

IF GOD IS FOR US

Text: Romans 8:31-39

- 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.
34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."
37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,
39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Comforting Questions

Practically speaking Paul raises 12 questions that should bring great comfort to all Christians who are enduring hard times for their faith.

Count them. Ask them. Answer them.

They are the fitting conclusion to the two great propositions (truths) Paul has given us in verses 1-30. In Jesus Christ there is:

- 1) No Condemnation (vss. 31-34).
- 2) No Separation (vss. 35-39).

NO CONDEMNATION

Question 1. ***“What shall we say to these things?”***

Answer: The suffering Christian who reads these “*things*” in the context of verses 14 through 30 will say, “bring it on!” An innocent man who has Jesus Christ as His defense attorney (Advocate – I John 2:1-2) is confident in the outcome of his trial. What will we “say” to these things that have come to hurt us and crush us?

They will say, “if we *suffer* with Him, we will be glorified with Him” (v. 17).

They will say, “the *sufferings* of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us” (v. 18).

They will say, “we eagerly wait for the revealing of the sons of God” (v. 19).

They will say, “we will be delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (v. 21).

They will say, “while we *labor* with birth pangs now, we eagerly wait for the adoption and redemption of our body” (v. 22-23).

They will say, “we eagerly wait for our fulfilled hope with perseverance” (v. 24-25).

They will say, “the Holy Spirit will help us in our *weaknesses*” (v. 26-27).

They will say, “all these things we know as sufferings for Christ because we love God are now being used in His providence to work to His purpose to save us” (v. 28)

They will say, “God controls history because He foreknew, predestined, called, justified and will soon glorify all His suffering saints” (v. 29-30).

In other words, God’s Sovereignty means He has a purpose for our suffering (vs. 1-30), but now this section (vs. 31-39) tells us that Sovereignty is ruled by His love. Our battle cry becomes “God is for us!” no matter how dark and difficult it is at the moment.

Question 2. “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Answer: No one! God is our Provider. At least no one in their right mind would dare stand to oppose us once they can see God taking our side. Like a momma Grizzly coming to protect her cub, so God, in all His Sovereignty and Majesty, stands to defend us and help us in every attack by Satan and his allies.

Yes, there will be opposition. Paul even lists all the weapons in Satan’s arsenal he uses to destroy us (vss. 38-39). But while those weapons of destruction seem overwhelming at the moment, we soon learn that Satan is only bringing a pocket-knife to a gun-fight.

“*If God is for us.*” Just imagine the implications of that statement. Add up all the attributes that make God who He is:

His omnipotence. His omniscience. His omnipresence. His omni-holiness.

His sovereignty. His sacrificial love. His merciful forgiveness. His eternal patience.

Opposing such a Being is as foolish as me challenging LeBron James to a one-on-one basketball game of winner-take-all with the loser being shot by firing squad. What chance would this 65 year old ex-bench-warmer who now has two metal hips and hasn’t even played a game of h-o-r-s-e in 25 years going to have against a 6 ft. 8 in. 250 lb. MVP of the NBA? Mr. James would show no mercy in defeating me. It would be 100-0. I doubt I would even get a shot off.

By now I’m sure Satan and all his allies feel the same way I would. They have tried repeatedly throughout history to oppose God and His allies (saints). The frustration must be mind-boggling. When God takes sides it’s Game-Over. God’s undefeated. Satan’s a perpetual loser. And if Satan, the roaring lion, can’t beat you, what lesser foe like a coyote or kitty cat can stand against us?

Read Jehoshaphat’s story in 2 Chronicles 20 for what God can do against all odds.

Then read Gideon's story as a bonus (Judg. 6-7).

Then read David vs Goliath story for a clincher (I Sam. 17).

Question 3. ***“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”***

Answer: God is our Provider.

If God gave us the greater, He would obviously give us the lesser. If I promised to give you my house, would that not surely imply that I would also give you my favorite recliner chair? If I gave you my car, would I then deny you my pine-scented air-freshener hanger? Silly, huh? So God powerfully illustrates how much He is for us. Unlike Pontius Pilate, who could be bullied to execute an innocent man, God cannot be bullied. He would never wash His hands and let us be betrayed to die.

