

Nothing Separates from God's Love
Romans 8:31–39

Turn to Romans 8 please. How much do you think God loves you? We know that he loves everyone and he loves the world, but how much does he love *you*? If he knows how many hairs are on your head, he knows quite a bit about you. How confident are you that he loves you personally?

It would be so good to have total confidence about this. Most of the time I do not. I know what the right answer is, but in my heart of hearts I still have to say, “I believe that you love me, Lord, help my unbelief.”

So, let's begin with our imagination. We cannot believe what we cannot even imagine. Strong faith requires a good imagination. For now, just imagine that God's love is the most important force acting on your life.

Gravity acts on us all the time, it never stops. It pulls us toward the earth. Imagine that God's love pulls you toward him, all the time, it never lets up, ever. Imagine that nothing could separate us from that love. And it is far stronger than gravity. Every hour of every day, God's love is the strongest force acting on your life, by far. We could at least imagine that. Let's turn to the Bible.

Romans 8:31 “What shall we say to these things?” Paul has been describing our salvation, and now he shifts to response. Now Paul will lead us in the only sensible response to God's salvation. How shall we respond to these wonderful things?

1 Is God really for us? Yes! Romans 8:31

Still in verse 31, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Nobody! The answer is so obvious that he does not need to say it. If God is for us, nobody can be against us. No doubt there. But, is God really for us? How do we know that? Here's how we know: Romans 5. “Here is how God shows his love for us: while we were sinners, Christ died for us. While we were God's enemies, he reconciled himself to us by the death of his Son.”

Think about this. We were sinners, we had made ourselves God's enemies. While we were in *that* state, God loved us. He wanted to collect us and bring to himself. So he gave up his Son. To death. What God did is almost inconceivable. A parent hands over their child to death to accomplish some greater good. It is a horrible thought. What parent would do that? What greater good could there possibly be? And it was not just death, it was humiliating and gruesome death.

This is God's love for us, while we were sinners and his enemies. “Here is how God shows his love for us: while we were sinners, Christ died for us. While we were God's enemies, God

reconciled himself to us by the death of his Son.” And we will say to God, “I’m not sure you actually love me?”

Folks, that’s how we know God is for us. That’s how we know God loves us, by what he did to bring us in. “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10). God sent his Son to die, so he could bring us to himself: that’s how we know he’s for us. If God is for us, who can be against us? Noone!

2 Can our sins separate us from the love of God? No. Romans 8:32–34

Verse 32: *He who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* God sent his Son to be a sacrifice for our sins. That’s a gift of love and grace that we cannot imagine. God did that to bring us his chosen ones to himself. So, Paul asks us: do you think that after that, God became stingy? Does God say, “I gave that much for you, but I’m giving no more. Now you have to earn your way in.”

Is that what we think? That after that indescribable gift, God turns into a grace miser, keeping it all? “No more grace for you!” It is ludicrous to think that, but actually we do. We insult God and we make ourselves miserable because we do not believe this.

“No!” says Paul. Never. God did *not* become stingy with grace. “He who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all—he will certainly, along with him, graciously give us all things!” If he was that gracious when we were sinners and enemies, his grace will certainly see us through, *whatever* grace we might need from him now.

Verse 33 – “*Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*” Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Certainly not God! God our accuser? Never!

One of the things we fear will separate us from God’s love is our sins. We still sin. Paul says, yes, but that will never separate us from God’s love. *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.* God’s whole project was make atonement for sinners who were his enemies. For Paul, that God would turn around and accuse us, bring charges against us, is ridiculous. Everything God did through Christ was **to get rid of** the charges against us. God is never our accuser. Our sins will not separate us from the love of God.

In verse 34 Paul shifts to Christ: *Who then will condemn us? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.* Who then will condemn us? Certainly not Christ!

Let’s talk about Christ’s love. Ephesians 5: “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” “Christ loved the church and give himself up for her, to

make her holy, cleansing.” 1 John 3: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”

This still goes after our fear that our sins will separate us from the love of God and of Christ. Who then will condemn us? No one. Certainly not Christ! Would God accuse us? Never! His whole plan was *to get rid of* the accusations. Would Christ condemn us? Never! His whole plan was to lay down his life so that we could *not* be condemned.

