unrivaled advocate. Look at verse 32 again. 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. That's a tremendous. Passage of scripture.

It's profound. To me. How in the same verse. You can have. Such extreme. Such extremes. Between two divine acts of God. They're extreme.

[15 : 46] You say. What do you mean? I mean. First. You have. The phrase. He did not spare his own son. That's Jesus. He did not spare his own son. And then you have.

In that same verse. Same sentence. Then. He says. Then. He says. Freely. He freely. Gives us all things. Those two. Things. Those are extremes.

He did not spare his own son. But he gives us. All things. Freely. Freely. Such extreme. And yet. One is totally dependent upon the other. These things. He doesn't spell the things out. These things.

These things freely given to us. Are only as free as the cost of them was to God. And it cost him a lot. Think about it. He spared no cost.

[16 : 43] For you. For us. We did not deserve it. And in our unregenerate state. We did not even want it. And if the roles were reversed.

We certainly would not have done it for him. Yet he did it. For us. He spared not his own son. And now. Gives us.

All things. Freely. So what a wonderful truth. God is. For me. He is my unrivaled advocate. And I'm so glad that he is. Because I have. I have an adversary.

You do too. And that's where we're going next. Paul. Tells us. Not only of our. Unrivaled advocate. That we have. With God. But also.

Our adversary. And yet he. Says that he's unproductive. So we have an unproductive adversary. An unrivaled advocate. But an unproductive adversary. Look. At verse.

[17 : 40] Thirty. Again. And see. This. These. Series of questions. Who shall bring a charge. Against God's elect. There's. There's a question.

It is God. Who justifies. And then. And then another question. Verse thirty. Four. Who is he who condemns. It is Christ. Who died. And furthermore. Is also risen. Who's even at the right hand of God. Who also makes.

Intercession for us. And then we have another question. Who shall separate us. From the love of Christ. And then he lists. A bunch of things. And says. Yet in all these things. We're more than conquerors.

Through him. Who loves us. Who loves us. So. Here. We have. Paul asking. Three questions. And. I will say to you. That they're rhetorical questions. And they're rhetorical. Because. Paul gives us the answer. In fact. When you consider the answer.

[18 : 37] Then you understand. That these are not questions at all. But they're bold statements. In fact. The very grammar. Even though our English. Brings out the if.

In the. Grammatical sense. It really is the word. Since. Not if. But since. So. Not a. Interrogative. Not a. A question. A statement. Since. This. Thus and such. Since. These things are true.

These are bold statements. Here. But let's. Take them as questions though. First of all. And so. Verse 33. Is the first question. And. Paul asks. What shall.

Or rather. Who shall bring a charge. Against God's elect. And. And. That is. Who will come. Before God. At his throne.

[19 : 30] And. Prefer charges. Against me. I'll just. Just. Make this. Personal. And. Use me. Here. I believe.

I believe. Paul. Is. Referring to Satan. Here. Though he doesn't mention Satan. He's speaking of our adversary. And.

I believe. That. That is Satan. Primarily. I believe. That's. That. That. That. That is the person that. Paul has in view here. Satan. The Bible does say that Satan is the accuser.

Of the brethren. And the sisters. Too. He's the accuser. So. This is Satan. And. What we have is an image of the courtroom.

It's pretty clear to kind of see this. It's kind of a courtroom scene. Here. Where. Satan is the self-appointed prosecutor. the prosecuting attorney, and he is constantly, continually coming to the bench where God is presiding as the divine judge, and he is bringing charges against a believer.

[20 : 39] And he's doing this day in, day out, bringing a charge against a believer. Satan is preferring charges against one of God's children. He does that, he charges me before God.

Now, the same scene carries forward into Paul's second question. We'll go ahead and take that. Verse 34, who is he who condemns? Sounds like a similar question, and it is similar.

Still have the same kind of imagery of a courtroom, and God is judge. The word condemn here is similar in meaning to the word charge.

Very similar, but it's a much stronger word. It goes a step further. And so what I have here is in verse 33, we have Satan coming as prosecuting attorney with charges against one of God's children.

And then in verse 34, we have Satan, he's stopped now being the attorney, the prosecuting attorney, and now he asserts himself, boldly elevates himself to the position of judge.

[21 : 45] And so now he's not just simply bringing an accusation, he's passing judgment. The audacity. He's saying, this guy down here is guilty.

He's guilty. Condemned. I can just kind of visualize this. I see Satan slithering up to the throne of Almighty God.

To the bar. The judgment. And in his left hand, he has accusations against me.

Kind of like when he came before God, an accusation about Job, remember? And then just look down here at this Job guy.

You know, one of your favored ones. I tell you, you just take away some of the benefits and he'll curse your name. That's an accusation.