Calvary's cross should once-and-for-all settle any argument and answer any question as to how much He is for you. If He gave His own Son to die a humiliating and horrific death in order to shout “I LOVE YOU!” – then, anything less than that is also at our beck-and-call to be used to defeat Satan. He has freely given us ALL THINGS!

List just some of the “*all things.*” Think about what that includes to help you against your great enemy Satan and his allies.

1. The Holy Spirit to intercede for you (Rom. 8:26-27).
2. The Sword of the Spirit and entire Armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17).
3. The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
4. The “Every Spiritual Blessing” promise (Eph. 1:3-14).
5. The “Every good and perfect gift” promise from Above (Jam. 1:17).
6. The “All Things that pertain to life and godliness” great, precious promise (2 Pet 1:3).
7. The “Great Escape” from all temptations promise (I Cor. 10:13).

What more can God promise me? He gave me Jesus. He gave me the Holy Spirit. He gave me all that heaven can give in order to save me. He has withheld nothing! Nothing! He has emptied the vaults of heaven to bless my life. Do you remember Charles Wesley's beautiful hymn *And Can It Be?*

And can it be that I should gain, An int'rest in the Savior's blood?

Died He for me, who caused His pain — For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Refrain: Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Question 4. ***“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?”***

Answer: God is our Defender.

Television shows with lawyers have always been popular hits. Series like Law & Order, Matlock, JAG, L.A. Law, and Perry Mason (for those of us of the 50's and 60's era) have shown us the supposed inside story of the judicial system. For instance, Perry Mason

never lost a case (the poor prosecutor was Hamilton Burger, who never won a case... I always wondered how he kept his job). If I had to stand trial I always wanted Perry Mason as my defense attorney, and hoped Mr. Burger was my prosecutor.

In reality, I actually am standing trial. Paul is using a judicial trial setting here. I am the Christian being charged. Satan is the prosecutor. Jesus is my defense lawyer. It is God's Courtroom, but ironically Jesus is also the Judge. Before you enter the courtroom to witness my trial, it would be fascinating to know the background of how this will turn out. Read these scriptures:

John 3:17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

John 5:22-30 "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" ... 24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ... 26 "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ... 30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

John 8:10-11 "When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

John 12:47-48 "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

While these verses seem like a contradiction (Jesus judges men, yet said He did not come to judge men). The solution is that He speaks of His two comings to earth. The first coming was His life on earth to save the world. His second coming is to bring the world before His Court to pass judgment. His "Law" (the New Testament) will be the Book that He throws at those who rejected Him; but the evidence of grace and mercy He shows to those who followed Him.

Satan will surely prosecute me to the fullest extent of his knowledge and power. He has a seemingly open-and-shut case against me. I am a criminal. I have broken the law. I am guilty of many crimes against God. But, like Perry Mason, my Advocate Jesus Christ pulls a stunning bit of evidence that turns the case upside down and vindicates me. I am declared "NOT GUILTY" on all charges. I am "justified!" What is this evidence that saved me? Grace. Mercy. Love. You see, the evidence was revealed when Jesus pulled up His sleeves and pants leg to expose His hands and feet. Nail scarred wounds showed He had paid the price for my crimes. He had served my time in prison. Hamilton Burger (aka Satan) had lost again! My Lawyer was also my Savior and Justifier. I was set free.

Read Isaiah's Messianic prophesy that shows where Paul got his material for Romans.

"For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed. He is near who justifies Me; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me. Surely the Lord GOD will help Me; Who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; The moth will eat them up." Isaiah 50:7-9

Question 5. ***"Who is he who condemns?"***

Answer: *"It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."*

In other words, if Jesus, who acts as both Judge and Jury does not condemn you, then who else is there to condemn you? The only one who can condemn me is my Judge. But He died to save me, and even now, after all these years, He is my Mediator and Intercessor speaking in my defense to save me. Hebrews 7:25 says, *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

There can be no "October Surprise" (in reference to political tactics to pronounce some hidden sin of a candidate just before the November election, when he does not have enough time to clear his name). There will be no last minute skeleton in my closet that surprises Jesus about my life. He knows every last detail of my life, warts and all. Satan cannot shout, "I object your honor, there is another piece of evidence that will convict and damn this man, and I wish to present it now." The Judge will respond, "Objection Overruled!"

