

## Romans 8:31-39

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Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0:00] I'm so thankful that God is pleased with our hallelujahs, even when they're hard to sing. I can get up there a little bit high. Please take your copy of God's Word and turn to Romans chapter 8 with me this morning.

It's very good to be here today. I intend this morning to finish out chapter 8, which may be a bit of a task before us to do all nine of these verses.

But I think you'll find it'll be of great benefit to our souls to do so this morning. Kind of by way of reminder, and it's quite possibly an oversimplification, but where we have been so far in Romans, Paul has given us a very clear gospel presentation, stated our desperate need of a Savior, that all of us have sinned.

We've all fallen short of the glory of God. There's nothing that we can do on our own to gain satisfaction in his sight up through 321. And then he tells us that the only way we can be made right with God is to place our faith in Jesus Christ, who was the perfect sacrifice on our behalf.

Then he goes on to tell us about the blessed benefits of the gospel. And in chapter 8, he talks about the Spirit that's been given to us, granted to those of us who believe in Christ.

[1:16] And we saw the ministries of the Spirit, our regeneration, our sanctification or perfection, and then the security that we have unto final, full perfection, eternal perfection or glorification.

And we know that that's the journey we're on as Christians. And even as we suffer, we have this great hope, the hope of eternal future glory, that we can bear up then underneath the suffering that might come our way.

Read with me, beginning in verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?

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. 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 were you being killed all the day long.

[2:27] We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. 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.

Now, before we pray together over this text this morning and the preaching and the hearing of it, I kind of want to set a stage for you as to what I would like to accomplish.

And I hope that our prayer together as we study this will be the same as that prayed by Paul on behalf of the Ephesians. And if you'll turn with me, keep your finger here, turn with me to Ephesians chapter 3.

I want to read you a couple of verses, and then we'll get going back in Romans. Ephesians chapter 3. Let's read verses 14 through 19 together. For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

So now his prayer for the church of Ephesus, and I believe he would pray the same thing for us, is that by the Spirit we would be strengthened to understand, to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

[ 4 : 08 ] And what he means by that is that we don't just have a mental assent to it. We don't read the end of chapter 8 and say, I believe that nothing can separate me from the love of God, but that we experience that to be true in our lives.

That we actually feel the great glorious truth of the gospel, that nothing can separate those who love God, and who have been called according to his purpose, from the love of God in Christ. That's his prayer for us here. And those of us who know him, who love him, and who have been called according to his purpose, are rooted and grounded in that love.

And these two words are so cool. Roots, obviously, the roots of a tree, our very being is reaching down into the love of God in Christ, and we're foundationally built on the same.

And the implication from this prayer, and from 8, 31 through 39, is that no matter how deep those roots grow, no matter how wide the building we build is, as we grow as Christians, we'll never run out of the love of Christ to grow into, and we'll never run out of a foundation of his love to build upon.

[ 5 : 20 ] That's what we should get out of 8, 31 through 39. So let's pray together. Father God, I thank you for those in this room who are called your own, who have been adopted as sons by the power of your spirit.

And I pray, Father, that this day, you will have us know beyond just a knowledge. We'll know experientially how great your love for us is in Christ.

Thank you, Father, for my calling to preach your word, and I pray that you'll find me faithful this morning to do it from total dependency on you, and that that will generate in everyone here a dependency on you.

We love you, and we thank you for all the great blessings you pour out on us. We pray that you'll bless us now. In Christ's name, amen. So back to chapter 8. We'll get you back there.

And the one point of this morning, I've said it already, but the one point that I want you to walk away with is that nothing can separate those who love God and are called according to his purpose from the love of God in Christ.

[ 6 : 27 ] But first, I have to ask two questions. We see in verse 28 of Romans 8, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. So I have to ask you two questions before we go on. Number one, do you love God? None of us love God perfectly.

That's not ultimately the question. I'm not asking you, do you love God perfectly? Certainly, as Christians, our affections for God wax and they wane. None of us love him perfectly.

What we're really asking here is, do you treasure him? Do you treasure him above all else?

Ultimately, when it's all said and done, do you love God more than everything else in this world?

Do you love God? And number two, are you called according to his purpose? I'm going to read to you a picture illustration that John Piper wrote.

