

24. The everlasting love of God

September 28, 2008

When we started to study chapter 8 of this great Book, Romans, we heard these profound words:

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Now we are about to finish chapter 8, we can see that the last verse of the chapter ends with this:

Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What is God trying to tell us through this aging apostle Paul who can tell us, "Been there, done that, bought a T-shirt"? God loves us and there is nobody can do anything against it. It is us who have a tendency to walk away from Him.

Let's quickly sum up what we have learned so far from chapter 8:

- There is no condemnation because we share the righteousness of God through Jesus 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.

In the final section in chapter 8 apostle Paul talks about the security of the believer in Christ Jesus. We don't need to fear what, who and how they can take us out of God's love.

Between v31-35, we find several questions posed by Paul.

A. WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY? WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

Romans 8:31-32 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 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?

What are "these things" that Paul is referring to? To understand this, we must go back to v28-30:

- The providence of God
- His ability to make all things work together for the good of those who love Him
- His divine plan to predestine all believers to be like Christ by foreknowing, calling, justifying, and one day glorifying them.

The second half of v31 sums up what we are going to study in next 8 verses. The Father is for us and proved it by giving His Son. The Son is for us and so is the Spirit. God is making all things work for us. In His person and His providence, God is for us.

But time after time, the devil wants to convince us that God doesn't love the people like us who struggle with sins. How much more can God do to affirm His love for us? Nothing more. We have to trust in Him and His love for us.

The word 'if' at the beginning of the phrase would be better translated 'since' or 'because'. So the question could be rephrased, "Since God is for us, who can be against us?" But this is one of those rhetorical questions not expecting an answer from listeners. No, he's simply making a bold statement- "Since God is for us, no one can be against us!" In other words, "God is for us" spell out 'grace'.

That's a powerful truth! In a world full of suffering and groaning, in a world filled with enemies, the God of the universe stands on our side, actually we stand with God. As the Great Reformer Martin Luther said, "One with God is the majority."

Let's stop and think about this. Can you love someone, who hates your guts, so much that you are willing to give up your own only son? None of us can. But God did. Shouldn't it speak volumes about His love for us?

There is a group in Tucson which calls themselves Christians. They encourage others to vote for Barack Obama because according to them the religious extremists, like us, are intolerant to homosexuals and do not include them as a part of God's creation. This worldly people who have a form of godliness, but they are denying its power. As a matter of fact, they are not even Christians because they are against the Lord and the Word of God.

B. WHO SHALL BRING A CHARGE AGAINST US?

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who will bring a charge against Christians? We might do better to ask, who doesn't bring a charge against Christians? Satan certainly does. The world does also. We Christians even accuse ourselves, carrying around a sense of guilt and shame when we blow it.

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

John 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Though everyone around us, even ourselves may bring a charge against us. But Jesus already has paid the penalty of our sins and we are secure in Him.

Next time when you feel like being accused by satan, simply admit that you sinned but let him know that you've been cleansed by Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

C. WHO IS HE WHO CONDEMNS?

Romans 8:34 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.

One of the doctrines of Christianity that drives everyone crazy is the Trinity – Three distinctive persons yet one God. No finite human can understand it ever. Out of this

Trinity Godhead, two thirds of them intercede for us. According to Romans 8:26, as we've learned the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Here again Jesus God the Son intercedes for us from the right hand of God the Father. And the Father listens to what His Son Jesus and His Spirit speak on our behalf. You can not top that.

Jesus Christ is the only Person who has been given the position to judge humankind. And yet He's the very One who died for us, who rose again so that we might rise with Him, and who intercedes for us. To the unbeliever, Christ is a judge. But to the believer, He's an advocate – a defense lawyer. He would never condemn those for whom He died.

Somehow many Christians feel condemnation of their own sins even though God declared them, "Not Guilty." God's grace nullifies opposition; God's grace silences accusations; God's grace overrules condemnation. The case is closed, never to be opened again. Not only that, but also the case file against us is gone. God forgot about our sins and no longer remembers it.

D. WHO SHALL SEPARATE US?

Romans 8:35-36 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Our God is an almighty God and there is no one who can take Him on. Any attack leading to the condemnation of us is considered a mute point, because He has already dealt with our guilt.

How easily we mistake these difficult circumstances for a sign of God's judgment, displeasure, anger or abandonment.

Apostle Paul was not belittling the difficulties an individual goes through. He himself went through some very dangerous situations. While we go through those difficulties of our lives, we feel like we are about to die because of very real pain and despair. Thankfully, death isn't the end of the story.

E. MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Wow, what a turnaround! From hopeless minority to overwhelming conquerors. How is such a transformation possible? Only through God who loves us.

While we are in despair and disappointments, we often forget that what we are going through is only temporary. Satan has already been defeated. There is no condemnation for us and no way for us to be separated from the love of God.

We conquer the world we live in by trusting, not in our own efforts, but in God, who provides us with the courage and strength we need to persevere. 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.

F. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD

Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor

height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dr. Howard Hendricks who was a renowned theologian from Dallas Theological Seminary was asked what the most profound truth in the Bible is. On this he answered, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." He had it right.

God did not create us because He was lonely. I don't mean to burst anyone's bubble, but God would have done just fine without humanity to contend with. The fact of the matter is that God is independent of humankind. In other words, God does not need us, or the rest of His creation, for anything. The apostle Paul explained it when he made this statement:

God doesn't need me. God doesn't need you. He is not dependent upon any of us. God did not create humanity because He had to, but rather because He chose to. He chose to make us, and He chooses to love us.

Jeremiah 31:3 Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

So let's give praise and thanks to our Creator for His everlasting love.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) Next time when you feel you are being accused by satan, simply admit that you sinned but let him know that you've been cleansed by Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

2) The best way to repay God's love for us is living the life that pleases Him.