

UNASHAMED

A study of the book of Romans

I am not ashamed of the **GOSPEL**, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. Romans 1:16

July 18, 2021 Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response 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, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? 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. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”^[a]

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[b] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ 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.

COMMENTARY

8:31. Paul wrote from first-hand experience about the overwhelming impact of God's love on him. The first phrase invites a verdict, what then are we to say? The response to this question is based in reality on the previous seven and a half chapters. This section is the height of Paul's argument. That God is for us is the most important statement Paul could make. We do not need to be afraid of God or uncertain about the present or the future. God has demonstrated He is for us. By comparison, any opposition is inconsequential.

8:32-34. The offer of His own Son is the ultimate demonstration of God's favor. Paul had experienced many charges against him. His confidence in God was so great, however, that he dared anyone to bring an accusation against God's people. God has taken care of the greater things, our eternal destiny and our standing before Him. We should not allow lesser things to shake our faith in God. They simply are not qualified to do so.

8:35-37. These last five verses begin and end with the idea of not being separated from God. Death is the great separator, but for believers that separation is only physical and temporary. Each of the perils in verse 35 arise from official suppression of Christianity. Verse 36 is a quote from Psalm 44:22. It shows God's people have always faced great danger. Rather than being extinguished, God's people have survived, flourished, and witnessed a new chapter in God's work amidst humanity. The verse probably refers to all of the items listed in the previous verse but is especially tied to the mention of "sword." For your sake is a stark reminder our faith in God puts us in danger. Against the modern notion that faith means protection from all difficulty is the biblical fact that faith places us in jeopardy. Paul responded to the Psalm with powerful confidence. Even in the face of physical danger, we who are in Christ are more than victorious.

8:38. Paul put forth his experience as proof of the contention that nothing can ultimately defeat a Christian. The Greek word for sure means "a firm and settled conviction." Paul had no doubt about his confidence. Death nor life is the first pair of challenges that could imperil a Christian's standing before God. Death appears the ultimate separator, the final end. But as Paul argued repeatedly, a Christian is raised with Christ and experiences life with Him. Life refers here to the travails of life. Nothing we have to endure will sever our relationship with God. The second pair, angels nor rulers, could be classes of angelic beings. In light of the contrast between life and death, however, Paul may have meant "rulers above as well as rulers below." The contrast continued between things present and things to come. Nothing in the present day can sever our relationship with God, nor can any future circumstance.

8:39. Paul continued the contrasting pairs with height and depth (v. 39). Some ancient writers used these terms to indicate things above the heavens and beneath the earth. Paul probably meant that nothing from any realm can alter a Christian's security. Nor anything else in all creation is a collective phrase to include anything Paul may have

overlooked. In his experience and in his imagination, nothing will separate us from the love of God. With this stunning certainty Paul concluded this first section of Romans.

MAIN POINT

We can endure in faith to the very end because no one and nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What situation in your life has required the most perseverance and determination from you? What motivated you to go the distance?

At what times do you find it the most challenging to persevere in your relationship with God and the work He has called you to? What factors make perseverance so tough in those moments?

In Romans 8, Paul highlights the rich benefits of being in Christ. Paul began the last part of chapter 8 by affirming that God is at work in all things and emphasizing God's faithfulness in the life of a believer. Paul assured first-century believers that they could persevere through suffering and persecution for their faith, because they are "more than conquerors" through Christ. As we examine this passage, let's consider these wonderful assurances that drive us to depend upon our great God.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Throughout Romans 1–8, Paul describes God's redeeming grace and the result of Jesus' sacrificial work on the cross. In Romans 8:28-30, Paul described a sequence of salvation that ends in the Christian's glorification, something that has already occurred. Thus God's character is now being revealed in us. In light of this truth, we enjoy a right standing before God that cannot be revoked. On the heels of this truth, Paul encouraged the believers in Rome to endure in their faith.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:31-32.

What does it mean to you to read that God is for you? If you are "for" someone or something, what does that entail?

What example does Paul give as the reason we can have confidence that God is a God of ultimate power and unlimited supply? Why is this significant?

What are some of the needs (v. 32) you have on a regular basis? How has the enemy attempted to defeat you when it comes to those specific needs? How can the certainty of God's love help you fight off the Enemy's attack?

If God did the greater (gave His Son), will He not do the lesser and give us all that is necessary for life and godliness? Of course He will. No matter where we are in current struggles or difficulties, we must remember that the supply line from glory is never cut off and the storehouse from heaven is never depleted. God will not withhold anything from us that we need to persevere in our relationship with and ministry for Him.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:33-34.

What is the work of Christ on behalf of believers? How is this work evidence of God's unwavering love for us?

Read Romans 8:1. What do verses 8:31-34 reveal as the reason why "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"? Why is this good news for us? How should this truth change how we live each day?

Paul had been laughed at, stoned, beaten, and imprisoned because of his faith. Ultimately, these calamities did not shatter his confidence in God but reaffirmed and deepened it. In fact, God alone is qualified to bring an accusation; but God is the One who justifies, or puts Christians in a right standing before Him. Obviously no accuser has the power to overrule God. The only possible accuser has declared us innocent. Likewise, only one could condemn us, Christ Jesus. Instead of condemning us, however, He actually has done the unthinkable. He died and has been raised for us. His sacrifice means believers are free from condemnation.

- HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:35-39.

What in verses 35-39 gives you evidence of God's unwavering love for you?

Of the things listed in these verses that cannot separate believers from the love of Christ, which stands out to you the most, and why? Share an example from your own experience that relates to that point.

Why can these things not separate believers from the love of Christ?

How does verse 36 relate to this passage? What does it mean in the context of these verses for believers to be victorious?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in keeping believers connected to Christ's love?

What do these verses teach about the power of God's love in the life of a believer?

Paul affirmed that nothing has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The list of potential separators includes physical danger, spiritual beings, present and future occurrences, and powers above us and below us. To clearly indicate that absolutely no thing or person can come between the Lord and His people, Paul concluded his list with "anything else in all creation." Absolutely nothing can come between us and our Lord. Nothing can remove us from His family.

NEXT STEPS

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What evidence of God's love do you see in your day-to-day life?

What difference does trusting in God's love for you make as you try to persevere through difficult times?

In what situation will you trust God more this week?

What is the closest you have come to feeling the despair and loneliness of being separated from God like Paul describes in Romans 8:31-39? How was your relationship with Him impacted? What will you do differently if you are ever in a similar situation?

What steps can you take to be more aware of all the positive actions Jesus has done/is doing for you? How can we help remind one another of this truth?

How can we support one another in prayer this week?

PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer, thanking God for His work on the cross that is the ultimate example of His unwavering love for us. Thank Him for His continued faithfulness to His children. Pray that no matter what we face this week, we would be able to cling to the promises of Romans 8 and trust in His love for us.