If you have ever read John Bunyan's classic masterpiece *Pilgrim's Progress*, you will remember where the main character, Christian, is on trial and being assaulted by his accuser Apollyon. One sin after another is thrown in his face as he recounts all the evil in Christian's journey. He then charges him as undeserving of God's grace and mercy. Christian responds, "All this is true, and much more you have left out. But the Prince whom I serve and honor is merciful and ready to forgive. I have now obtained pardon from my Prince."

Too many of us don't need Satan or anyone else to accuse us, for we are our own worst accuser. We constantly look in the mirror and pronounce ourselves as unworthy and miserable sinners. God could not possibly show grace to such a wretch as me. My sufferings are happening because I deserve them. We daily stand condemned by our own memories, claiming hell as our just reward. STOP IT! NOW! It's a lie!

NO SEPARATION

Question 6. “***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ... tribulation?***”

Answer: God is our Keeper.

He now begins launching into a series of sufferings that might happen to a Christian. He gets specific so that if that particular one is troubling you, then you are forced to see it through the eyes of God. These seven types of trials were all part of Paul’s hard life, yet he never called into question the love of Jesus. Neither should we. These seven are just samples of many other trials of our faith. They are stated as rhetorical questions (meaning they have obvious answers that everyone should immediately know).

Some allow tribulation to doubt Christ’s love. But it does not have to be. Tribulation (Greek *THLIPSIS* – “pressure, a pressing together; affliction; distress”) is an outward pressure to compromise or surrender your faith in Christ. Many through the centuries have caved in to this pressure and allowed it to kill our love for Christ. Just read the sad letters from Jesus to the churches of Asia in Revelation. To the Ephesian church He said, “*I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*” (Rev. 2:4). To the Sardis church He said, “*I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*” (Rev. 3:1). To the Thyatira church He said, “*because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*” (Rev. 3:16).

It didn’t have to be that way. The churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia were enduring just as much tribulation as the other five, yet Jesus told Smyrna, “*I know your works, **tribulation**, and poverty (but you are rich); ... Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*” (Rev. 2:9-10). He told Philadelphia, “*Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, ...*” (Rev. 3:10-12).

Question 7. “***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... distress?***”

Have you ever allowed distress to separate you from Christ’s love? Many have. The word distress (Greek *STENOCHORIA* – “a narrow place; narrowness of room”) implies a squeezing of your spirit and emotions to where you have no room to move. While Tribulation was an outward pressure, Distress is an inner pressure. It is a type of spiritual claustrophobia where you feel shut in to a tight spot with no wiggle room. It often causes one to panic and not be able to think straight or reason accurately. You think the light at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. Paul, who surely felt confined in many prisons and through many perils (2 Cor. 11:24-27), said “*I take pleasure in infirmities, in*

*reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in **distresses** for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*" (2 Cor. 12:10). Most of us don't face 1/1,000th the pressures and anguish that Paul felt. If he could take pleasure in distresses, becoming strong through his weaknesses, then surely we can too.

Question 8. ***"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... persecution?"***

Persecution (Greek *DIOGMOS* – "to be persecuted; threatened with harm") is something everyone who becomes a Christian should know comes with the territory. Jesus never pulled punches when asking men and women to become His disciples. He never promised an easy life, ever. In His famous parable of the sower He said of the rocky soil, *"yet he has not root in himself, but endures only for a while; for when tribulation or **persecution** arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles"* (Matt. 13:21).

He told all His followers, *"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with **persecutions**--and in the age to come, eternal life."* (Mark 10:29-30).

The church at Thessalonica went through incredible trials, but note what Paul said of them: *"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your **persecutions** and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer"* (2 Thess. 1:3-5). If these brethren did not allow severe persecutions to separate them from Christ's love, we can do it too!

Question 9. ***"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... famine?"***

Famine (Greek *LIMOS* – "scarcity of harvest; hunger; a lack of food") can drive many a person to wonder if God or Jesus still loves them. After all, Jesus had said if we *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* then food, clothing and shelter would be provided to us (Matthew 6:25-33). But Jesus was not giving an iron-clad guarantee to every Christian that he would always have life's necessities provided and he would never endure hunger, nakedness or homelessness. It was a general rule, but clearly with exceptions.

