

The Best Chapter in the Bible #12

Romans 8:35-39 Derek Thomas

Review:

Paul asks some big questions: *How can I know for sure that God is for us?* (v.31-32); *Who is the one who accuses?* (v.33-34); and now, *Who can separate us from the love of Christ?* (v.35-39)

Outline:

1. Who/what can separate me from my love of Christ? or
Who/what can separate me from Jesus' love for me?
2. We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (v.37)

Questions:

1. v.37 is written in the context of suffering, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword. Are we doing anything wrong if we don't experience the same distress?
2. *"He is no fool to give what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose."* – Jim Elliot
It's a much used quote, but break it apart and discuss exactly he had in mind.
3. The question arises in v.35, *"Who can separate us from the love of Christ?"* If we are totally secure, what difference does it make if we deny Christ. Why would anyone burn at the stake when it wouldn't make a difference in eternity? Or, would it?
4. In v.37 Paul says, *"We are more than conquerors through Him who **LOVED** us."*
What are some of the ways God has LOVED believer in the past?
5. Derek Thomas said, *"Only the Gospel, only the Gospel can give you that assurance, only the Gospel."* It's clear he is exercised about the Gospel, but what is it about the Gospel that would cause him to repeat himself three times? In other words, what about the Gospel stand out to you?
6. *"It is God who declares you, sinner, to be as righteous and as holy as Jesus is. Hear that, Christian, and believe that, Christian."* How has the content of that statement changed your life or how would you like it to continue to change your life?
7. What is "sacramental obedience" and what's the problem with it?

Romans 8:35-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written,*

*"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."* [Ps.44:22]

³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* ³⁸ *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* ³⁹ *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.*

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna

Three days before he was apprehended, as he was praying at night, he fell asleep, and saw in a dream the pillow take fire under his head, and presently consumed. Waking thereupon, he forthwith related the vision to those about him, and prophesied that he should be burnt alive for Christ's sake. The pursuers having arrived late in the day found him gone to bed in the top room of the house.

Hearing that they were come, he came down, and spoke to them with a cheerful and pleasant countenance: so that they were wonder-struck, who, having never known the man before, now beheld his venerable age and the gravity and composure of his manner, and wondered why they should be so earnest for the apprehension of so old a man. He immediately ordered a table be laid for them, and exhorted them to eat heartily, and begged them to allow him one hour to pray without molestation; which being granted, he rose and began to pray, and was so full of the grace of God, that they who were present and heard his prayers were astonished, and many now felt sorry that so venerable and godly a man should be put to death.

When he was brought to the tribunal, there was a great tumult as soon as it was generally understood that Polycarp was apprehended. The proconsul asked him, if he were Polycarp. When he assented, the former counseled him to deny Christ, saying, 'Consider thyself, and have pity on thy own great age;' and many other such-like speeches which they are wont to make.

The proconsul then urged him, saying, 'Swear and I will release thee; — reproach Christ.'

Polycarp answered, 'Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?'

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury

"I beseech God grant me grace, that I may speak something, at this my departing, whereby God may be glorified, and you edified....

And now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than nay other thing that ever I said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth. Which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand, contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be: and that is, all such bills, which I have written or signed with mine own hand since my degradation: wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished: for if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned. And as for the pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine."

Coming to the stake with a cheerful countenance and willing mind, he put off his garments with haste, and stood upright in his shirt.... And the bishop answered, (showing his hand), "This was the hand that wrote it, and therefore shall it suffer first punishment."

Fire being now put to him, he stretched out his right hand, and thrust it into the flame, and held it there a good space, before the fire came to any other part of his body; where his hand was seen of every man sensibly burning, crying with a loud voice, "This hand hath offended." As soon as the fire got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying all the while.

Robert Bruce

For some time previous to his death, which happened in August 1631, he was, through age and infirmity, mostly confined to his chamber. On the morning before he was removed, his sickness consisting chiefly in the weakness of age, he came to breakfast; and having, as usual, eaten an egg, lie said to his daughters, "*I think I am yet hungry, ye may bring me another egg.*" But instantly thereafter, falling into deep meditation, and after having mused a little, he said, "*Hold, daughter, my Master calls me !*" Upon these words, his sight failed him; and calling for the family Bible, but finding he could not see, he said, "*Cast up to me the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and set my finger on these words, / am persuaded that neither death nor life... shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.*" Now," said he, "*is my finger upon them ?*" and being told it was, he said, "*Now God be with you my children ; I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night.*" And so, like Abraham of old, he gave up the ghost in 'a good old age, and was gathered to his people. —