



THE THREAD

weaving Sunday's message through the week

Date: November 21, 2021

Theme: Living by the Spirit Enables Us to Rest in God's Love

Passage: Romans 8:35-39

1. The Spirit inseparably unites us with Christ through faith (35a, see *Romans 6:1-14*)
2. The Spirit preserves our union with Christ through every kind of suffering (35b-37)
 - Paul expected suffering to be part of the normal reality for believers in the last days (see Rev. 6:8; 18:8)
 - Paul's own experience was that he faced every kind of trial (1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:3-10)
 - Sharing in Christ's suffering is *evidence* of our union with him rather than cause to question his love for us (Romans 8:17)
3. The Spirit gives us overwhelming victory through Christ (37)
 - More than conquerors = "prevailing completely"
 - We prevail *in the midst of various sufferings* through Christ, who loved us (see 32-34)
 - We grow weary and disheartened when we try to conquer by our own effort rather than resting in Christ's blood bought victory
4. The Spirit gives us confidence against every threat (38-39)
 - "For I am sure" – convinced, definitively settled, unshakeable surety
 - Paul became convinced as he experienced God's love throughout his own trials
 - Suffering is the context in which our faith is solidified as we experience God's faithful love (Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 136)
 - Nothing throughout time, space, or the spiritual realm can separate those who are in Christ from the love of God

MAIN IDEA: Living by the Spirit gives the believer utter security as we rest in the unconquerable and inseparable love of God for us in Christ. This creates a community of worshippers filled with joy and peace, anchored in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. What tends to threaten your confidence in God's love? What is the greatest threat to your ability to rest in God's love for you right now?
2. How have you experienced God's faithful love in the midst of suffering? What affect did that have on your faith?
3. Do you find yourself trying to overcome trials, affliction, etc. in your own power or by trusting in Christ's work? What does it mean to conquer through Christ?
4. How would you describe your personal "theology of suffering"? Do you expect suffering to be part of the Christian life? Does suffering call God's love for you or your loved ones into question? Do you expect the Christian life to be easier than God has promised it would be? How do these verses shape a biblical understanding of suffering?
5. Have you become "convinced" (v. 38) that nothing can separate you from God's love in Christ? How can you meditate on this promise this week? How will you let these verses shape your prayers this week?

Prayer: Father, your promises find their final "yes" in your Son, Jesus. He is the resounding evidence of your love. I confess that I am often unsettled by life's troubles and I lose confidence in your love. As I face whatever you may allow in the coming week, would you keep me fixed on Christ by your Spirit. Serve me with the grace I will need to keep walking in step with the Spirit and fill me with confidence, joy, hope, and peace as I learn to rest in the completed work of Jesus on my behalf. May I participate with gladness with your people as we worship you for all you have done to redeem us for your name's sake. Amen.

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