

**Romans 8:31-39**  
**May 3, 2015**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: If you were having coffee with a friend and he or she asked you, “How do you know that God loves you?” How would you answer? [God sent Jesus to die for me. If Christ dies for you, He is FOR you!!]

The emphasis in this final section is on the security of the believer. We do not need to fear the past, present, or future because we are secure in the love of Christ. Paul presents five arguments to prove that there could be no separation between the believer and the Lord.

**Transition:** As we wrap up the last section of Chapter 8, let’s look for Paul’s ARGUMENTS that prove that God is for us so that every born-again believer CAN live securely in Christ’s love for them. Let’s begin.

**Read Rom 8:31-39**

V.31:

- What, then, shall we say in response to this? If **God is for us**, who can be against us?

V.32:

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

V.33:

- Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

V.34:

- Who is he that condemns? **Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

V.35:

- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

V.36:

- As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

V.37:

- No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

V.38:

- **For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,**

V.39:

- **neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: We are looking for Paul's supporting arguments that we are secure in God's love as His children. Let's just go verse by verse and see if we can identify them. [Review all highlighted phrases above and process them]

Q V.31: How does knowing that God is for you affect how you live your life? [I can live it without fear. I can live it knowing that God always has my back in all circumstances. God always wants the very best for each of us]

Q V.32: Isn't this the greatest selling point of God's love for us – who He gave us His Son to die for us. God gave His very best to us, so why would we expect anything less than He will give us what we need.

Q: Doesn't this remind you of when Jesus told His disciples that God cares for the birds, the sheep, and the lilies of the field?

Q V.33: Why is justification an important part of the security of the believer? [Understanding the meaning of justification brings peace to our hearts. When God declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ, that declaration never changes. Our Christian experience changes from day to day, but justification never changes. We may accuse ourselves, and men may accuse us; but God will never take us to court and accuse us. Jesus has already paid the penalty and we are secure in Him.]

Q V.34: How much do you value that Christ and the Spirit of God intercedes for us? Do we live with the awareness that the same Savior who died for us is now interceding for us in heaven? Are we taking this for granted? [This is one of the things I most cherished about my Dad. He considered it his highest privilege and responsibility to pray for his children daily. I can't even begin to describe how loved I felt knowing that he was always praying for me.]

Q V.35-39: In Rom 8:31-34 Paul proved that God cannot fail us, but is it possible that we can fail Him? Suppose some great trial or temptation comes, and we fail? Then what? [To begin with, God does not shelter us from the difficulties of life because we need them for our spiritual growth (Rom. 5:3-5). In Romans 8:28 God assures us that the difficulties of life are working *for* us and not *against* us. God permits trials to come that we might use them for our good and His glory. We endure trials for His sake (Rom. 8:36), and since we do, do you think that He will desert us? Of course not! Instead, He is closer to us when we go through the difficulties of life.]

V.37: We need not fear life or death, things present or things to come, because Jesus Christ loves us and gives us the victory. This is not a promise with conditions attached: "If you do this, God will do that." This security in Christ is an established fact, and we claim it for ourselves because we are in Christ. Nothing can separate you from His love! Believe it—and rejoice in it!

## **LOOK:**

A review of this wonderful chapter shows that the Christian is completely victorious. We are free from judgment because Christ died for us and we have His righteousness. We are free from defeat because Christ lives in us by His Spirit and we share His life. We are free from discouragement because Christ is coming for us and we shall share His glory. We are free from fear because Christ intercedes for us and we cannot be separated from His love.

No condemnation or separation! If God be for us, who can be against us!

## **Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 541–543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

**Freedom from Fear-No Separation (Rom. 8:31–39)**

There is no condemnation because we share the righteousness of God and the Law cannot condemn us. There is no obligation because we have the Spirit of God who enables us to overcome the flesh and live for God. There is no frustration because we share the glory of God, the blessed hope of Christ's return. There is no separation because we experience the love of God: "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35)

The emphasis in this final section is on the security of the believer. We do not need to fear the past, present, or future because we are secure in the love of Christ. Paul presented five arguments to prove that there could be no separation between the believer and the Lord.

***God is for us (v. 31).*** *The Father* is for us and proved it by giving His Son (Rom. 8:32). *The Son* is for us (Rom. 8:34) and so is *the Spirit* (Rom. 8:26). God is making all things work for us (Rom. 8:28). In His person and His providence, God is for us. Sometimes, like Jacob, we lament, "All these things are against me" (Gen. 42:36), when actually everything is working for us. The conclusion is obvious: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The believer needs to enter into each new day realizing that God is for him. There is no need to fear, for his loving Father desires only the best for His children, even if they must go through trials to receive His best. " 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope' " (Jer. 29:11, NASB).

