

If God is for us . . .

Romans 8:31-34

Introduction

William Dixon lived in Brackenthwaite, England. He was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw that the house of one of his neighbors was on fire. Although the elderly owner was rescued, her orphaned grandson was trapped in the blaze. Dixon climbed an iron pipe on the side of the house and lowered the boy to safety. His hand that held on to the pipe was badly burned.

Shortly after the fire, the grandmother died. The townspeople wondered who would care for the boy. Two volunteers appeared before the town council. One was a father who had lost his son and would like to adopt the orphan as his own. William Dixon was to speak next, but instead of saying anything he merely held up his scarred hand. When the vote was taken, the boy was given to him.

The scarred hand was convincing proof of his great care for the boy already

When Jesus had appeared to the disciples in the Upper Room – Thomas was not there the first time – and did not believe their report of the resurrection

John 20:25 - ' . . . Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.'

Jesus returned the following week and said to Thomas

John 20:27-28 - 'Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"'

Of course – the scars are not only proof of the resurrection – but they stand as eternal reminders of the costly love of God for His people

Romans 8:34 - 'Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.'

Paul has just finished telling us that God causes all things to work together for good – to those who love God and are called according to His purpose

That purpose is ultimately that we be conformed to the image of His Son – to experience the blessings of salvation - - - the redemption of the body - - - to dwell with God for all eternity

To such truths the Christian can only rejoice

Romans 8:31 - 'What then shall we say to these things?'

In this next section [to the end of chapter 8] Paul points to the fact that – no matter what obstacles the Christian may face in this life – No matter what trials or tribulations we experience in this life – no matter what spiritual foes we encounter - -- We overwhelmingly conquer thru Him who loved us – and there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus

R.C. Sproul: 'We are secure, not because we hold tightly to Jesus, but because He holds tightly to us.'

I. The God Who Gave His Son - vv. 31-32

'If God is for us . . .?'

If you have God – it's not that nothing can be against you
The point is – nothing can be against you to real effect [ultimate defeat]

Nothing can destroy your faith if you are one of God's elect
Nothing can take away your inheritance – if you are one of His sheep
Nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus
Nothing falls outside of the realm of God's providential ordering of the affairs of your life for good

Who or what is greater than God and able to thwart His purposes and plans?

John 10:27-29 - 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.'

With God on our side – the forces that are marshaled against us simply will not prevail

That is because salvation is God's program / God's doing

We looked at last week - - He is the One who foreknows and predestines and calls and justifies – also glorifies

Those are all things which God does

John MacArthur: 'Salvation is not a result of the will of man. It is not a result of the merit of man. It is not a result of some religious sacrifice on man's part. It is not a result of the love of man. It is not a result of the good intention of man. It is not a result of the purpose of man. And it is not to the praise and

glory of man. Every aspect of salvation is born out of the purpose, and the will, and the plan of God that when it is accomplished it may be solely and only to the praise and the glory of God.'

II Timothy 1:9 - '[God] who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.'

Paul points to the fact that God gave His son for our salvation – v. 32

In his book, "Lament for a Son," philosopher / theologian Nicholas Wolterstorff writes of the tragic death of his son in a mountain climbing accident. In the preface to his book he says:

Nicholas Wolterstorff: 'If someone asks, "Who are you, tell me about yourself," I say - not immediately, but shortly - "I am one who lost a son." That loss determines my identity; not all my identity, but much of it. It belongs within my story.'

He notes that our Heavenly Father is also defined in the Scriptures by the fact that He too, is One who has lost a Son – handed over to sinners

Octavius Winslow: 'Jesus was delivered not by Judas for money; not by Pilate for fear; not by Jews for envy - but by the Father for love.'

The language of 'not sparing' takes the reader back to Abraham and how he was willing to offer up Isaac unto the Lord – and God stepped in at the last minute

Isaac was a type of Christ

When God called Abraham to sacrifice his son – Isaac

Genesis 22:2 - 'And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I tell you.'

Isaac was the son of the promise – the only son of Abraham and Sarah

And – it would be thru the line of Isaac that the Jewish nation would come and – ultimately that Christ would come

Of course – we know this was a test of Abraham's faith and loyalty to God

God had no intention of allowing Abraham to sacrifice his one son in whom He had vested all the promises

The angel of the Lord stopped him at the very moment he was about to go thru with it

Genesis 22:12 - 'And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'

Robert Haldane: 'God spared Abraham's son but He spared not His own Son.'

John 3:16 - 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.'
[kjv]

The cross was the hard part of our salvation – giving up His Son

The Father said of Jesus at His baptism

Matthew 3:17 - 'And behold, a voice out of the heavens saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

MLJ: 'The argument is that as God has already given His Son to death for us, He will not refuse to do for us anything else that is necessary.'

Paul is raising before our minds – challenges to final perseverance

How can I know that I will finally arrive at glory – when that day comes to stand before God

v. 32 – God has already taken care of our supreme need

Charles Hodge: 'If God has done the greater, He will not leave the lesser undone.'

This points to our security

I Peter 1:3-5 - 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'

Your inheritance is protected by God through your faith

Earthly inheritances can be lost / destroyed in a disaster / stolen by thieves / confiscated by governments

This inheritance is secure - protected by the power of God

We reserve things like hotel rooms / seats at a concert / spot on an airplane

‘hold this for me - I am planning on being there! - - I want a spot!’

You might remember the poor airline passenger [David Dao] back in 2017 - had taken his seat on a United Airlines flight - departing Chicago. Before the plane was done boarding - he was told that he needed to give up his seat – [get off the plane!] Dao was a doctor and said he needed to see his patients tomorrow – ‘I’ll stay on this flight – thank you’

Eventually - Several officers forcibly removed him - his lawyers later said that he suffered a concussion in the altercation as well as a broken nose / some missing teeth - all caught on video

United eventually - paid a settlement to Dao - of an undisclosed amount

He had a ticket - he reserved a spot on the flight - something went wrong - they didn’t keep his seat for him

Peter says - for the believer - our spot is secure

Nobody is going to say - sorry - we told you there was room - but we gave it away

We told you that faith in Christ will get you here - but it turns out – God can’t keep His Word

You might be hassled and jostled about in this world - like David Dao - - - but when it comes to heaven - your accommodations are secure

Why? Because the power of God is put into play to protect it and accomplish it

II. The God Who Justifies - v. 33

Paul is addressing challenges to our salvation

How do I know my sins won’t condemn me in the end?

No charge can be brought against one whom God Himself has justified

In his book, "Pilgrim's Progress" – Bunyan has Christian encountering Apollyon – in the Valley of Humiliation - - Apollyon represents Satan who seeks to prevent his journey to the Celestial City – hurls flaming darts at Christian

Apollyon accuses Christian of not being a very good Christian and not likely to make it all the way to glory – too many failures and wrestlings with sin

Bunyan gives this reply to him

John Bunyan: 'All this is true, and much more which you have left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honor is merciful and ready to forgive. Besides these sins possessed me in your own country; I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, but now have obtained pardon from my Prince.'

One of Satan's primary works is 'accusation' – in the Scriptures

Revelation 12:10, 11 - 'the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb . . .'

'Who will bring a charge against God's elect?' / God is the One who justifies

When I was around 19 – I was charged with stealing a Christmas tree

It was kind of a prank – I was sitting around with some friends after work – drinking a few beers – and we looked across the parking lot – and saw all these Christmas trees in front of a grocery store. It was probably around 11 pm. Somebody asked, 'What would prevent someone from going over there and grabbing a tree?' - - - so we ran over and grabbed a tree - - - and threw it in my Camaro – and drove around – with this tree hanging out of the trunk for a while

Later on – I went home – my brother told me I was supposed to call my manager Steve – at work. He says that I need to come down – an officer wanted to talk to me

The charge: petty larceny

Before my court date – my manager – went and spoke to the grocery store owner on our behalf and talked him into dropping the charges

About a month later – I got a letter from the Lincoln Police Dept. – telling me that the charges against me had been dropped

No condemnation! – I was not going to be sent down the river / No Alcatraz for me!

Of course – in a sense – God doesn't really drop the charges against us - - - He lays them upon His Son

When it comes to our sin - - - God's justification is all that matters for us

No one can lay a charge on us / not Satan / not the FBI – nothing that can stick for eternity

Ultimately – there will be an accounting of sins

Only those in the Lamb's book of life – are justified

During the Great Tribulation – there will be martyrs for God

Revelation 7:13-14 - 'And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they and from where have they come?" and I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

Sproul: 'God does not save us because of our spotless lives, but because we are clothed in Christ's righteous garments.'

Romans 8:33 - 'Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies.'

You are one of God's elect

When Christ returns – He will gather His elect

Matthew 24:31 - 'And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.'

Can anyone who has been justified [declared righteous] by God ultimately come under condemnation?

Let the devil come / let sin and death and hell do their best

The work of Christ on the cross answers all our foes – He has defeated them all

Spurgeon: 'O dear friends, if God be at peace with you, it matters not who is at war with you; if your Master acquits, it little matters who condemns; if Jehovah absolves, your name may be cast out as evil . . . but who is he that can be against

you? What are all these things, if put into the balance, but lighter than vanity, if Jehovah Himself hath justified you?’

III. The Interceding Savior - v. 34

Here we are reminded that every action of Christ answers to our great need

In Christian’s battle against Apollyon – he fought the dragon and gave him a great thrust with his spear

At that – Christian hollered out – ‘Yea – we are more than conquerors thru Him who loved us.’

And with that – Apollyon spread his wings – and flew away

Why are we more than conquerors?

Jesus is our Great High Priest

He ascended into heaven – and took His seat at the right hand of the Father – depicting that His work of redemption was accomplished

On the cross – He cried: ‘It is finished’

In the Jewish temple – in the Holy Place – there was no chair or seat for a priest to sit down upon

There was the mercy seat on the Ark – which was covered with blood on the Day of Atonement once a year

But – the priest’s job was never finished

Why?

Hebrews 10:1 - ‘For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.’

Hebrews 10:4 - ‘For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.’

Hebrews 10:12 - ‘But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.’

Jesus functions as our great High Priest

Every grace needed for our salvation comes to us - from and thru Jesus Christ

Hebrews 7:23-24 - 'and the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing., but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.'

Hebrews 7:25 - 'Hence also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God thru Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.'

As long as He is there – at the right hand of the Father – our salvation is secure

We may and will experience temporary moments of defeat – but victory is assured unto us in Jesus

We may lose some battles here and there with sin – but we are on the winning side of this war

Jesus intercedes for us – we see what this may look like in His High Priestly prayer in John 17 – where He prays for the disciples

John 17:15 - 'I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.'

Conclusion

A young girl had grown up with a mother whose hands were badly scarred. For a while she was content to simply accept the fact that her mother's hands were different from all the other mommies' smooth hands. But as she grew older this difference became a source of embarrassment. She began to feel shame at the ugliness of those scarred hands. At the age of eight, she could stand it no longer and asked her mother, 'Mommy – why do you have such ugly hands, when all the other mommies have smooth hands?'

Her mother sat her down and told her the story: 'when you were a little child, still sleeping in a crib – we had a sudden fire in the house, and when I went into your room the flames were already around your crib. I grabbed you and wrapped you in a blanket – but the flames had already reached the outside of the blanket, and my hands, as you can see were terribly burned. So darling – that is why my hands are scarred and not as lovely and smooth as other mommies'

There was a moment of silence and then a look of recognition came over the girl's face as she reached down and grabbed hold of her mother's hands – she said, 'Oh mommy – I love these hands' [Disarming the Secular Gods, p. 127]

The scars were evidence of her mother's love

The scars of Jesus are evidence of the love of God for us

Romans 8:32 - 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?'