[ 7 : 26 ] But before that, let me read to you 1 Corinthians 1, 23 and 24. It says, We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

So to those who don't believe, who are not called according to his purpose, Christ is foolishness. But to those who do, who are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

So let me read this little illustration to you. Picture it this way. Before you were called by God, you were in real sense asleep in your bed. Into your bedroom came Jesus Christ.

He stood there in the glory of his Calvary love and his resurrection power. But you were asleep. In fact, you were dreaming. And in the dream, which is your ordinary life, you saw Jesus.

Only in the dream, he looked foolish. He wasn't attractive. You wondered why others made such a big deal out of him. In the dream, your television was more exciting. Your boyfriend was more real. Your job, more satisfying.

[ 8 : 29 ] Then God's spirit, the Holy Spirit, came into the bedroom where Jesus was standing in the glory of his Calvary love and resurrection power. And the spirit hovered over your dreaming head and called in a voice just loud enough, Wake up.

And it shook you. And you opened your eyes. And there before you stood the real Jesus Christ. And his glory was unmistakable. And you knew that all your life you'd been dreaming, that all your thoughts about his being foolish and unreal and unattractive were mere fantasies and empty images of sleeping minds.

But now the veil of slumber was lifted and the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ was irresistibly true. Christ crucified was now for you what it really is, the power of God and the wisdom of God. That is what it means to be called. I hope that all of us in this room today can answer these two questions. Do you love God? And are you called according to his purpose with an emphatic yes? If you can't, the promises here are not for you. All of this great stuff, secure future glory, that nothing can separate you from the love of God is not for you because you are already separated from the love of God.

[ 9 : 44 ] And there's no better time than now to place your faith in Christ and believe in him. You don't have to wait for me to make some special invitation to that end. Just believe that Christ is the Son of God and that he is the only way to restoration with him.

Make that happen this morning, that these promises may be yours. So he asks a question, beginning in verse 31. What then shall we say to these things?

What is he referring to? He's referring back a couple of verses to 28 through 30. So let's read those together. He says, and we know that those who love God, all things work together for good.

It's one of those things. For those who were called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of a son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. And the point Paul is making is that our eternal final glory is fully secure because God planned the ends from the beginning.

[ 10 : 53 ] The eternal ends have been established from the eternal beginning. God is fully sovereign. And he will accomplish what he set out to accomplish.

That is the point Paul is making here. We get to get into all the implications of that in the coming chapters. But right now, all he's saying to us as Christians is that as you suffer, know that you can hope because you have a sovereign God.

That is good news for us. So, what then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, then who can be against us?

I don't know that I even need to explain that to you. If God is on our side, then there is nothing in this world that can be against us. Because God is sovereign. He controls everything.

It is all under his dominion. This world turns under the providence of his power. By his word, this world is sustained. And if he is for us, none of those things can possibly be against us.

[ 11 : 55 ] And God gave up his own son on our behalf. And if he did that for us, how will he not then graciously give us all things? Verse 32. And he's referring back here then to verse 28.

Where it says, what? That all things work together for good. For our future glory. All things work together for good. So, how is it that God will withhold anything good from us?

You know what that means for you? That anything you experience in this life as a believer, as one who follows Christ. Anything you experience is a gift from God for your good.

Even the things we don't feel are good. The experiences that we don't particularly like. All of those things have been given to us graciously for our good.

Psalm 84 11 says, for the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

[ 13 : 00 ] And for those of us who have placed our faith in Christ, we walk uprightly before God because of Christ. And if that is true of you, then everything that happens is good for you.

For your final and future glory. So again, I say, nothing can separate those who love God and are called according to his purpose from the love of God in Christ.

Verse 33. It says, who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. God does the justification. Who is to condemn?

Now recall verse 1, chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Because God is for us. Who can be against us?

We ourselves can't be against us. The implication here. Our own sin does not condemn us any longer because Christ bore it on our behalf.

[14:06] And he makes that case by continuing to say, Christ Jesus is the one who died. We know that. Christ, the perfect sacrifice, the spotless lamb, the sacrifice that was necessary for us.

More than that, though, more than him dying, more than that, he was raised. And he's at the right hand of God. He's interceding for us. So Christ took on our sin, died on our behalf, but he was raised again.

He had victory over death. And he is now seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession, praying on our behalf, continually and constantly for us.

Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 4 through 7, reads, Paul here speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand as the same thing as us sitting at the right hand.

Paul here speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand as the same thing as us sitting at his right hand, because Christ himself stands there as our representative.