***Christ died for us (v. 32).*** The argument here is from the lesser to the greater. If when we were sinners, God gave us His best, now that we are God's children, will He not give us all that we need? Jesus used this same argument when He tried to convince people that it was foolish to worry and fear. God cares for the birds and sheep, and even for the lilies; surely He will care for you! God is dealing with His own on the basis of Calvary grace, not on the basis of Law. God freely gives all things to His own!

***God has justified us (v. 33).*** This means that He has declared us righteous in Christ. Satan would like to accuse us (Zech. 3:1–7; Rev. 12:10), but we stand righteous in Jesus Christ. We are God's elect—chosen in Christ and accepted in Christ. God will certainly not accuse us since it is He who has justified us. For Him to accuse us would mean that His salvation was a failure and we are still in our sins.

Understanding the meaning of justification brings peace to our hearts. When God declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ, that declaration never changes. Our Christian experience changes from day to day, but justification never changes. We may accuse ourselves, and men may accuse us; but God will never take us to court and accuse us. Jesus has already paid the penalty and we are secure in Him.

***Christ intercedes for us (v. 34).*** A dual intercession keeps the believer secure in Christ: the Spirit intercedes (Rom. 8:26–27) and the Son of God intercedes (Rom. 8:34). The same Saviour who died for us is now interceding for us in heaven. As our High Priest, He can give us the grace we need to overcome temptation and defeat the enemy (Heb. 4:14–16). As our Advocate, He can forgive our sins and restore our fellowship with God (1 John 1:9–2:2). Intercession means that Jesus Christ represents us before the throne of God and we do not have to represent ourselves.

Paul hinted at this ministry of intercession in Romans 5:9–10. We are not only saved by His death, but we are also saved by His life. "Therefore He is able to save completely those who

come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them” (Heb. 7:25, NIV). Peter sinned against the Lord, but he was forgiven and restored to fellowship because of Jesus Christ. “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has asked permission to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed especially for you that your own faith may not utterly fail” (Luke 22:31–32, WMS). He is interceding for each of us, a ministry that assures us that we are secure.

**Christ loves us (vv. 35–39).** In Romans 8:31–34 Paul proved that God cannot fail us, but is it possible that we can fail Him? Suppose some great trial or temptation comes, and we fail? Then what? Paul deals with that problem in this final section and explains that nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ.

To begin with, God does not shelter us from the difficulties of life because we need them for our spiritual growth (Rom. 5:3–5). In Romans 8:28 God assures us that the difficulties of life are working *for* us and not *against* us. God permits trials to come that we might use them for our good and His glory. We endure trials for His sake (Rom. 8:36), and since we do, do you think that He will desert us? Of course not! Instead, He is closer to us when we go through the difficulties of life.

Furthermore, He gives us the power to conquer (Rom. 8:37). We are “more than conquerors,” literally, “we are super-conquerors” through Jesus Christ! He gives us victory and more victory! We need not fear life or death, things present or things to come, because Jesus Christ loves us and gives us the victory. This is not a promise with conditions attached: “If you do this, God will do that.” This security in Christ is an established fact, and we claim it for ourselves because we are in Christ. Nothing can separate you from His love! Believe it—and rejoice in it!

A review of this wonderful chapter shows that the Christian is completely victorious. We are free from judgment because Christ died for us and we have His righteousness. We are free from defeat because Christ lives in us by His Spirit and we share His life. We are free from discouragement because Christ is coming for us and we shall share His glory. We are free from fear because Christ intercedes for us and we cannot be separated from His love.

No condemnation! No obligation! No frustration! No separation!  
If God be for us, who can be against us!

**Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 474–476). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

8:31–32. It is astounding to realize that God’s plan of salvation for people is a program that reaches from eternity past to eternity future which God will carry out perfectly. Recognizing this, Paul asked and answered (in vv. 31–39) seven questions to drive home the truth that a believer’s eternal salvation is completely secure in God’s hands. The first question is general, **What, then, shall we say in response to this?** (cf. 4:1; 6:1; 9:14, 30) The obvious response to 8:28–30 would be to say “Hallelujah,” or to stand in open-mouthed amazement.

This leads to a series of six more specific questions. The first is, **If God is for us, who can be against us?** Obviously, Satan and his demonic hosts are against believers (cf. Eph. 6:11–13; 1 Peter 5:8), but they cannot ultimately prevail and triumph over believers. God is the self-existent One and the sovereign Creator and, since He is for believers, no one can oppose believers successfully. He is for believers to the extent that **He ... did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all.** The word “spare” (*epheisato*, from *pheidomai*) is the same word used in the Septuagint in Genesis 22:12 where the NIV translates it “withheld.” God said to Abraham, “You

have not withheld your son.” Then God directed Abraham to spare Isaac and to offer a ram as a substitute (Gen. 22:2–14), whereas God offered His own Son as the Sacrifice for sin (John 1:29). In view of this supreme act of God’s grace, **How will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?** Since God gave the greatest Sacrifice of all, His own Son, He will certainly not hesitate to give believers all other things pertaining to and leading to their ultimate sanctification (cf. 2 Peter 1:3).

8:33–34. The next two questions Paul raised and answered are forensic or legal in nature. **Who will bring any charge** (*enkalesei*, “make a formal accusation in court; press charges”; cf. Acts 19:40; 23:29; 26:2) **against those whom God has chosen?** Satan is identified as “the accuser” of God’s people (Rev. 12:10; cf. Zech. 3:1). His accusations are valid, because they are based on the believer’s sinfulness and defilement. But Satan’s accusations will be thrown out of court, because **it is God who justifies**. The Judge Himself declares the accused person righteous on the basis of his faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:1). As a result all accusations are dismissed and no one can bring an accusation that will stand.

The related question is, **Who is He that condemns?** The Greek participle *ho katakrinōn* can have a future sense, “will condemn,” which seems preferable here. (Cf. *katakrima*, “condemnation, punishment” in 8:1.) Jesus Christ is God’s appointed Judge (John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31), so Paul answered this question by stating, **Christ Jesus**. But Jesus is the very One whom the believer has trusted for salvation. Furthermore, He is the One **who died—more than that** (lit., “but more”) **who was raised to life—who is at the right hand of God** (cf. Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22) **and is also interceding for us**. The Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the Judge, but He is also the One with whom each believer is identified by faith. As a result he is a believer’s Sacrifice for sin (cf. Rom. 5:8; 8:32), his new life (a believer shares in Christ’s resurrection life; 6:4, 8, 11; Eph. 2:5–6; Col. 2:13), his Intercessor (cf. Heb. 7:25; also the Holy Spirit intercedes, Rom. 8:26–27) and his Defense (1 John 2:1). Certainly the Judge will not condemn His own who are in Him by faith! (cf. Rom. 8:1)

8:35–37. Paul’s final questions are in verse 35: **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** The context (vv. 37, 39) shows that “the love of Christ” is His love for believers (not their love for Him; cf. 5:5). The apostle suggested seven things a believer might experience (Paul experienced all of them; 2 Cor. 11:23–28) that some might think could come between a believer and Christ’s love—**trouble** (*thilpsis*, “pressure or distress”; mentioned frequently by Paul in 2 Cor.) **or hardship** (*stenochōria*, lit., “narrowness,” i.e., being pressed in, hemmed in, crowded) **or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword**. These things—stated in increasing intensity—do not separate Christians from Christ; instead they are part of the “all things” (Rom. 8:28) God uses to bring them to conformity to His Son. Then Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 to remind his readers that in this life the people of God must face much affliction (cf. John 16:33) including even martyrdom for some. In the early days of the church one or more Christians were martyred every day, or faced the possibility of it. Their persecutors valued Christians’ lives as nothing more than animals to be butchered.

In all these adversities (cf. “all things” in Rom. 8:28 and “all things” in v. 32 with **all these things** in v. 37), rather than being separated from Christ’s love, believers are **more than conquerors** (pres. tense, *hypernikōmen*, “keep on being conquerors to a greater degree” or “keep on winning a glorious victory”) **through Him who loved us**. Jesus Christ and His love for believers enable them to triumph (cf. 2 Cor. 2:14).

8:38–39. Paul then ended his discussion on believers’ safety in Jesus Christ and the certainty of their sanctification with a positive declaration—**For I am convinced** (perf. tense, “I stand convinced”; cf. 15:14) **that** nothing can **separate** believers **from the love of God** (God’s love for them, not their love for God; cf. v. 35). Paul’s list of 10 items begins with death, where the list of 7 items in verse 35 ended. These elements in God’s universe include the extremes of existence: (1) **death** and (2) **life** (in either death [2 Cor. 5:8–9] or life, believers are in God’s presence); the extremes of created spiritual armies: (3) **angels** and (4) **demons** (angels would not and demons could not undo God’s relationship with His redeemed ones); the extremes in time: (5) **the present** and (6) **the future** (nothing known now, e.g., the hardships listed in Rom. 8:35, or in the unknown time to come); spiritual enemies: (7) **powers** (perhaps Satan and his demons; cf. Eph. 6:12; or possibly human governments); the extremes in space: (8) **height** and (9) **depth** (nothing overhead or underneath can suddenly come swooping down or up to sever believers from God’s love); and (10) everything in the entire created realm. Absolutely nothing in His **Creation** can thwart His purpose for believers **in Christ**. What a climactic way to affirm the certainty of believers’ salvation!