

Victorious Declarations, Part II (Romans 8:31-39)

Paul wants us to be strengthened in our salvation and that is the purpose of Romans 8. He wants us to know there is no condemnation in Christ and that we are overwhelmingly secure in our salvation. Seven declarations emphasize the reality that because God foreknows us there is absolutely nothing that could ever separate us from the love He has given us, the love with which he has foreloved us.

God's love for His adopted children is from everlasting to everlasting from eternity past to eternity future, a profound truth that has very practical implications for our lives. God wants us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit in this new life we have in Christ and so we have these seven declarations that become this anthem we sing as believers as we triumphantly put on this helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6).

Last week, we reviewed the first three declarations; today, we address the remaining four.

1. **God loves us!** (v31) - there is nothing left to say but that God loves us!
2. **God is for us!** (v31) - therefore, no one can be against us!
3. **God will not forget us!** (v32) - because He has given us the greatest gift, there is no doubt He will give us everything else we need.
4. **God justifies us!** (v33) "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?" The idea is that there is a legitimate sin that can be brought against one of God's elect on the last day. It could be anyone bringing it to God's attention or it could be a sin that only you and God know. And who are these "elect"? They are the ones on whom God has determined to put His love, those who have responded in faith to the gospel, those who love God, who fear and worship Him (Hebrews 12:28-29), who strive to know Him and desire to glorify Him in their lives (Matthew 5:6), who love others who desire righteousness, who love His word, who are being conformed into the image of Christ and those who are being sanctified in truth.

Because it is God who justifies, no one in the universe can bring a charge against the elect. No one has the right to take the perfect righteousness of Christ and apply it to another person. It is only God's prerogative to impute this righteousness because it is His righteousness; therefore, we, as believers, are in an irrevocable, unalterable state of peace (Romans 5:1). Why? Because He is the one who gave His righteousness to us. What is a key implication of this justification?

Stop carrying the burdens of your past and present sins. In 1 John 3:18-20, we see that God is greater than our hearts. God is greater than the legitimate sins that may be raising up in our hearts. As believers, we tend to give into our flesh, into our weakness. When this begins to happen we need to remember Romans 8:33: God justifies. We cannot condemn ourselves; therefore, lay aside the burden of sin that clings so closely and run your race!

- 5. God will not condemn us!** (v34) - No one can sentence you to condemnation. How do we know? What assurance do we have? Paul answers that with four truths of what Christ has done and/or continues to do for us, these four truths informing this declaration.
- **Christ died for us.** On the cross, Christ bore our sins, every sin (1 Peter 2:24, John 1:29). It was pleasing to God that He placed the full weight, the full sensation of guilt deriving from every sin we would ever commit on Christ, even though He was not guilty of any of it, not just for each of us but for every person in the world. This is an unfathomable weight! And Jesus bore it for us **Isaiah 53:5-6, 1** "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." Jesus bore our sins and died for us and the resurrection proves that his sacrifice was acceptable to God.
 - **Christ was raised from the dead for us** (Acts 17:2-3). The resurrection validates God's power, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah He claimed to be, His sinless life, His divine nature, all the Old Testament prophecies (Acts 17:2-3), and provides proof that his sacrifice will secure our future resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20).
 - **Christ ascended for us** (Acts 1:9-11) Christ's ascension marked the end of His earthly ministry but is the beginning of his new work as High Priest and King. In His return to heavenly glory and exaltation He has to the Father, He takes his rightful position at the right hand of the Father (Matthew 28:18). All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ, established by the ascension.
 - **Christ intercedes for us!** Christ is continually, constantly pleading with the Father on behalf of the merit of his own death, the guilt that He bore for our sins on behalf of believers. He is propitiation of our sins (1 John 2:2 says). Therefore, we cannot be condemned for sins His sacrifice has already covered. It is not that the accusations brought against you are not valid, it is not that you do not commit sins but, it is that the sin has already been paid for by God's grace. To change His mind, would negate His own sacrifice on our behalf, the high price

He paid for us on the tree, it would negate the guilt that He bore on our behalf. So, there can be no one who can bring condemnation against you. Not even Satan can condemn. **Revelation 12:9-10** tells us that Satan stands before God and accuses the believers night and day. This is why it is so important that we have Christ as our intercessor, the authority of Christ in our lives. God will not revoke His love because He has the authority to make it secure. When we sin, He turns and sees His Son, not us. He sees the righteousness of Christ, not our sin. God will not condemn because He is determined to love us.