[15:23] 1 Corinthians 15, 17, Paul said, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

So he backs up this whole idea of no condemnation. Who is to condemn? If Christ has died for you, there is no condemnation for you. It's impossible that you can be condemned.

Verse 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or any pressure or trouble or illness or distress or any difficulty or crisis or persecution or any opposition or ridicule or famine or any suffering or scarcity or nakedness or any assault or shame or danger or any peril or threat or sword or any injury or violence or death?

Notice the words I added, to give you no room to wiggle. If you are beloved, if you're one of God's own, there is no thing that will separate you from the love of Christ.

No circumstance, no person, no illness, not yourself. Nothing will separate you from the love of Christ. Verse 36, as it is written, For your sake we are being killed all the day long.

[16:57] We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. Paul here quotes Psalm 44, 22. To say to us, to remind us once again, that our suffering is sure.

We will suffer. We have suffered. We're in the midst of suffering now. Suffering being anything in this life that's uncomfortable as we move towards that final, perfect, glorified state.

Remember in verse 17 he says, And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him.

We get as heirs the glorification of Christ, that final thing that we all eagerly long for and that the creation groans for and we groan for and the spirit groans on our behalf. We also get the suffering of Christ.

We inherit it as well, that we might be finally made perfect. Psalm 44, if you'll actually turn there, you'll appreciate this. A reader of the book of Romans at this time would have known the rest of the psalm.

[18:03] As Paul quoted to them, he knew that verse 22 would take their minds to the end of this psalm. And I admit that I didn't know the rest of the psalm. I had to look it up and read it.

I would presume that most of you don't know the rest of the psalm. So let's look at it together.

Beginning in verse 22. Again, yet for your sake we are killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

Hear what the psalmist says after this. Awake. Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself. Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and depression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust. Our belly clings to the ground. He's desperate. Feels as if he's totally been abandoned.

My God, have you ever felt that way? You ever been in the middle of a circumstance and you just thought, God's left me alone. There's no way something this bad happens to a son of God.

[19:04] God has just totally forgotten about me. Verse 26. He writes, Rise up. Come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.

Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love. I don't think the psalmist even knew what he was writing when he penned this. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love. This is a cry as he's suffering, as he's going through this tribulation.

It's a cry out for what we now have, the redemption of our souls. How beautiful is that? Paul didn't quote the whole thing, but he knew that people would know exactly what the psalmist was crying out for as he makes us sure that we will in fact suffer in this world.

What does Paul then say in verse 37? So, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall any of these things, all the things we lifted off, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword?

Lord, verse 37, he says, No. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

[ 20 : 16 ] All of these things have been subjected under us. My mind went to Habakkuk chapter 3, the very end of the book.

The book of Habakkuk is a unique minor prophet because it's a record of of Habakkuk's prayer life. You see Habakkuk crying out to God and God's responses to him.

Fairly unique in its literary style. At the very end, chapter 3, beginning in verse 17, this is Habakkuk's rested state as he's cried out to God.

He says, Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places.

[ 21 : 19 ] So Habakkuk says, even if everything in this world is working against me, everything is bad from my perspective, I will rejoice.

I will take joy in the God of my salvation. Why? Because of his unfailing love in Christ. And then he says, He'll make my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places.

And this was a common Hebrew term when there was a victor over a battle. The way the victor, the king, the general would proclaim his victory is he would run on the ridge over the valley.

Seems a bizarre thing for me. After a battle, you're probably exhausted. But he would get up on the ridge, and he would run over the battle and declare his victory in doing that. And that's exactly what he's saying here.

We will be more than conquerors. We will run in victory over all the circumstances of this world because of Christ. Because we are his.

[ 22 : 20 ] Because we experience, we experience beyond just simple knowledge, we experience his steadfast love for us. Verse 38, he says, For I am sure.

Are you sure of these things? Can you say without a doubt, as Paul does here, I am completely confident is what the Greek term means.

I am without a doubt, positive, 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.

He leaves no room, no doubt, nothing in this world, including you, will separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

So, why ultimately does Paul spend so much time and space, really, quite a few verses there, making this point? Why does he want to drive this into our minds?

[ 23 : 37 ] Firstly, for our good. Isn't that the ultimate and final aim we see in verse 28? Not good from our perspective, but he's speaking of the final good, the ultimate good, our glorification, our perfection.

All these things are working together for that. If we can keep that in mind as we suffer in this world, as bad things happen to us, we can say of these bad things, we don't have to enjoy them, but we can say, ultimately and finally, this is for good.

Secondly, for God's glory. Verse 36, he quotes Psalm 44, 22, for your sake, we're being slaughtered.

For your sake. So ultimately, all things in the world serve our good and God's glory. Have you ever heard somebody pray that? Remember a prayer that says, God, we just pray that our meeting today will be for our good and for your glory.

It's a very biblical prayer. For our good and for God's glory. I want to give you a little analogy that I experienced this week.

[ 24 : 50 ] Sam, I got home from work on, well, it doesn't matter. I think it was Wednesday. And Sam had bought Cade, just a little toy. And I'm pretty sure if I remember right, on the package, it said \$2.

And knowing my wife, she probably got a better deal on it than that. She got it for a quarter. There you go. And I'm pretty sure it was an Easter clear out because it's a little train and it says on it, Bunny Express.

she made Cade wait until I got home to play with it. And she had told him early in the day that he had to wait until I got home. And the first thing he did, I came in our front door and I saw him in the living room and he did like a little hop step happy thing and he took off what he was doing and he brought this to me.

I'm very excited about it. It came with a little bit of track and a little caboose. The track made about a nine inch circle. Really cheap. No big deal kind of a thing. And so, I opened it up and we set it up on the floor and Cade didn't touch it as an almost two year old I would think would want to wreak havoc with it.

Didn't touch it. We wanted to see how it was going to be put together and how it was going to work. And I laid on the floor with him and he laid on his stomach with his chin on his hands for 30 minutes watching this whole thing turn it on.

[ 26 : 07 ] Watching it go around and around and around and around. It doesn't do anything exciting. It doesn't like back up or switch directions. It just went around and around and around. And let's see if we can get a Cade man. K.K.

What's this? What is it? You can talk. What is it? Okay. It's not going to say it. It's a choo-choo. And he was so captivated. He was so enthralled with this little train. For those of you who don't hang out with two year olds very much, 30 minutes is a really long time for one thing to keep their attention.

A really, really long time. And he was so excited. I think most of the time he didn't even notice that I was there. A couple of times I got up and went and did something and came back. The whole time he said he went he'd go choo-choo. Choo-choo.

Choo-choo. Choo-choo. And then when I was laying there with him he'd look at me and go choo-choo. And back in the train choo-choo. For 30 minutes. Then we did some other fun stuff beyond that.

[ 27 : 02 ] But I was totally enthralled by this. We love Christ because he first loved us. we have experienced the redeeming grace of the almighty God in Christ.

Our souls have been regenerated by the spirit. That should be incredible to us. And we should never grow tired. Never grow tired of gazing upon these types of truths.

And we should want to tell anyone who comes along and wants to check it out with us lay on the floor and look at the train. Anybody who wants to see that we should be more than happy to show them.

So for our good Cade was so happy with this little train. So happy. We should be that way because Christ loves us like this. And we should exalt him.

We should lift him up anytime somebody comes along and wants to know what are you looking at? Why is that even cool to you? A Gentile who sees Christ as foolish we ought to show them the wisdom of God.

[ 28 : 10 ] in Christ. For our good and for God's glory. So what do you do when you don't feel these truths? When you are walking through a circumstance that just doesn't seem possible that it's for ultimate and final good?

You know this. You quote this scripture. You go to Romans chapter 8. You read it again and you read it again. What do you do? How do you bear up? How do you experience the love of God that's beyond the simple knowledge of it?

We need to stop listening to our fickle emotions. We too often let our emotions speak to us. And we need to begin preaching to ourselves and to each other the great glorious truths of the gospel.

We need to begin telling ourselves what is true based off the scriptures. Quit listening to our emotions. You have to recognize that your emotions are fickle.

Your circumstances will change your emotions constantly. You will say God this is not a good thing. I don't enjoy this. I want to feel differently than I do.

[ 29 : 29 ] You can allow your emotions to control your overall demeanor when in fact we ought to be preaching to ourselves the great glorious truths of the gospel. And you never arrive there beloved.

You never get to a point where you just get to bring these things up. It doesn't matter how much scripture you memorize. It doesn't matter how much you've grown as a Christian. You will always falter so you constantly have to teach yourself the truth.

Preach it to yourself. Get up in the morning and remind yourself of the love God for you in Christ because nothing can separate those who love God and are called according to His purpose from the love of God in Christ.  
Let's pray together.