[22:50] So here's Satan. He's slithered up to the throne. You know, and he's looking at God. Hey, here's some accusations. Here's what this guy's done.

And then with his crooked bony finger, he's pointing down to that believer and he says, guilty. Guilty.

And day after day after day. I'm convinced this is Satan's primary job. Primary job. It's a day and night kind of job.

He sends all his minions to do their thing here on the earth. But Satan's primary job, job one for Satan, is to keep coming to God, bringing accusations against his children.

Condemning them before God. And he makes his ugly appearance before the throne of God to charge us and to condemn us before God. But listen, his charges are hollow and his condemnations are meaningless.

[23:57] And why is that? Well, because God's word is already said very plainly in the very first verse of this chapter. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ.

None. None whatsoever. So who and with what charge can come before God, the divine judge of all, and accuse me of anything?

And the answer is no one can. This is what Paul is saying. Now, wait a minute. Someone might object. God is the judge and he knows everything, doesn't he?

And, Brother Don, you know you're a nice guy. There, I'm sure, plenty of things you've done. Plenty of things maybe you are doing that would give him just cause to condemn you.

Well, let's just face the fact. I would say that's exactly right. You're right. That's true. There's no denying that. And what's more, I would even go out on a limb to say that some of Satan's charges have a grain of truth in them.

[25:08] Maybe more than just a grain of truth. See, that's not the point. Don't forget. Paul said, God is for me.

He's on my side. Not because I'm a great God, but because I belong to him. And he is for me. In a sense, this court proceeding, such as it is, is fixed.

Or really more accurately, it's already settled. Already settled. The judge is my father. And he's for me.

And he's for me. And we understand him being for me in these terms. In verse 33, he says that God has justified me. He's justified.

That is, he always sees me now in Christ as though I've never done a single thing wrong. Look at verse 33.

[26:21] Let's just put the whole verse together. Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? And the answer is no one. Why? Because God has justified. He's blotted out all of those things.

They're all gone. They're buried in the sea of his forgetfulness. In reality, it means that God sees them as totally forgiven.

But then, if that's not enough, Paul answers Satan's devilish condemnations by reminding him and us in verse 34 that Jesus is also in the courtroom.

All right, so we've got to bring Jesus in here. Verse 34. Look at that again. Who is he who condemns? What's the answer?

No one. Why? It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen who is even at the right hand of God. Where is he? At the right hand of God.

[27:31] And what's he doing there? He's even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us. So Jesus is there too. And so, you know, he's the one who died for us.

He's the one who was raised from the dead for us, for our justification. He is the one who's at the right hand of God making intercession for us. And therefore, with every charge Satan makes, every condemnation he levels against us, Jesus says to God the Father, innocent.

He's innocent of all charges. What about this? Satan grumbles. And Jesus is innocent. Innocent.

Satan says, look now at what your precious little saint has done. And Jesus replies, he's innocent of all charges.

Not replying to Satan, replying to God the Father. He's innocent. Surely this will interest you. Satan comes with some new little thing he has found. Surely this will interest you, God.

[28 : 44] You know. Now, you know, let me tell you what he's done now. Man, surely you're not going to let this go by. And Jesus says without hesitation.

Innocent. Innocent. Now, we're not out of the woods yet because Paul asks a third question. Verse 35.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And then he lists a number of possibilities. There's tribulation and distress and persecution and famine and nakedness and peril.

And what's the last one? Sword. He lists all of these things. But you know, it's interesting that Paul uses the pronoun who rather than what.

Who shall separate us from the love of God? And then he lists all those things. He's not personifying the things. I think he's pointing again to Satan.

[29 : 52] Our adversary. And Satan would throw everything he can in our way trying to convince us that God is not for us. That God does not really love us.

Or that maybe he did but now he doesn't anymore. Satan would love to do that. See, the word separate here in the text means literally to put a space between.

And so our adversary, the devil, is trying to place. He's not only accusing us before God in heaven, but here on the earth.

He's trying to place things between us and God. And to try and separate us from the love of God. And it won't work. That's why he's the unproductive adversary.

And so tribulation comes. And we say, are you against me? Are you going to defeat me? No. God is for me. God loves me. Distress.

[30 : 55] Persecution. Raise their ugly heads in our life. Are you against me? Are you going to take me down and take me out and defeat me? No. God is for me.

God loves me. Famine engulfs me. And I say, will you then be against me? Will you rob me of God's love?

No. God is for me. You cannot separate me from him. Nakedness. God. Nakedness. Peril. Sword. They all come after me. Can you defeat me? Can you cause me to lose what I have in Christ? No. Absolutely not.

God is for me. You get the idea. It's clear, isn't it? Satan is the unproductive adversary because God is our unrivaled advocate. God is for me. God has justified me.

