

## The Greatest Love from the Greatest Words

### Romans 8:31-39

31 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 gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 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. 35 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." 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.

**MPS:** Nothing can save your life and nothing can change your life like knowing and receiving the love of God: Jesus.

1. God loves you more **deeply** than you can possibly imagine.
2. God loves you more **securely** than you can possibly imagine.
3. God loves you in **more ways** than you can possibly imagine.
4. God is **far happier** to love you than you can possibly imagine.

God loves you more **deeply** than you can possibly imagine.

*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?... (v. 34) Christ Jesus is the one who died!*

- There is no person in the universe more worthy, more wonderful, more perfect, and more glorious than the Son of God, Christ Jesus. There is no greater, priceless commodity in the universe than the precious blood of God's Son Jesus, the Lamb.
- This person--eternal God, himself--Jesus, the Son of God...eternal God, himself, the Father...*gave* to us!
  - He gave us the perfect life and perfect account of his Son's perfect life.
  - He gave us the perfect mind, heart, soul, and body of his perfect Son, to stand in the place of judgment, condemnation, and wrath.
  - He gives us the precious, cleansing, purifying blood of his Son so we can be fully welcomed in his presence, in the same approval and happiness he has for his own Son, Jesus.
- If you are a Christian:
  - You are *covered* in Jesus; you are *saturated*, through and through, by Jesus.
  - You stand now, before God, as a unique, individual *monument* of his own Son's glory.

- You now represent to God, a vessel--a precious jar or container--of the glory of his Son, the grace of his Son, the happiness he has for his Son, and the eternal love he has for his Son.
- Philipians 2:
  - The name God puts above all other names, the glory that God esteems more than all other glories, the renown for perfect deeds and accomplishments above all others...
  - ...God the Father happily and proudly bestows on Jesus, his Son.
  - ...and *it was this* Son, whom God has given so that *you* can be included and welcomed into this love.
- You can't imagine the depth of God's love for *you*, because you can't possibly imagine the depth of God's love for his Son, *Jesus!*

God loves you more **securely** than you can possibly imagine.

When the Bible says, in this passage, "If God is for us, who can be against us," you can insert *your name* into the answer!

- God is for *you*.
- God is for *you*, \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - What does it mean for God to be *for* you?
    - His passion is oriented toward your good.
    - His mind is oriented toward your good.
    - His power is oriented toward your good.
    - His faithfulness is committed to making sure *everything*--no matter how small or great in its greatness and no matter who small or terrifying it is in its tragedy--*all* of it, he orients toward your good.

"If *God* is for us, who can be against us" isn't a rhetorical questioning way of saying, "No one's actually against you."

- *Of course* someone's against you--*lots* of people and things are against you!
  - Just look at verses 35 and 38-39!
  - Satan, demons, human rulers, violent and crafty evildoers, systems and organizations are against you.
  - The fallen state of the natural world is against you, threatening your good!
    - The winds of tornadoes and hurricanes
    - The waters of tsunamis and floods
    - Lightning, hail, falling meteors, wolves, snakes, alligators, blizzards, droughts, famines
    - Cancer cells, viruses, bacteria, fungi
  - Even *we*, our *selves* stand opposed to our good
    - In my *whole life*, *no one* has threatened nor injured me than me.
    - In my *whole life*, *no one* has lied to me more than me.

- No, what this question does is to put *every single opponent*--visible or invisible, angelic or human--in its proper place of power and authority.
  - Every single person or thing that can and *does* stand opposed to your good, no matter how great or mighty or numerous...
  - Every single one of them and all of them combined stands...no, sits...no...lies on its face, on the ground, beneath the power and authority of God Almighty, who has announced that *he is for you!*
- *35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...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...and then...Verse 34(b) “...(he) is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”*
- Y’know, for a long time, I’ve read this and envisioned God the Father, sitting in his recliner in the living room, after a long day juggling galaxies--he’s just managed to pry his golden sandals off his throbbing feet and all he wants to do is watch Jeopardy, get all the answers right, and be left alone...
  - ...and then Jesus pops up at his right side and says, “Uhhhh...hey, Pop. Listen, it’s...uhhh...it’s about Matt Ford.”
  - The Father slllllly turns his face to Jesus, eyes narrowed, starting to glow a little orange...
  - “...yeah...again. Now, before you say anything, please just hear me out. He’s really sorry this time. Wayyyyy more than he’s been in a long time. I can really tell, seeing as how I can see his innermost thoughts and feelings. Can we forgive him again? I mean, c’mon...I *did* die on the cross to pay for his sins, right? Let’s cut him some slack this time. Maybe we can sort of give him some minor inconvenience or difficulty? Y’know, to let him know we really mean business this time? Like, ‘you’d better learn your lesson *this* time, buddy!’”
  - ...and of course the Father can’t refuse those darling, vivid-brown Jim Caviezel eyes of his beloved son...and so he relents and goes light on me.
- No...nope. This is *nothing* like that. At *all*.
  - What Jesus is doing, interceding for you and I, at the right hand of his Father is this:
    - The Son and the Father are having a sort of continuous conversation, not only about how much they love you, but they’re also discussing their faithfulness to their own reputation, honor, and glory.
    - In 1 John 1, the Bible says: *9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
      - Notice what God says about his character, so that we can trust his promise to forgive us and cleanse us of our sin--he’s faithful and *just*.
      - You know what this *doesn’t* say? That he’s “faithful and merciful” or that he’s “faithful and gracious” to forgive us.
      - Now, of *course* God is merciful and gracious in forgiving us--that’s what it *takes* to forgive the offense of sin!