Furthermore, Christ Jesus is beside God and is interceding for us. Christ lives to bring us to the Father. That's his passion. He's interceding the way Moses prayed for Israel in the golden calf story. Christ makes sure that no one will condemn us. He is the last one to condemn us.

People, we're probably about as bad as we think we are. But if we think our sins will separate us from God's love and Christ's love, we have lost sight of how much they loved us when we were lost in sin and enemies of God. We have lost sight of how much they have done to make sure that accusations and condemnation can no longer happen.

Far too many believers think they are worse than other believers. Way too many. I guarantee you that the worst believers are not thinking that at all. Instead, let's thank God for all the ways his grace has changed our lives for the better. There is an accuser, my brothers and sisters, and he has too much success in our minds. Use this Scripture to silence him.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all—he will certainly also, along with him, graciously give us all things! Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Certainly not God! God our accuser? Never. It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? Certainly not Christ. Christ condemn us? Never. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

God might address our sins from time to time, but they never cause the slightest hesitation or pause in his relentless love, his overwhelming love. All God did through Christ's death, and all that Christ did in going to the cross, was exactly so that our sins would not be any barrier between us and God.

3 Can our troubles separate us from the love of Christ? No. Romans 8:35–37

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Troubles can make us wonder if the Lord is angry at us. At the very least, severe ongoing troubles make it seem as if the Lord is not paying attention at all. If he cared for us, he would not

let this happen. At some level we know that's not true, but in the situation, it is very hard to believe that the Lord could have any real love for us and still let this happen.

But troubles, people, never mean separation from the love of Christ, from the love of God that comes through Christ. Never. Remember what happened to Christ Jesus. Because of God, Jesus was considered as a sheep to be slaughtered. Now we are.

When we suffer, that's the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. God is creating a bond between Christ and us, because he suffered and we suffer. We suffer because we are bound to Christ, and he suffered. We participate in his sufferings. His sufferings overflow to us.

We don't like it. He didn't either. We feel forsaken. So did he. But he loves us as much as ever. In all these things, we are more than conquerors. This is incredible. We not only survive, we not only endure, we conquer, we triumph. In fact, we not only conquer, we are more than conquerors, we are not only triumphant in all these things, we are more than triumphant. We don't feel like that at the time, but we are. Christ did not feel triumphant at the time, either.

Do you know what being more than conquerors looks like? It is when our face is being pressed into the mud, and rubbed there. It is when our face is being rubbed in our own blood. In those situations, we are more than conquerors. That is actually the victory scene. That's what happened to Jesus, and to Paul, and that's what he's talking about.

Why are we more than conquerors in all these things? Because Christ's love for us makes that happen. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ***“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”*** Christ's love for us is so great that right in all our troubles, we are actually more than conquerors. Total victors. His love makes it happen.

Our sins cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Our troubles cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. And lastly, nor can anything else.

4 Nor can anything else separate us from the love of God. Romans 8:38–39

Romans 8:38–39 *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This list collects everything else not already covered. These won't separate us from this love either. Nothing is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How do we know that God loves us? “Here is how God shows his love for us: while we were sinners, Christ died for us. While we were God's enemies, he reconciled us to himself by the death of his Son.” “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as

an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” God gave up his Son for us all, so that God could have us. That’s how we know he loves us.

How do we know that Christ loves us? “Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” “Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her, to make her holy, cleansing her.” 1 John 3: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”

When we think about God’s love, we need to have a firm grasp on how we know. When we think about Christ’s love, we need to have a firm grasp on how we know. Amen.

PRAYER: Father, plant us and root us in your love. Give us strength to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is Christ’s love. May we know his unknowable love, Father, so that we all can be filled to the brim with you. Amen.

BENEDICTION: May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and into Christ’s perseverance. May the Lord of peace give you peace at all times in every way. Amen. Go in God’s peace to love and serve the Lord.