



God is For Us

Romans 8:31-39

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We talked last week about how vital it was for David, if he was going to seek and thirst for God, to know and believe that he belonged to God, to know and believe that God loved Him with a faithful love, to know and believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that he had been fully forgiven by God and that he was accepted by God and to know and believe that God was for him. As important as that was for David, beloved, it is equally important for us. The Apostle John tells us in 1 John 4 that the reason that we love is because God has loved us first. The root of our love for Christ is nothing of our own doing, but it finds its root in the fact that God has loved us first, loved us when we were rebels, loved us when we rejected him, loved us and pursued us, even while we were in sin, to make us His own. We must freshly and continually be affected by the truth that if we are truly Christians, by faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, that we do belong to God, that He does love us with a faithful love, that we have been fully forgiven by God and are accepted by Him in Christ, and that God really is for us. Unless we are convinced of these things, we will never love Him like we should. So this morning, I want for us to look at these wonderful words from the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:31ff. Words that if we receive them by faith will freshly affect our souls with the greatness of God's love for us. (Romans 8:31–39, ESV)

As we consider this text this morning, it is important that we read it with soul-impact. Now, what do I mean by that? What I mean is this. I want us to guard our hearts from reading this text as simply a sterile description of how it is that God carries out His eternal plan of redemption. This is not meant to be an academic text only. Instead, from the very beginning of this text we see that Paul intends that his words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, would impact our minds AND our hearts. Paul's purpose here is to give us a deep, certain, immovable soul-strengthening, love producing confidence in God's steadfast, covenant love. These words are for those who have been made the children of God and have come to faith in Christ alone for salvation. These words are not for everyone, but for those who are the children of God.

Paul starts this section by asking the question: “What shall we say to these things?” What things is he referring to? He is talking about the wonderful truths of the gospel that he has just presented in its fullness since Romans 1:16: (Romans 1:16, ESV) Then begins the a description of the depravity of man: (Romans 1:29ff, ESV) Then comes the glorious truth that though “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.” (Romans 3:23–25, ESV) He is talking about the gospel that gives us “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1, ESV) He is referring to the gospel that makes us “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:11, ESV) He is speaking of the gospel that tells us that “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1, ESV) He is speaking of the gospel promises that are insured by this very fact about God, that “those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” (Romans 8:29–30, ESV) God's purpose is to have many sons and daughters, who will love him with all their hearts and who will bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ and who will praise the Father for His glorious grace. God's purpose is to have a race of people, his own children, who will love him.

He looks at this and Paul asks: What do we say to these things? What follows here is one of the greatest doxologies in the Scripture. It is a song of praise with a point, an anthem of praise with deep truth and meaning. It is intended to drive home the eternal nature and the certainty of God's love for those that are His. Paul asks: What do we say to these things? And the answer is not: What an amazing plan of salvation. It is not: Mmm, that's real nice. No – the answer is: If God is for us, who can be against us. The glorious gospel is meant to cause us, as His people, delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ, to say with amazement an awe and thanksgiving – God is for us and if God is for us there is nothing, there can be nothing that can ultimately be against us. God is for us, and for that reason no one can be against us. God foreknew us in love, predestined us to adoptions as sons and daughters, called us from death into eternal life, declared us righteous because of Christ's shed blood, and is working in us from one degree of glory to another until the great day when Christ is revealed in all of His glory from heaven. God is for us. Now listen, we need to understand the very personal nature of this truth. God is for His people – yes. God is for his church – yes. But if you are a believer, a true Christian, God is for YOU, for you personally. You are the very object of His love.

The evidence of God's incredible love toward us is obvious in verse 32. "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?" (Romans 8:32, ESV) In giving up His precious Son to save us from the world God has made it clear that he is totally committed to our salvation. Here is the greatest proof of God's love. This is a classic Jewish argument, arguing from the greater to the lesser. God loved us and God chose us in His love before the foundation of the world and predetermined that love relationship to last forever. His love is strong, His love is securing, His love is so strong that in order to establish His love toward us for all of eternity, He gave His Son. He sent His Son into the world to save us. This is all driven by the love of God to us, to sinners.

In Romans 5 he says, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8, ESV) God puts on display, He reveals His love for us, for sinners, by giving His Son to die for us. The astounding wonder of God's love is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners, still ungodly, still weak, still enemies with God. He died for His enemies. He died for those who crucified Him. He died for those who hated Him. He died for those who rejected Him. He did not die for his friends; He did not die for His family. He died to make us His friends, to make us His family. He died for sinners, such as I. That is how God makes His love conspicuous; that is how God puts His love on display. That is how God defines the depth of His love.

Do you want to see the love of God? See it in who God sends Jesus to die for. He dies for people who don't deserve it, people who are totally unworthy of it. And what Paul wants us to know is that God did not spare His beloved Son, but gave Him up so that we could become His sons and daughters. That kind of love doesn't just fade away. It is enduring and powerful and awe-inspiring. And it's something, that beloved, you and I will spend an eternity beholding and we will never understand it fully. The love of God, how deep, how wide, how surpassing all our knowledge it is.

What an incredible thing is the love of God. God did not spare His own Son but gave Him for us all who are believers. If that doesn't make your knees weak and set you heart to wondering, I don't know what will. That the infinitely holy God who is of purer eyes than to look upon evil, who sees every heart and who is rightfully filled with wrath toward sin, that He could reach out and love ungodly sinners...that is the surpassing nature of God's astounding love. Charles Hodge observed rightly, "If [God] loved us because we loved him, He would love us only so long as we love Him, and on that condition; and then our salvation would depend on the constancy

of our treacherous hearts. But as God loved us as sinners, as Christ died for us as ungodly, our salvation depends, as the apostle argues, not on our loveliness, but on the constancy of the love of God.”

Now if when we were His enemies He loved us enough to give His Son, which is the greatest sacrifice, will He not do the lesser things necessary to keep us, to keep us as His own? That's Paul's point. God has already given the best, He's already given the most, He's certainly not going to hold back what is lesser. Since He delivered His Son up for us to save us, will He not also along with His Son give us whatever we need to keep us in His love and get us to glory? Whatever grace it takes --whatever sustaining, empowering, enduring, sanctifying grace, whatever strength, whatever wisdom -- He will do whatever is necessary to keep us in His love.

That is how much God is for us. Not only did it cost him his Son to save us from sin and death and hell and not only were we enemies so that God had to satisfy his own wrath in order to save us but he went way beyond the love of rescue and the love of sacrifice and the love of mercy to his enemies. He showed us another kind of love beyond all that – the love of Father. God is going to complete our salvation and keep us as the objects of His sovereign love.

“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.” (Romans 8:33, ESV)
Who can bring any charge against God’s chosen ones, against the objects of His eternal, steadfast, redeeming love? Who can bring any charge against God’s elect -- Who? We know that in the book of Revelation, Satan is called the accuser of the brethren who attempts to bring to God's attention every flaw, every defect, every sin, every shortcoming, and every weakness you have.

Sometimes it our own fallen conscience and out doubting that brings accusation against us. Now I am not talking about the conviction of the Holy Spirit that brings repentance. I am talking about that voice whispers to us that we are such failures and so disappointing to God that He is just waiting to cast us away, that there is no way that He could love us, He can barely stand us. But beloved, Paul reminds us that the reason that God accepts us is not because we are righteous by our own works. Satan or our fallen conscience cannot bring an accusation that will sever us from God because our salvation is not founded upon on our own righteousness, is it? It is founded on the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, founded on the blood shed for us.

On the cross Jesus bore all of our sins, took the full wrath of God, He bore our sins in His own body on the cross, Peter says. He was made sin for us, Paul says. God poured out all the fury of His wrath against Jesus Christ as our substitute, put all our sins on Christ and then took the righteous life of Christ and covered us with it, imputed it to us. What we've said before...God treated Jesus as if He had committed all our sins, so He can treat us as if we only lived Jesus perfect life. Sin has been paid for and we're not justified, we're not righteous, we're not holy before God because of our own righteousness, but because He gave His Son of perfect righteousness to be our Redeemer and to purchase us by His blood and to make us the children of God. God sent forth the perfect sacrifice. Like we see in 1 John 4: (1 John 4:9–10, ESV) For that reason "It is God who justifies." God is the one who justifies you. He has declared you to be not guilty and accepted as fully righteous in His sight. This has been His plan since He set His love upon you in eternity past. Beloved, feel the freedom of that truth.

Now let me say right here that is not an excuse for loose living. I hope you know that. These words are not meant to make unbelievers in this room or those who are Christians in name only to be comfy on their way to eternal torment and destruction. Some take this truth that I am sharing with you now and twist its meaning to allow them to commit all sorts of unrestrained sin without conviction, or to live completely independent of Christ's Lordship and still call themselves Christians. That is not even what Paul is talking about here. This text is meant for those who are sincerely Christ's, who really do trust in Him, who desire to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him and who find themselves in the midst of the fight against temptation and sin and who know what it is to fail and fall and get back up by God's grace and to continue to pursue holiness for Christ's sake. The point that Paul is making is this that you should not despair that somehow God is going to withdraw His love from you -- you have been fully and freely forgiven by God in Christ. You have been fully accepted by God the Father in Christ. If you are a believer in Christ, a true Christian, God has declared you to be righteous and not guilty with an everlasting, irrevocable, immutable righteousness. Even in the face of your struggles with still indwelling sin, you stand before Him accepted in Christ, accepted in the beloved, the object of His personal love and delight. God is for you and He loves you. It all began with the Father's love. He loved. He sent. He empowered the Son through His earthly ministry. And He is the one who gives up His Son as a sacrifice for our salvation.

In fact, to emphasize the security we should know in being the very objects of God's affection, Paul turns to the work of Christ saying: "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 indeed is interceding for us." (Romans 8:34, ESV) How does this amplify God's love to us? In this way –

you who are the object of God's love can never be cast away from His presence and condemned to eternal separation in hell because Christ would never condemn you. He is the Judge, the only one who could cast you into hell. (John 5:22, ESV) Christ is the only one who could ever condemn you and there is no way that He ever would.

Christ Jesus is the one who died...Do you think Christ who died for you would condemn you? He died for you because He loves you. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:2: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:2, ESV) He died on the cross as a sacrifice, being punished for your sin and my sin. He died on the cross for you and for me. Do you think He would undo His cross? Never! He gave His life for you, His sheep. And this was a fragrant offering to God. Don't miss that. It is kind of picturesque but the point is that Christ's offering of His life for us was a fragrant aroma to God the Father. In other words, God loves, He delights in, the Son's love of us. Christ won't undo that.

Not only did Christ die for us, secondly, verse 34 says, "He was raised." That Christ's death blotted out our sins and that God was pleased with His sacrifice for our sins was affirmed by His resurrection. When God raised Jesus from the dead He showed that He was satisfied with His sacrifice. Why would Jesus undo His resurrection?

Thirdly, in verse 34, Paul tells us He is at the right hand of God. He is at the right hand of God. That's referring to His coronation, to His ascension, to His exaltation. It wasn't that God was mildly satisfied when He raised Him from the dead; it was that God was completely satisfied. So much was He satisfied that He lifted up Jesus Christ and sat Him on His own throne at His right hand in the place of honor and power. It's absolutely unthinkable...absolutely inconceivable that the Lord Jesus Christ who had accomplished all of that would undo it, that His death would become meaningless, His resurrection meaningless, His exaltation meaningless. If he were to stop loving us it would render all that he has done pointless. In fact,

And fourth He indeed is interceding for us. He keeps on making intercession for us. He stands as the lamb slain and triumphant and provides a living evidence and witness for the grounds of our salvation. The idea here is not that Jesus has to bend the heart of God to us and make God the Father love us – that would be completely in contradiction to the love of the Father to us. The idea here is that He sits at the right hand of God in heaven before all of creation as the

personal evidence of God's invincible love for us, a love that destroys the penalty of sin, a love that conquers the power of sin, until the Day that He is fully revealed in all of His glory and He destroys even the presence of sin. He is intercessor in that He is the personal, bodily evidence of God's love, His holiness, His grace, His judgment upon sin, and His love for redeemed sinners, and His justice to love us and to do us good. He intercedes for us, reigning and ruling over creation for the good of His people. This gives strength to the promise of Romans 8:28. When we read there that: "for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, ESV), you remember that the One who works all things together for good is the Lord Jesus Christ. Who, in His sovereign dominion is at the right hand ruling the world by His word and Spirit, so that individually and personally everything works for your good.

Paul shows us all that the Father has done, all the that Son has done to deal with our sin, out of deep and eternal love for us and then, beginning in verse 35, he shows us how invincible God's love to us truly is. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" (Romans 8:35, ESV) Paul gives a list of the common things that true followers of Christ will experience if they walk faithfully with Christ. These things are all very real experiences of believers throughout the world to one degree or another – verse 36 makes that clear -- all of which were experienced by the apostle, but they cannot separate us from Christ's love.

Jesus Christ's mightily loving his people with omnipotent, moment-by-moment love that does not always rescue us from calamity but preserves us and rescues us through it. Paul says in verse 37: "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Romans 8:37, ESV) Literally, we are super- conquerors, winners of a resounding victory. And why are we? It is because those kinds of trials in our lives make us humble, drive us to God, expose us to greater grace, break our self-confidence and make us cling to Christ our Lord. We overwhelmingly conquer, not in our own strength but through Him who loved us. Paul is not saying that there will never be any adversity. That is not the point at all. He is saying that though there will be trials and difficulty in this life, we will be victorious through it. When we come to fully understand the love of God in Christ poured out upon us, we will begin to trample adversity under our feet. We can do that; we can live like that because we know we are the objects of the boundless love of God.

Then in summation, in verses 38-39, Paul says: “For I am sure 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.” (Romans 8:38–39, ESV) Beloved, Paul covers the gamut. Not even death, the great enemy can separate us. Life with all its dangers, life with all its difficulties, life with all its temptations, life with all its trials cannot separate us. No personalities that could separate us -- no angels, no rulers...

no supernatural angelic beings either good or evil, nothing in the present age, nothing in any future time, including the judgment of God that's coming on the world. There is no power, no mighty miracle, nothing in infinite space above or below, no created thing – NOTHING -- that can separate us from the love of Christ.

No exceptions, none shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. That is a reason to sing. It is a reason for rejoicing. It is a reason for security and confidence. It is reason to love God.

This love of God for us is so amazing, so wonderful, so incomparably wonderful and great that we cannot begin to understand it apart from God's grace to us. It is the reason that Paul prays in Ephesians 3: (Ephesians 3:14–19, ESV) There is no changeability, no wavering, in His love. This is a personal, invincible love. Love that will not let us go, love that brings us from the depths of darkness into the glory of holy light, love that no longer condemns but counts us just and righteous in God's sight, love that pursues enemies to adopt them into the divine family, love that removes the guilt of sin and replaces it with the joy of forgiveness.

Why is it so vital that we be convinced of God's love for us, notion general, but personally? Why is it so important for me, for you, to know that I, that you, are the beloved one of Christ, the object of God's love? Why is this so important?

Unless I am convinced that God loves me:

1) I will not love Him – fear Him, be in awe of Him, be intimidated by Him – but love Him – never.

2) I will not commune with Him in prayer. I will not be convinced that He hears me, that He cares about me, that He desires to be with me, that He will give himself to me.

3) I will not be holy because I will not pursue obedience for the right reasons, from the right motivation which is love for Christ, but instead from fear of retribution or as a means to gain God's favor. Obedience is driven by love for God which is the result of knowing the love of God. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Corinthians 5:14–15, ESV) Here is the way Charles Hodge put it: A Christian is one who recognizes Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as God manifested in the flesh, loving us and dying for our redemption; and who is so affected by a sense of the love of this incarnate God as to be constrained to make the will of Christ the rule of his obedience, and the glory of Christ the great end for which he lives

4) I will not worship Him in spirit (with the proper emotions) or in truth (knowing the doctrinal truth about God and His gracious love for His people). How can I when I do not know Him as He is?

5) I will have no security in my relationship with Him but will always be fearful that God will tire of me and ultimately cast me away.

6) I will not be able to fight sin effectively because I will not believe that God is for me and I will be afraid to come to Him bearing my soul and my struggles with sin because I will believe that He will cast me away.

7) I will not persevere in the trials of this life because I will always question God's motives toward me and His purposes toward me.

8) I will never grow in faith, never grow in trust, because I will not see that He is fully trustworthy and loves me unflinchingly.

9) I will never know the joy and the peace that comes with knowing that I am God's and He is mine. Will not be able to say with confidence that God is MY God.

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