

(31) What, then, will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? If 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. 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? As it is written,

"For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (Psalm 44:22)

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

Think on These Things

- 1) Last week's lesson (Romans 8:18-30) talked about how God provides us with the Holy Spirit to handle life, with a particular advocacy in the challenging moments, and spoke about God's goal in predestination is to bring us into conformity of His Son, Jesus. God's intent is to glorify the chosen. Thus, the question, "What then shall we say? If God is for us..." Explain what it means to you to have God on your side.

Personal responses. The "sense" that God is on our side depends, in part, on our relationship with the Lord. If we are close to Him, dependent on Him, there can be great comfort that whatever we encounter in life can be handled with God by our side. But if our relationship and faith are more academic and distant --- such as thinking our prayers rise "only as high as the ceiling," and God is someone we are taught about (like in school books) --- we will be less comforted or certain that God cares about us personally (here and now).

The obvious thrust of this passage is that we should have a sense of fearlessness in life concerning those who can only harm the body but not the soul (Matthew 10:28). What matters most --- my soul --- is reliably entrusted and protected by God Himself!

- 2) The second half of v. 31 seems rhetorical in nature, that is, that the answer is implied and obvious. But it's not! See these verses: Luke 22:31-34; Ephesians 6:10-13; and 1 Peter 5:8-9. Who opposes you, even though God is on your side? Why? (see Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 20:9; Romans 3:23 and 1 John 1:8)

Luke speaks of Satan wanting to sift Peter; Ephesians says Satan, the devil, schemes against believers with a whole host of evil ones in heavenly places. 1 Peter describes Satan as our adversary...seeking someone to devour, and we are to "resist" him!

Satan's goal is to bring wickedness to mankind (Genesis), and no human can claim purity from sin (Proverbs). All people have sinned (Romans); to say otherwise is to deceive ourselves (1 John).

- 3) Can you name some things that God the Father will give to Jesus the Son? V. 32 indicates that God intends to give us all the stuff He's giving to Jesus. What do you expect this to be?

The Father has given Jesus a "name above all names" that every knee is to bow. Jesus stays at His (authoritative) right hand, and together they will create a brand new heaven and earth just for us! Moreover, God shows great love for His Son, Jesus, and that will be lavished on us. He raised Jesus from the dead by the Spirit; by that same Spirit He will raise us up to eternal life. Jesus was given dominion over sin and death; we shall also be raised incorruptible (pure).

- 4) V. 33 asks, "Who will bring charges against God's chosen?" Read Revelation 12:7-12. Who then dares to "accuse" God's chosen? Think of a courtroom setting. Consider God as the Judge. What roles are being played by Jesus and Satan? What will be the result (see John 5:24, Romans 8:1 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 54-57 and 1 John 3:21-24)?

Revelation describes Satan, the devil and great serpent, as the "accuser of the brethren," accusing them day-and-night before God the Father in heaven. In a courtroom setting, Satan would be the prosecuting attorney against us, and Jesus our defense attorney. Though we are guilty of sin --- because of our faith in Jesus (1 Corinthians) --- we are free from judgment (John), conviction (1 Corinthians), and condemnation (Romans and 1 John.).

- 5) The question found in v. 35 is rhetorical, with the answer provided in vs. 35-39. "What can separate you from the love of Christ?

For believers, NOTHING in this life can separate us from the love of Christ! Personal SIN can separate people from God: non-believers to experience the fullness of God's wrath and judgment; and believers to repent of their sin and restore fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:8-9), as well as to stop grieving the Holy Spirit within us (Ephesians 4:18-32).

- 6) Did you notice that the conditions listed in vs. 35b-36 point to a persecuted Christian life? Most of us have never really faced such opposition. Do you think active, physical persecution (i.e., you --- or those close to you --- could really be harmed, hurt or killed because you claim faith in Jesus) would not affect your faith? What do you think of Paul's statement?

Personal persecution that physically harms me or my family would certainly cause one to think through what faith in God really means...! Would I be willing to die for this position in life? But for many across the world, this is exactly what they face for believing in Jesus! One would have to truly believe to accept an outcome of death or harm for saying, "Yes, I believe."

Paul's statement isn't really about our perception of God. It is about God's perception of us. No matter what we face in life for saying we believe in Him, nothing anybody else can do to us will ever result in Him rejecting us. His love is steadfast and firm!

- 7) Who's love in v. 39 can never be severed (cut off, removed)? If you belong to God, this is a promise for you! God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (Hebrews 13:8).

The love of God we find in Jesus Christ our Lord --- when we come to belief in Him!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: