

The Greatest Assurance Romans 8:31-39 bible-sermons.org November 10, 2013

Last week we read of the greatest hope that any human could ever have, to be like Jesus (8:29). We would consider it impossible except for the fact that God declares in His word that it is His plan to conform us to the image of His Son. It reminds me of the Scripture that with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26). If we could see the finished work of God in a brother or sister in Christ we would be tempted to fall down and worship them. That is because they will share in His glory. We share in it now to the extent that we exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, but then the outshining will be so brilliant that the unredeemed would not be able to gaze upon us.

When we broach this subject, we must do so wrapped in the humility of our present imperfections. This future glory is all the work of God. We don't deserve it. We can't earn it. It is all by grace through faith. The only thing in which we will boast is our Lord Jesus who had done it all (1Corinthians 1:31).

Paul goes on to encourage us with the reasons he is certain that this is indeed the future of God's children. If last week's message was on the greatest hope, this week's message is the greatest assurance of that hope. **If you can grasp this chapter with your mind and heart, you have the way to live, the hope of the future, and the certainty of it.** That will change our daily attitude and actions. It will renew your mind with the mind of Christ (1Corinthians 2:16). What is Jesus looking forward to? He is awaiting the day when you and I are glorified, the beautiful bride of Christ, sitting down at the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). He is anticipating it. Certainly you and I should be! In light of this, should we be joyful? Should we be enthusiastic? I couldn't dream of a more wonderful future if I tried.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? How do we respond to the wonderful plan of God? What can you say? When you start to realize what God has in store for us, though we can't imagine how glorious it will be, we should rejoice in the LORD always (Philippians 4:4). We should always have joy in our heart. It would have been enough had God only delivered us from sin so that it wouldn't ruin this life, but to glorify us, to make us His bride, to desire that we live in His presence through eternity... Wow! When people ask why I'm always smiling I use to answer that it was because I am loved by God and forgiven. From now on I'm going to add the rest of the story, conformed to His image and sharing His glory!

What shall we say? How about thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Praise You! We exult in You! You alone are worthy of all our praise! How can I serve You? Help me love You more. Help me cooperate with Your Spirit. That would be a good beginning. Do you

Commented [notes1]: Romans 8:29 (ESV)

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Commented [notes2]: Matthew 19:26 (ESV)

²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Commented [notes3]: 1 Corinthians 1:31 (ESV)

³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Commented [notes4]: 1 Corinthians 2:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Commented [notes5]: Revelation 19:9 (ESV)

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Commented [notes6]: Philippians 4:4 (ESV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

think perhaps we should center our day around our time focused upon His word and prayer? What shall we say, but also how shall we respond? Is He worthy to be the focus of your every day? Then how will you plan to make that happen? What action will you take?

Now Paul asks us to contemplate this question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Answer: Everyone, but it doesn't matter! That's because if God is with you then you have the majority. And even though it may seem the world is against us and is always winning, all things work together for good to those who love God! What is the worse they can do? Do not fear those who kill the body but can do nothing more. Fear Him who is able to destroy body and soul in hell (Matthew 10:28)! Those aren't my words. They came from Jesus. What if the opposition causes you to suffer? It just means greater glory for us (Philippians 1:29)! It just builds your character and gives you a greater testimony (Romans 5:3-4). It equips you to encourage others who suffer.

We should never minimize the very real pain caused by betrayal, slander, gossip, abuse, and all manner of physical and emotional harm. But at the same time, as Christians, we should realize that is the result of sin in the world. It is the very thing that Jesus came to eliminate. But He won't do it against our will. So we suffer at the hands of others, at times through no fault of our own. In fact, sometimes we suffer because we are doing the right thing (1Peter 2:19-21). God knows. He feels our pain. He is there to strengthen and encourage us, if we will let Him. Know that it is His intention to end all sin and its resulting pain, in His perfect way and in His perfect time. In the meantime we are strengthened by the experience (Isaiah 41:10). It should cause us to hate sin like He does, yet always hope and pray for the sinner's redemption. And if we are the one causing the unnecessary pain, to repent, apologize, and let God change our heart (Isaiah 51:10).

³² *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?* This verse is right up there with 28 and 29 in my list of most encouraging verses. Let this speak to your heart. God allowed His own son to suffer and die that we might have life. I wouldn't do it. I love you, but I love my son more. Now consider this. God directed this to happen while we were living in rebellion toward Him (5:8). We have been given life and beauty and love, yet we slander and mock God by the way we live. We even blame Him for the effects of sin, which is the very antithesis of who God is. But still He gave Jesus up for us all. Incredible!

But even more incredible is Paul's logical conclusion. If God did that, if He has that much love for us, then *how will He not also with him graciously give us all things?* If you loved someone that much, what would you withhold? Is not your own child the most precious thing in your life? Then what's money, time, talent, strength, or anything else in comparison? If God gave up His Son for you, do you think He would refuse to

Commented [notes7]: Matthew 10:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Commented [notes8]: Philippians 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

Commented [notes9]: Romans 5:3-4 (ESV)

³ More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

Commented [notes10]: 1 Peter 2:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

Commented [notes11]: Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Commented [notes12]: Psalm 51:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Commented [notes13]: Romans 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

comfort you in your time of need? Or would He withhold anything you need when you need it? Would He withhold His love from you because you messed up?

Now look how He gives those blessings. Graciously! He doesn't begrudgingly lift you up when you stumble. He does it graciously. He doesn't reluctantly answer your prayers. How does He do it? Graciously! This is the perfect father. He is so good! He is love! He knows how weak we are, but He still has great plans for us. He doesn't always give us what we ask, but what is best. He doesn't always rescue us in the way we'd like, but in a way that will make us better prepared for what lies ahead.

There is one more word in this verse that we need to meditate on, "all". What will He graciously give you? All things! Paul said the same thing to the Corinthians. ²¹ *So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours,* ²² *whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours,* ²³ *and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 (ESV) If that doesn't stretch your heart and mind, nothing will! God gave Jesus up for us. There is no good thing He will withhold from us. All things are yours in Christ! I don't think I understand that fully. If I did, not only my head, but my heart would burst as well. Let me remind you what I said two weeks ago. We are talking about being loved by the One that spoke everything into existence (Hebrews 1:3). If you are His, what is the lottery, or a new car, or great home; nothing compares. You are an heir of God and fellow heirs with Christ (8:17)!

³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* Previously we learned that Satan means accuser. He stands before the Angel of the LORD to accuse the saints (Zechariah 3:1). Who brings a charge against us? Plenty of people! It's the same kind of questions Paul asked earlier. Who can be against us? The answer isn't that no one can. It is that everyone can, but none of them will stick because God has justified us. The more we stand for truth and are led of the Spirit of God, denying yourself to do what is right, the more you will be charged with wrong by others. That is because Satan is the prince of this world and lives to bring accusations (John 12:31).

However, God is the One who justifies us. All sin is sin against God (Psalm 51:4). Even when we sin against man, we sin against God, for man is made in God's image (Genesis 39:9). God has justified us by giving His Son up for us. The Son bore the just wrath we deserved. He took the just penalty in our place. That is why He is the only One who can condemn.

³⁴ *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.* He is given all judgment, for only He can tell who has received His work on the cross (John 5:22). He is the One who can say, "You refused my grace and mercy, so now you must bear the justice you deserve. I died so you wouldn't have to, but you refused the gift I offered time and time again."

Commented [notes14]: Hebrews 11:3 (ESV)

³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Commented [notes15]: Romans 8:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Commented [notes16]: Romans 8:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Commented [notes17]: John 12:31 (ESV)

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

Commented [notes18]: Psalm 51:4 (ESV)

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Commented [notes19]: Genesis 39:9 (ESV)

⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Commented [notes20]: John 5:22 (ESV)

²² The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

Jesus conquered death which showed His sacrifice was accepted. He sits in the place of power at the right hand of God and intercedes for every lost soul. They hear His pleading, the Spirit woos them. God orchestrates opportunity after opportunity. But the narrow door does not stay open forever. The day will come when it is shut. Then they will plead to enter saying, "We ate and drank in your presence and You taught in our streets." But He will say to them, "I don't know where you are from. Depart from me you workers of evil (Luke 13:25-27)!" Jesus is faithful to warn us.

Jesus is also interceding for His own, those who have received His gift of life. He is interceding with your prayer requests. He is praying for your maturing and fruitfulness. He is asking that you be kept strong until your graduation into His presence. He is interceding for the pain in your heart. Isn't it wonderful to know that He lives to ask the Father for our best interest (Hebrews 7:25).

I take great comfort in knowing that a group of people are praying for me and for the ministry God has given me. I take even greater comfort in knowing that Jesus takes all those requests and presents them to the Father in a perfect way in line with His will. I suspect one of the many joys of heaven will be looking back and seeing how God orchestrated the details of our life through the intercession of His Son. We'll see that many of the things we considered trials were really blessings in disguise.

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? If He died for us, then what could separate us from so powerful a love? How about a little trouble in your life? He will intercede for you and see you through, if you are willing to endure. What about some distress? Life is full distressing situations. Will you blame God? Where else will you go? He is the strength to endure through the distress. Do it yourself and it only gets worse. Perhaps, persecution will end your relationship, causing you to deny Him. Every persecuted believer I have met or read about only loved Jesus more. Would lack of food or clothes make a difference? In other words, will you let lack of this world's necessities keep you from His love? Again, where else will you turn? He alone has the words of life (John 6:68). What about facing death? Those situations only reveal if we are truly in Christ or living for self. His martyrs say, "What can man do to me?"

³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." Paul is quoting Psalm 44:22 that tells us there is so much more to life than being comfortable and physically satisfied. It is often the wealthy who have all they could ask that take their own lives out of sheer boredom and dissatisfaction. Paul is telling believers in Rome and all believers that persecution is par for the course (2Timothy 3:12). This life is destined to be troublesome and difficult, especially for believers. So much for the prosperity gospel! Life is more thorns than it is roses, but it isn't all about here. We have a destination. It is through these trials we grow and are victorious. As Paul wrote earlier in the chapter, ¹⁸ *For I consider that the*

Commented [notes21]: Luke 13:25-27 (ESV)

²⁵ When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us," then he will answer you, "I do not know where you come from." ²⁶ Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets." ²⁷ But he will say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!"

Commented [notes22]: Hebrews 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Commented [notes23]: John 6:68 (ESV)

⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,

Commented [notes24]: 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18 (ESV)

³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* No, none of these physical hardships can separate us from the love of Christ. You are loved! The hardships don't mean you aren't. They just confirm that the Bible is true when it says we live in a fallen world whose prince is a liar, accuser, and lives to destroy (John 8:44). But we are in the love of Christ! **Satan and man can do their worst. Nothing will separate us from His love. Nothing!** We aren't just conquerors, we are more than conquerors! We exceedingly, abundantly overcome through Jesus. Remember the glorious future in store for us. As Jesus intercedes for us, as nothing can separate us from His love, as all things are ours in Christ, we are super victorious! Don't let the Liar tell you otherwise.

³⁸ *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* ³⁹ *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.* Paul is absolutely convinced that though the world kills you, or demonic angels assault you, or judges convict you, or the present is difficult and the future is more difficult, or the powers that be come against you, or you travel to outer space or the oceans depths (Psalm 139:8), there is no created thing that can separate you from this wonderful, incomprehensible love that would give up His only Son for you. We see the greatness of the love of God in Jesus on the cross. Is there any good thing He would keep from you? Is there anything He will not help you overcome?

Allow me to repeat myself. What shall we say? How about thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Praise You! We exult in You! You alone are worthy of all our praise! How can I serve You? Help me love You more. Help me cooperate with Your Spirit. That would be a good beginning. Do you think perhaps we should center our day around our time focused upon His word and prayer (Proverbs 8:34)? What shall we say, but also how shall we respond? Is He worthy to be the focus of your every day? Then how will you plan to make that happen? What action will you take? In Christ, you and I are victorious conquerors destined for a glorious future beyond our imagination. Let's start living like it! Take hold of these truths. Meditate on them day and night (Psalm 1:1-2). Then we will serve and worship God each day, not out of guilt or duty, but out of a heart of gratitude for all He has done and is doing and has planned for us.

Questions

- 1 What is the believer's future?
- 2 What shall we say to these things?
- 3 Who can be against us?
- 4 What did God do for you? Implications?

Commented [notes25]: John 8:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Commented [notes26]: Psalm 139:8 (ESV)

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

Commented [notes27]: Proverbs 8:34 (ESV)

³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

Commented [notes28]: Psalm 1:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

- 5 What does God give us?
- 6 Who can bring a charge against God's elect? And...
- 7 Who is it to condemn? Why?
- 8 What is Jesus doing now?
- 9 Can anything separate us from His love?
- 10 Why was Paul so convinced?