- But, knowing that one of the *most important* reasons we can trust God's promise to forgive us and love us is that he's *just*.
  - God is *just*. He always does the right thing. The perfect thing. Never unfair. Never misguided. Perfectly wise, perfectly good, never incorrect, ignorant, mistaken, unfair...never *unjust*.
  - ...and God has promised that *his* grace, his mercy, his kindness, his forgiveness...*his love*...will be given to *anyone* who will believe on his Son Jesus, the crucified savior of sinners.
- Do you know why you should find real, unmovable confidence and security, believing that God really does love you and always will?
  - Because he's faithful and just!
  - Faithful to his glory, his honor, his character, his reputation
  - He's *just*...and if lays off or slacks off in his love for you, in his care for you--even one nanometer for one nanosecond--that's it! He's no longer *just*.
  - It's all over--he's no longer God because he's no longer perfectly faithful and perfectly just.
  - You can't imagine how **secure** you are in God's love because you can't possibly imagine how securely God is **God**!

God loves you in **more ways** than you can possibly imagine.

*31 If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?...33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies...34 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.*

From this one passage, all by itself, God's love far more diverse than merely "not-hating you" and "letting you go to Heaven someday!"

- God's love *starts* with the gift of his Son--if he didn't *spare* his own Son for the sake of loving us, what in the world keeps tricking us into thinking he's going to start nickel-and-diming us with his love?
  - Matthew 6: God is your *Father*...and he feeds the stupid *birds*; he clothes the stupid *flowers*...he even supplies the needs of every human being who denies him, rejects him, and unrepentantly hates him!
  - If God is your Father, who loves you unimaginably more than birds, flowers, or enemies...how will he not also supply *your* needs, oh ye of little faith?
- God's love refuses to let any charge of sin, imperfection, or failure get into his ears.
  - Not just the false, illegitimate accusations against you...
  - ...but also the *very true*, most truly *legitimate* and truly *damning* accusations against you!

- In your Father's court of Law, when dark spiritual forces, human enemies, or even your own fallen, forgetful, weak-in-flesh faith tries to speak up and enter an accusation or piece of evidence against you, your Father slams his gavel on his desk and tells them, "You shut your mouth! My Son, *Jesus*, has handled all of *that*. The court has already ruled on that. All of those matters are *settled*. The person and work of *my* Son has already answered. The person you're accusing is *justified* in the eyes of *this* court. They are guiltless, spotless, and righteous--just like my Son."
- God's love sets you free from every fear of condemnation and punishment.
  - The worst thing that could ever happen to you would be for God to give you what you deserve--to turn his face away, refuse to look at you, refuse to hear you, withhold his care and concern, and reject you--to deny you *any* place or portion with him.
    - You've been spared from that...nothing worse can happen to you, now.
    - For the lost, this world is as close to Heaven as you'll ever get; for the Christian, this world is as close to Hell as you'll ever be.
  - If you don't have to fear that God's going to condemn you and turn you away--but, instead, he will *always* welcome you, always approve of you, always want you, and always be happy to have you--then there's no person, no company, no job, no group, no club, and no society who's rejection and condemnation you should fear.
- God's love is the guarantee of resurrection to eternal, spiritual *and* physical life!
  - Christ Jesus didn't just die for you--he rose again, to real, physical life!
    - Romans 8:11 says, " If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."
    - Chapter 8, verse 24 says that the "fullness," the *total completion* of our salvation is the "redemption of our mortal bodies; it is in *this* hope we are saved."
- Can I just run you through, as quickly as I can, other ways Romans 8 shows us God's love for us?
  - Verse 34 says that Jesus, who loves you, is praying for you.
  - Verse 1 guarantees that, because you are loved by God, there is now *no condemnation* for you--God won't respond to *a single sin in your past, present, or undiscovered future* with punitive action.
  - Verse 9 says that God loves you by giving you, not only his Son, but also his Spirit; the very Spirit of Christ! God isn't just *for* you...he's *with* you, always, at all times!
  - Verses 15-17 promise us that, because of God's love, you are now his adopted, beloved child--you're loved like family; you now have a saved seat at the family table; you now have a secure share in the very inheritance of Jesus, to whom *all* things belong!
  - Verses 18-25 are a *way* underestimated example of how God loves us:
    - He explains things to us because we're his children and he loves us.
    - Because he loves us, he wants us to understand *why* this world we live in is as broken and fallen and as painful as it is--he *loves* us and doesn't want us to remain lost and crazy in this confusion.
      - Why do such bad things happen?

- Why car crashes? Why cancer? Why birth defects? Why wars? Why murder? Why governmental fraud and deceit and abuse of power? Why rape and molestation? Why drownings? Why do children die?
  - No one can know the perfect, concealed mind of God in all of his purposes in appointing that these things take place...
  - ...but I can tell you the one reason he does **not** appoint these things...
  - It is *definitely not* because he **hates** you. It's not because he's punishing you. It's not because he's forgotten you. It's not because he's done with you. It's not because you reached the limits of his love.
- On that note, Romans 28 God's love guarantees us that--not just *in spite of* those terrible, deplorable things taking place in your life...but *through those very things*...God is working them toward a certain and inevitable future in which they serve your eternal good...your eternal *joy*.
  - For those God loves, the very worst things that can and will befall you in this life now become your *servants*.
  - That's what verse 37 says! As one who God loves, you are now *more than a conqueror* over even death!
    - The love of God, through Jesus, means that death, personified, is no longer the great and final enemy that ends it all for you. **No**.
    - Now, you're God's son, you're God's daughter--and when his kids die, Death now greets them as a humbled servant, saying, "Right this way, sir. Right this way, ma'am. Your Father has finally summoned you home. Right this way, please."
      - [Take a look at places like Psalm 103, if you'd like more fuel!]

God is far **happier** to love you than you can possibly imagine.

- **Zepheniah 3:17:** *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*
- **In Isaiah 9**, the Word of the Lord is given--this is the famous prophecy in which he's going to give us his Son and he foretells the purpose of Christ's life in our world and what glorious things he's going to do--what he's going to accomplish by loving us...and the prophetic promise ends with: *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.*
  - He's not just *happy* to love you and do good to you...
  - ...he's enthusiastic. He's *pumped*! He's ready to rock and roll!
- **Psalm 16** ends by saying, "*In your presence, there is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*"
  - Why will you find joy--the *fullness* and *epitome* of joy--in God's presence?
  - Because *he* is full of joy! All happiness, gladness, laughter, celebration, and good feelings--they exist because *he* exists! Happiness flows from God because *he* is happy.

- **Nehemiah 8:10:** “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”
  - The fact that God loves you and he’s happy about you...
  - ...the *joy of the Lord*...God says, “Oh...you want some encouragement? You need some strength? Here you go--I love you and I’m for you and I’m with you and I am *happy* about this arrangement!”
- **Psalm 149:4:** *For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation.*
  - Some translations use the word *delight*--The Lord *delights* in his people!
    - God *loves* looking at you--you humble, ignorant, weak, forgetful, slow-to-learn, mostly deaf, mostly blind, bumping into everything and everyone...you mess-creating, panicky, fit-throwing, impatient, too-big-for-your-britches, diaper’s always full *soup-sandwich!*
    - God *loves* looking at you! He *delights* in you...you’re his *creation*. You’re his *kid!* You’re his beloved and humble friend in need. You’re a vessel of his mercy. You bear the mark and seal of his Spirit. You are clean and pure and holy, having been washed by the blood of his Son. Your name’s written in his *BOOK!*
- Friends, God is not fed up with you. He’s not tolerating you. He doesn’t resent you. He’s not getting tired of you.
  - He’s not growing impatient, having to walk alongside you in this life at your snail’s pace.
  - He’s not exhausted by your smallness and pitifulness.
    - 1 John 3: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
    - Psalm 103: As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. 14 For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; 16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. 17 But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children...

**Nothing can *save* your life and nothing can *change* your life like knowing and receiving the love of God: Jesus.**

#### QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

- 1 Have you ever felt forgotten or unloved by God?
- 2 How does remembering your salvation (not getting what you deserve) help you realize God’s love for you?
- 3 What can separate you from this love? (Read Rom 8:32-39 again.)