6. **Christ loves us!** (v35a) The reason it cannot separate is because His love is very intimate for us, it is very personal. The reason it is so secure, so personal is found in **1 John 4:9**, "We love because He first loved us." In context, this love is manifested by salvation which he procures and applies to us. If God does it, who can separate us from it? No one can because Christ is wrapped up in our salvation. This is an intimate love that He has granted to us. Because of God's love, because of Christ's love, we can endure any hardship; therefore, Paul now tells us...
7. **No fear can overpower us!** (v35b-39) No fear in this world (v35b) can overpower us. Nothing will separate us.
 - Not emotional distress - He is talking about immense emotional pressure, wrecking your mind, which never goes away because we are finite beings living in a fallen world. It has to be here. Nothing man can do will make this stress, this pressure go away. Even in this intense level of pressure, when it seems nothing in life is going to work out, God says in that moment we cannot be separated from the love of Christ under any level of suffering.
 - Not physical distress - The word for "distress" (here) is a "vice", a narrowing with no way of escape that causes heartache in your life and the idea is living in an environment where these constant, unavoidable temptation and turmoil happen around us...in this time, in this distress, nothing is going to separate us. Do not lose sight!
 - Not persecution - No afflictions, emotional and/or physical hostility that we endure for the sake of Christ, which will be coming one day, will separate us from God. Being in famine, left destitute, nakedness, without the ability to make money because we believe in Christ. Society will attempt to cut us off until we recant our faith. Even in all of this, we cannot be separated.

- Not peril - which are constant threats on our lives from all directions, at all times.
- Not the sword (hatred against you because you are a believer) - Our faith in Christ may cost our lives. Then, Paul expands on the sword by quoting **Psalms 44:32**, "As it is written for your sake, we (being Christians) are being killed all the day long (at all times of day and at all times of night); we are regarded as sheep (weak and defenseless in the culture) to be slaughtered". Because we live in a very privileged society, it may seem hard for us to imagine being under such duress that we believe God has forgotten about us but, it can happen. Paul wants us to know that even if it does, Christ's love, will not be separated from us. In fact, in any of these situations, any of these fears, His love for believers will actually intensify, grow, increase in comfort. Nothing that can happen in this world, in this life, can separate us from Christ's love for us.

One key practical application: we are more than conquerors! Nothing we have gone through this week separates us from the love of God in Christ. We need to understand what God has accomplished for us! Praise God He loves us, praise God He is for us! Even if we are against ourselves (in our sins), He remains faithful to us! We are an object of God's love. This should drive us to be faithful to and for Him.

Selah: A Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Father, You have set Your eye on Your children and that is immense grace that we do not understand. We have glimpses of it, we have inklings of it, there is truth that resonates in our hearts and we begin to experience it but, our confession is that we are infants in understanding Your grace. We pray that You would grow us up in this, that you would help us to be secure in our salvation, not waiver, not falter, to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in Your work for nothing is in vain in You. Your word tells us because of what You have done. Not because of who we are but, because of what you have done should change who we are and we should represent You in a very crystal clear way. We should hunger and thirst for righteousness. We should love Your word and Your truth. We should constantly be in a state of awe in the fact that You would save us. We pray that that would change every single breath that we breathe, every thought we have, every step that we take, that we will begin to walk by faith and not by sight. As we walk by faith and not by sight, the world cannot help but to see You in us. In that truth, we rest and we strive. As we walk towards You, as we, Father, pronounce these great, glorious truths on our way to glory, we pray the legacy we

would leave would be one of a person who desperately loves You in all things. In the precious name of our ascended Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen.