

# Who shall separate us

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[ 0 : 00 ] Romans 8, reading at verse 31. What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but give him up for us all, how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? 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 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.

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.

[ 1 : 30 ] Verse 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? We were looking last Sunday evening at the confidence that God's people can have, no matter what we may be up against, no matter who may be against us.

As we seek to live for God, the Bible tells us that we should be confident in our God. God wants us to receive strength and encouragement from his own world.

And I believe a passage such as we are looking at over these two evenings is one that is designed to strengthen, to encourage, to build up God's people.

We saw a little last week of the purposes of God for his people. And we, as we looked at them, considered the context in which we find them.

We saw how God was promising that he was going to work all things together for the good of those who loved him, and who were the called according to his purpose.

[ 2 : 56 ] We saw that if God is for us, then no matter who may be against us, they cannot prevail, they cannot win.

Against me, we were singing it tonight, though an host and camp, my heart yet fearless is, though war against me rise, I will be confident in this.

And we saw the great argument the Apostle uses, in order that we might have such confidence. He reminds us of the fact that God did not spare his own son, but that he gave him up, delivered him up for us all.

If God has done that for us, no, since God has done that for us, because we know God has done that for us, how is it possible for us, not to graciously give us, in Christ, all that we need.

And so, we looked last week, at God's purposes, for his own people. This evening, I want to examine further, some of the ways in which the Apostle proves, the truth, of what he is saying.

[ 4 : 21 ] And finally, just to mention how we can be, persuaded, of the truth, of this passage, only, if we are in, Christ, Jesus.

Not everyone here tonight, has a right to take these words, and apply them, to themselves. Only those, who are in Christ. Only those, who have received, the love of God, in Christ Jesus.

So, if you haven't, I urge you, in the name, of my Lord and Saviour, before we go any further, to receive, this love for yourself, to receive, all that God has, for his people, in Christ.

And then, all these truths, that are so, tremendous, in the estimation, of the people of God, will be, tremendous, in your estimation, as well.

You too, can come to know, the reality, of these things, for yourself. One thing, that's very, very obvious, as we live our lives, in the world, be it as individual believers, or as, the people of God, in

general, one thing, that is obvious, is this, that we are often, very much, up against it.

[ 5 : 47 ] We have, innumerable enemies, against whom, we must, contend. The Christian life, is a life, of conflict.

There are many, pushes, at work, in our world, who are bent, on the destruction, of the Church of Christ. And the greatest, tragedy, of all, is that sometimes, these pushes, operate, within the Church, so called, itself.

How then, are we to, face up, to all our foes? How then, are we to, respond, to all, these things, that we may be, aware, are against us, this evening?

Well, what better, than to turn, to the passage, that's before us, tonight. In the 33rd, verse, Paul asks, this great question, who will bring, there's really, a series of questions here.

The first one is, what then, shall we say, in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not, bear his own son, but gave him up, for us all, how will he not, also along with him, graciously, give us all things?

[ 7 : 01 ] He's begun, asking this, series of questions. And in verse 33, where we're really, beginning this evening, he asks, who will bring, any charge, against those, whom God, has chosen?

See, Paul knows this Bible. And Paul knows, that in the Old Testament, scriptures, God told his people, no weapon, that is formed, against the Lord's people, can prosper.

Isaiah says, he who vindicates me, is near. Who then, will bring charges, against me? Who is my accuser, says Isaiah?

Let him confront me. It is the sovereign Lord, who helps me. Now, Paul knew these words, and virtually, repeats them, in this, 33rd verse, sums up, the message, of that passage, in Isaiah 50, and Isaiah 54, and says, who will bring, who will bring, any charge, against those, whom God, has chosen?

It is God, who justifies. If we're in Christ, tonight, God has justified us. God has made us, right, with himself.

[ 8 : 25 ] And it is that, same God, who according, to Isaiah, will refute, every tongue, that accuses us.

Now you say, that's all very well, for Isaiah to say. That's all very well, well for the apostle Paul, to speak, in such, strong terms. But what about, who little me?

What about me, in my, little corner? What about the things, that I'm up against? I find myself, perhaps you say, in a minority.

Well you wouldn't be, the first one, to find yourself, in a minority. But as one of my, old elders, back in Helmstil, used to say, one with the Lord, is a majority. See Noah, was very much, in the minority. When he went about, the business of, building an ark. People laughed at him. People asked him, where's the sign, of rain? Noah. They mocked, they jeered, they ridiculed.

[ 9 : 28 ] But God, was on his side. Joseph, was very much, in the minority. But God, was on his side. Gideon, and the 300, who, thought the Midianites, were in the minority.

But in the strength, of God, the Lord, they overcame. David, was so, insignificant, when you compared him, with Goliath.

He was even, ridiculed, by his brothers. Who do you think, you are, going out, to fight, such a man? But God, was on his side.

Martin Luther, to come near, at his own time, was very much, in the minority, in the days, of the Reformation. And many others, have been in the minority, down through the centuries.

What about, oh Lord Jesus Christ, himself, was he not a minority, of one? Does the Bible, not tell us, that he trod, the winepress, alone? And that none, of the people, were with him.

[ 10 : 36 ] And yet, what was Christ, doing, as he trod, the winepress, alone? What was he doing, as he hung there, on the cross? What was the Lord, Jesus Christ, doing? He was conquering.

He was triumphant. He was taking, the sting, and the victory, away from death, and from the grave. So that this evening, if we are in Christ, these promises, that I've already quoted, from Isaiah, belong to us.

Because Isaiah says, this is the heritage, of the servants, of the Lord. And their vindication, is from me, says the Lord.

It's only in Christ, and because of Christ, that we can stand up, with the apostle, and say, who dare, bring any charge, against those, whom God has chosen?

The purposes of God, are coming to pass, in bringing us to himself. It is God, who justifies. Who is he, that condemns?

[ 11 : 46 ] If God, does not accuse us, then, no man, has the right, to accuse us. not even, our own consciences, ought to accuse us, if God, has pardoned us.

Our profession, this evening, as, those who are in Christ, is that, the divine justice, has been satisfied. our profession, along with the apostle, in this passage, is that therefore, there is now, no condemnation, for those, who are in, Christ, Jesus.

The judge, has freed us, Christ, has died for us, the debt, has been paid, we have been, vindicated. Christ, is alive, and Christ, looks at us, his people, and in us, he sees the fruit, of his death, and resurrection.

And this Christ, in whom we trust, this evening, this Christ, has been given, all power, and authority, in heaven, and on earth.

[ 13 : 05 ] Christ, has priored, Christ, has been raised up, from the dead, Christ, has gone, to God's, right hand, and Christ, is there, in the heavenly realms, cut hold of us, three, Christ, is there, this evening, in the heavenly realms, far above, all rule, and authority, far above, all power, and dominion, and every title, that belongs, to Christ, has been given to him, not only, in the present age, but also, in the one to come.

God has appointed, all things, to be placed, under his feet, and God, has given him, to be head, over all things, for the church, which is, his body, the fullness, of him, who fills, everything, in every way.

If we're in Christ, tonight, we have a friend, at court, a friend, in the court of heaven, we have an advocate, par excellence, who ever lives, to make, intercession, for us.

God, is for us. All that he is, is for us. All that he has, is for us. All that he's done, is done for us. The shed blood of Christ, is for us.

His death, his resurrection, his intercession, everything, is for us. Christ, is determined, to give us, all things.

[ 14 : 49 ] God is determined, for Christ's sake, to give us, all things. It's impossible, for God, to withhold, any good thing, from those, who are in Christ.

We have been, chosen, in Christ, unto salvation, by his own, sovereign decision. You have not chosen me, he says, but I, have chosen you.

There's no place, for pride. We have been chosen, in order that we, might obtain, the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus. God, has done it all, for us.

Therefore, we can ask, this evening, if we are in Christ, we can ask, who is he, that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died, more than that, who was raised, to life.

He is a bright hand of God. Appropriate to yourself, all that the Bible tells us, about Christ, and what he's done.

[ 16 : 02 ] Are you in Christ? We saw this morning, that he came, to save, that which was lost. It's only on the basis, of what he has done, that any of us, can know God.

It's all, and utterly, of grace. And for that, all God's people, give thanks. And it's because, it's of grace, that we can have, this confidence, that God's purposes, have been fulfilled, in our lives. And we have, the great proof of this, in that God, has brought us to himself, and made us right, with himself, in and through, the Lord Jesus. And we know, that he has given us, that which can never, be taken from us.

And we know, tonight, that having loved, his own, who were in the world, he loved them, to the end. It's because, of these, tremendous truths, that we can, identify with, this series of questions, that the apostle Paul, asks.

And say, who, shall separate us, from this love? This is the great question, that he asks, in the 35th verse.

[ 17 : 22 ] And that he answers, at the end, of the passage. He asks, in verse 35, who shall separate us, from the love of Christ? And he ends the section, by telling us, that he's convinced, that nothing, shall be able, to separate us, from this love.

And yet, he's a realist, as this man, of God. And he faces up, to the fact, that as we live, in this world, there will be, difficulties, of various kinds.

And he just, highlights a few of these, and I would like, just to mention them, briefly. Shall trouble, separate us? Now, it, may very well be, that he's referring there, to some, outward kind of,

tribulation.

revelation, that God's people, as individuals, or, the church of Christ, as a whole, may be called, to go through. And you don't need me, to tell you, that in the Bible, there are many references, to the troubles, to the troubles, of the people, of God.

To the afflictions, of God's people. To the fact, that, often we are, brought through the fire, of tribulation.

[ 18 : 41 ] But what we need to realize, when we are, in the midst of, such trouble, is that, no trouble, of any kind, no tribulation, whatsoever, shall be able, to separate us, from God's love, in Christ.

What about, hardship? Those distresses, that may be caused, as a result of, those who would oppose us, and put obstacles, in our path.

The difficulties, that accompany, living the Christian life, well, whatever hardship, it may be, it cannot, separate us, from this love.

What about, persecution? The way, we may be treated, on account, of our commitment, to Christ. Again, that can be, sometimes, very openly, and obviously, in our cup.

other times, it may be, in a very subtle way, that no one else, is aware of. Because, of our, identification, with him, we can expect, persecution.

[ 20 : 02 ] But, he wants us, to know, that, no persecution, shall be able, to separate us, from this love. What about, lacking, the basic necessities, of life, famine, or nativeness?

Yes. Paul himself, knew a little, of what that was about, in a way that, that we don't. Well, here we're reminded, of the fact, that no, extremity, of an outward kind, or of an inner kind, shall be able, to separate us, from this love.

What about, placing our lives, in danger, for the Lord Satan? None of us, here tonight, at least, most of us, know nothing, of what that's about, maybe one or two do, but for the most part, we don't.

Well, no matter, what danger, we may be in, because of our, commitment to Christ. Suppose, it means, that we have to go, to the death, for Christ.

Not even that, can separate us, from this love. You know, sometimes, sometimes, we, we may wonder, how we would react, if our lives, really were, put on the line, because of our, commitment to Christ.

[ 21 : 23 ] Very few of us, probably know anything of, I certainly don't, of what it means, to be in this kind of danger, for the Lord's sake. Well, all we can say is, that God will not, give us grace tonight, to cope with danger, if we're not in danger.

God will supply, his grace, not before we need it, but in time, of need. And yet, sometimes, Christian people, have been, have been tested, on this very point, and found, wanting.

I remember, hearing, a story, of an incident, that took place, in, Eastern Europe, during the, Communist regime.

Those are gathering, of, Christians, one evening, in a certain place, and as they were, gathered together, two men, brushed in, with guns, and dressed, in, in soldiers, uniform.

The men, lined up, the whole meeting, against the wall, and said, anyone, who's prepared, to, to thorn Jesus Christ, can go.

[ 22 : 42 ] One or two, slept away, a little bit, shame physically, but nonetheless, away they went. Again, the men said, we're giving you, one more opportunity, for anyone, who's prepared, to deny, Jesus Christ, to go.

Another, few, left the room. This continued, until there was, only a handful left, and a further, opportunity was given, and this time, no one moved.

Then the men asked, are you all, prepared, to die, for the sake, of Jesus Christ. Everyone, in that room, said yes, whereupon, the soldiers, took off, their uniforms, laid down, their guns, and went round, the room, embracing, all who were left.

Now, we know, it's safe, for us to worship, our Lord. Now, I'm not saying, and I don't think, any of us, should say that, all those, who left the room, were necessarily, hypocrites.

Now, I honestly don't know, what I would have done myself, and I'm sure you don't, if you're honest either. I don't know, how many of us, would have passed that test. But these men, only felt safe, when they knew, they were meeting, with people, who were prepared, to lay down their lives, for the sake, of Christ.

[ 24 : 26 ] I just tell that story, and I want you to, to ask yourself, what you would have done, in that situation, as I must ask myself. And I've told you my answer, I don't know.

I don't know. But in this verse, I'm told, that no danger, or sword, shall be able, to separate me. Shall be able, to separate us. This is true, of all the Lord's people. From this love. As it is written, for you, say it with his death, all day long.

We are considered, as sheep, to be slaughtered. We shouldn't, be surprised, we shouldn't, be surprised, when we find ourselves, up against it.

When we find ourselves, treated in this way, in this world. Jesus himself, said to his followers, don't be surprised, though the world, hate you.

[ 25 : 28 ] It hated me, before it hated you. Don't be surprised, and no matter, what you may experience, don't let any of it, make you imagine, for a moment, that Christ is against you.