[31 : 55] Christ intercedes for me. There is now no more condemnation. God is for me. And Paul finishes this passage with a statement that I think serves as a culmination.

Kind of the cap on it all here of the entire chapter. And I would sum it up this way.

He is. God is our unconquerable. Our God. We have God's unconquerable affection.

Unconquerable affection.

Verse 37. Yet in all these things. We are what? More than conquerors. Through him who loved us. Do you hear that? We're more than conquerors. I probably have told this story, but it fits here.

[32 : 57] I heard a story about a certain football coach. And he was sitting down with one of his recruiters and giving his recruiters some last minute instructions before he was to go out and visit some of the high school football games.

Because he was looking for good football players for the team. And so the coach is giving him some instructions. And he says, you know, you know that guy that when he gets knocked down, he stays down.

And the recruiter said, yeah, all too well. You don't want him, do you? No, I don't want him. But you know the kind of guy that when he gets knocked down, he gets right back up again? Yeah. Seen him.

Is that the kind of football player you want? And the coach said, no, I don't want him either. But you know that kind of guy that when he gets knocked down, he gets right back up again. He gets knocked down, he gets right back up again.

He gets knocked down, he gets right back up again. And every time he gets knocked down, he gets right back up again. You know that kind of guy? And the recruiter said, yeah, that's the one you want. And the coach said, no, I don't want him either.

[33 : 59] Recruiter's kind of bewildered. And he said, well, just what kind of football player you want? The coach said, I want the guy who's knocking all those other guys down. He's unconquerable.

You can't stop him. And that's the way our God is. He's unconquerable. And his love is unconquerable.

And when we find ourselves secure in his love, then we are more than conquerors. It's amazing that what the world would call defeat.

I'm talking about tribulation, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, all these things. The world would call those things defeat. Well, see, you know, just proves that, you know, they were following and believing the wrong thing.

They call that defeat. But what the world calls defeat, God calls victory. And we need to think of these things in those terms. And, you know, the way Paul words this, and specifically the grammar that's used here, it makes it clear that he is saying that you are conquering while these things are happening in your life.

[35 : 18] Do we find enough security in the thought that God is promising that ultimately we will be conquerors when we get through this? But he is saying, actually, in the present tense, you are conquering as this is happening.

Not ultimately you will conquer, but right now you are conquering. And not just conquering. Overwhelmingly conquering.

More than conquerors. And how can this be? I mean, you know, in our mindset, especially in a Western mindset, how can we be naked, that is, not have enough clothes even to wear, and what we have are just rags.

How can that be our condition? And at the same time be overwhelmingly conquering. We just can't see that those two could go together. How can that be?

Because God is for us. And so these things are not against us. How could they be? Paul was convinced of that.

[36 : 22] He said, I'm persuaded. Are we? Are we? No matter what happens. See, Paul experienced all of the above in verses 35 and 36.

None of us have. In fact, really, we've not experienced any of these things. Have we?

Not really. And I wonder if it would take these things. Some of this kind of thing.

Like persecution. Or nakedness. I wonder if it would take these things to convince us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

What if suddenly everything, everything you have was taken away from you? I mean, it does happen, doesn't it? I'm not talking about losing everything because you've made some moral choices, immoral choices.

[37 : 30] And you're just reaping the result, the fruit of your choices. That happens, certainly. But I'm talking about for no fault of your own. And this happens to Christians, has happened to Christians all throughout the ages of the church.

Where Christians have had everything taken from them because of Christ. What if that happened to you? What if you lost every single thing? Would you still be a conqueror?

That is, would you still be convinced, maybe even more so, that God still loves you and that God is for you?

Hmm. Ponder that question. Could it be that Paul is wanting us to settle that issue right now, on the front end, before the tribulation comes, before distress, before persecution and famine and nakedness and peril and sword?

Settle that right now. To say right now, yes, God loves me and nothing and no one can ever change that. I think that's what we should do.

[38 : 44] Is settle that right now in our own hearts. See? Because, listen, no matter what hell might throw at you, we have this testimony of Scripture.

You will always be the object of God's unconquerable love and affection. Always. Always. No matter what. Jesus said in John 10, verse 27, He said, My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me.

And I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

I and My Father are one. When Greg, that boy I told you about at the beginning, when he kneeled and he prayed, and he prayed a prayer of repentance and faith, and he was saved. At that very moment, though I didn't see it, the right hand of God reached out and took hold of Greg, put him right in the palm of his hand, and he's right inside the hand of God.

[40:03] And then, at that moment, the left hand of God came out of heaven and took hold of the right hand of God. And where's Greg?

Right inside there. The double grip of God. God has sinned. Now, who, what is able to take Greg out of the hands of God?

No one. No thing. Paul says, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers. Those three go together. Nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth. Whatever extreme you might be able to find. Nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen and amen.