Don't imagine, for a moment, that any of it, can separate you, from his love. And the way, this is put, it seems, it seems as if, this was a, an ongoing experience, for the Lord's people.

For you'll say, not we've faced death, once, all day long, but we've faced it, this is continually, the case. And we should never, lose sight of the fact, that the church, is in conflict, with the world, at a very, deep, spiritual, level.

Christ says, be of good cheer, I have overcome, the world. And it's only because, of what Christ has done, that we can be, and this brings me, to the last point, we can be persuaded, convinced, sure, certain, of the answer, to this question, of verse 35.

Who shall separate us, from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

[ 26 : 54 ] As it is written, for you're saved, with this death, all day long, we are considered, as sheep, to be slaughtered. Quoting from Psalm 44, verse 22. Here's the answer.

This is what Paul, is persuaded of. No, in all these things, notice that, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.

We're not guaranteed, immunity from them. We're not told, that we're going to avoid them, or escape them. But, in them, in them.

We are not conquerors, it's far more than that. We are, super hyper conquerors, through him who loved us.

Nothing to do with us. Nothing to do with our strength, and ability to cope. Nothing to do with our character. Nothing at all to do with us, but all to do, with our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 28 : 05 ] I was reading, this afternoon in fact, the story of a painter, who once painted, the devil, playing a game of chess, with a young man, whose eternal soul, was at stake.

The scene, showed the devil, with a look of glee, on his face, as he checkmates, the young man, whose look of despair, acknowledges defeat.

There appears to be, no other move, for him to make. A great chess player, came across this work of art, and after carefully, studying the game, he set up a chess board, with the pieces, in a similar position.

After much thought, and time, he saw that defeat, could be turned, into victory. By making just, one certain move, on the young man's behalf, the devil was placed, in a position, of other defeat.

In life, we have no chance, whether we are young, middle aged or old, against the wild, of the devil, who is determined, to ruin our souls.

[ 29 : 22 ] No hope, against the devil, if we contend, with the devil, on our own. But at Calvary, God intervened. At Calvary, the Lord Jesus, made that move, that enables all of us, whether we are young, middle aged or elderly, to trust in Christ, to have complete victory.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, I've got to ask, are you trusting, in what Christ has done, to give you the victory, over all, who would ruin your soul?

Are you persuaded, as Paul is, of, this love? I am convinced, that neither death, nor life, he says, shall be able, to separate us.

Death, the last enemy, death, which, so many people, dread, so that they'll talk, about anything, and everything else, but death.

And yet, for the people of God, unless the Lord, comes first, death, has been given to them, as the door, through which, they will enter, into their Lord's presence.

[ 30 : 44 ] How then, can death, separate us, from this love? In fact, for the believer, death, will only be the gateway, into the full enjoyment, of this love.

How will it be, for you? Where will death, see you? I want to ask, tonight, does death, belong to you, or do you, belong to death?

You mean by that, preacher? Very simple. If we're in Christ, death belongs to us. All things are usual, whether life, or death, belongs to you.

Look at death, even as, having been given you, by God, as the way, in which he'll take you, into his own presence, unless he comes back, before that. But if, you haven't received, death, as God's gift, in that sense, paradoxical, although that, I'm a sound, the truth is, that you belong to death.

You're in the grip of death, and there's only one, who can deliver you from it. And it's through that one, and in that one, that we can say, that we're convinced, that neither death, nor life, none of the ups and downs, of life, whatever we may experience, in providence, can separate us, from this love, because it were Christians.

[ 32 : 08 ] Christ is our life. So if Christ is our life, how can life, separate us, from God's love, it's impossible. If Christ is our life, then it's impossible, for anything in life, to separate us, from this love.

Can I ask, is Christ your life? For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain. Can you say, that for you to live, is Christ.

Neither angels, nor demons. The angels, of God, the messengers, of God, they wouldn't, attempt to separate you, from God's love in Christ.

That's not, what they're for. And the fallen angels, the demons, are no more able, than their leader, to deliver you.

What about, the present, circumstances, in which you find yourself? Well this passage, tells you, that it doesn't matter, what your present, circumstances are, if you're in Christ, they can't separate you, from his love.

[ 33 : 27 ] Oh you say, but mine are peculiar. Oh if you only knew mine, listen, this passage says, that nothing in the present, is able to separate us, from this love.

What about the future? There was a gallant preacher, who was a noted songwriter, and in one of his songs, he says that, the thing that troubles him most, was what lay between him, at the time he, he wrote his hymn, and the time of his death.

He says in the hymn, that he's far more concerned, about that, than he is about, the other side, as he puts it. Well he needn't have been. For all he was aware, of his own frailty, and for all that we're aware, of our frailty.

This passage says, that, neither the present, nor the future, shall be able, to separate us, from this love. How can it, if we know, to quote the chorus, who holds, the future?

Do you know, who holds the future? I know, who holds the future? Do you? It's God, who holds the future. How then, can any of that?

[ 34 : 46 ] But my life, between us, and between now, and the time of our departure, separate us from this love. Neither height, nor depth. You know, sometimes, when we're on a high, that's when we're, at our most vulnerable.

When we're on a high, that's when we're, at our most vulnerable. Spiritually. And perhaps, in other ways too. Well, no matter, what high we may be on, no matter, how vulnerable, we may be, no height, can't separate us, from this love.

Ah, because they, I'm really, scaling the heights, I'm usually, down in the depths. Well, what were we preaching, on the other week?

Psalm 130. Lord, from the depths, to thee, I cried. My voice, Lord, do thou hear. We have the Lord, delivering from the depths.

Depths of various kinds, as we saw, on that occasion. Then, we can say, no depth, no matter, what the nature of it may be. And again, you may be, pretty peculiar to yourself, as mine may be.

[ 36 : 01 ] Maybe the depth, of my own making. It surely is, wouldn't he? Well, we're told here, that no depth, no matter who's making it, maybe, no depth, shall be able, to separate us, from the love of God.

Ah, but you say, but ah, but I'm different. Ah, but, what I have in my life, is peculiar to me. Do you have an answer for that?

Just look. Neither, height, nor depth, nor anything else, in all creation.

Now, I ask you one question. What can be more comprehensive, than that? What can be more comprehensive, nor anything else, in all creation?

No exceptions, to this rule, if we're in Christ. Did he not make the creation? Is he not sustaining it? Does it not all belong to him? I have nothing to fear, from this creation God has made.

[ 37 : 07 ] This is one of the great myths, of our time, that Christians have a lot to fear, from, from the scientific exploration, of creation. Nonsense. What have we to be afraid of, in the face of every discovery, that is made, if God made everything?

Nothing can be discovered, that is contrary to God. It's only the theories of men, that are contrary to God. Man can never discover anything, that is contrary to the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ, in this creation.

Because God made it. And there is nothing in it, nothing at all, that is able, to separate us, from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, there shall be, Christ Jesus, he says, our Lord, this is what I want to finish with, is Christ Jesus, your Lord.

Sometimes it's the little words, that are the most significant. It's this pronoun, that is so, pregnant with significance. It's this pronoun, that determines, whether or not, these things are true of us.

If Christ Jesus, is our Lord, then we are of those people, who have every right, to be strengthened, and encouraged, by a passage such as this.

[ 38 : 45 ] On the other hand, if Christ Jesus, is not our Lord, then none of us, who have not received, Christ Jesus as Lord, have any right whatsoever, until such time as we do, to be strengthened, or encouraged, by this passage.

I ask you tonight, do you want, these things, to be true of you? They can only be true of you, in Christ Jesus.

The paraphrase of this passage, is one that, I want to quote, as I finish, this evening. And I want you to ask yourself, as you hear it, as I ask myself, where are we in the light, of these words?

It's paraphrase 48. Let Christian faith, and hope, dispel, the fears, of guilt, and woe. The Lord, almighty, is our friend, and who, can prove a foe?

He who has son, most dear and loved, gave up for us to die. Shall he not all things, freely give, that goodness, can supply?

[ 40 : 09 ] Behold the best, the greatest gift, of everlasting love. Behold, the pledge, of peace below, and perfect bliss, above.

Where is the judge, who can condemn, since God, hath justified? Who shall charge, those with guilt, or crime, for whom the Saviour died?

The Saviour died, but rose again, triumphant from the grave, and pleads our cause, at God's right hand, omnipotent, to save. Who then, can e'er divide us more, from Jesus and his love, or break the sacred chain, that binds the earth, to heaven above?

Let troubles rise, and terrors frown, and days of darkness fall, through whom, all dangers will defy, and more than conquer all.

Nor death, nor life, nor earth, nor hell, nor times destroy, and sway, can e'er efface us, from his heart, or make his love decay.

[ 41 : 17 ] Each future period, that will bless, as it has blessed, the past. He loved us, from the first time, he loves us, to the last.

Who shall be able, to separate us, from the love of God? Nothing in all creation, shall be able, to separate us, from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

May God bless, our meditation, to each one of our hearts. Amen.