Like Paul. His list of trials included this statement: *"in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness"* (2 Cor. 11:27). Like the Jerusalem church. A famine was prophesied: *"Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea."* (Acts 11:28-29).

Would you allow hunger to separate you from Christ's love? The very One who went 40 days without food to face the fury of Satan on your behalf (Matt. 4:1-11), understands hunger like few men. He did that willingly to prove His mastery over Satan and sin. He did it to prove His love for you. Can you not do the same for Him?

Question 10. ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... nakedness?”***

Nakedness (Greek *GYMNOTES* – “without clothes; nudity” – Note: our word Gym or Gymnasium came from the Greek athletes who competed in the nude) speaks of a type of trial in which those who are persecuting Christians left them exposed to the elements to increase their sufferings. It might also refer to the extreme poverty some would endure because they would not worship the gods of the trade unions and therefore were ostracized and quarantined from making a living. This left them so poor they could not clothe themselves. In either scenario, their nakedness might cause them to question Christ's love. “If God loves me I wouldn't be without the basics of food and clothes.”

But exposure to the sun as a cruel torture method to make a Christian denounce Jesus, or a loss of employment that led to going without life's necessities is not a sign of God forsaking us. Many saints before us have been in nakedness and famine for the name of Christ and came through it with their faith stronger, or their deaths from such horrors as a sign of their great faith. Paul is telling us that being naked in body is nothing compared to being naked in faith. The Laodiceans were such spiritually naked people: “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” (Rev. 3:18). Don't be a Laodicean.

Question 11. ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... peril?”***

Peril (Greek *KINDYNOS* – “a danger; peril”) is a way to describe a large number of ways a Christian will feel “danger close” (a military expression of imminent peril in combat to put a soldier on high alert). The Christian soldier is forever in battle, fighting for his life against dangerous enemies. “*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” (Eph. 6:12).

Jesus' death forever disarmed and completely neutered as harmless all perils we will face. Paul reminds us the cross of Christ “*disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*” (Col 2:15). The perils from our greatest enemies are impotent now. They cannot defeat us.

2 Cor. 11:26 describes Paul's life over a period from 36 A.D. to his death in 68 A.D. “*in journeys often, in **perils** of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.*” In other words, Paul got out of bed every morning with the thought, “what next?” That would be followed by, “bring it on!”

What will you say to today's menu of perils that will surely come? Will they separate you from Jesus' love?

Question 12. ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ... sword?”***

Sword (Greek MACHAIRA – “a large knife; a weapon used for killing or cutting”) is used here as an instrument of torture or death. To be “put to the sword” meant execution by beheading or piercing of a vital organ. John the Baptist comes to mind, being beheaded by the sword (*“Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison”* Mrk. 6:27). Or the execution of the apostle James (*“Then he killed James the brother of John with the **sword**”* Ac 12:2). Capital punishment was performed by the sword (Rom. 13:4).

The use of the sword makes all the other means of torture or persecution seem less threatening. With the others you still lived, but with this you certainly died. But is that the worst thing that could happen to you? Jesus didn't think so when He said, *“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”* (Lk 12:4-5).

Hundreds, perhaps many thousands, faced the sword because of faith and never lost their love for God. They became our “great cloud of witnesses” because they *“quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the **sword**, ... They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the **sword**. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented”* (Heb 11:34,37). They did it, and so can we.

Super Saints

36 As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Paul begins his poetical climax by quoting Korah in Psalm 44:22 *“For your sake we are killed all day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”* Read the whole Psalm. Israel is in deep distress, wondering where God is during their struggles with her enemies. It seems like God has abandoned them. It seems like they are all going to die. He said in verses 23-25 *“Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast us off forever. Why do You hide Your face, And forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground.”* The pressures of the moment were temporary. They survived. God came to the rescue. But it separated the believers from the unbelievers. The men from the boys. It was during such pressure that we learn the strength of our faith (Jam. 1:2-4).

“In all these things...” brings us back to our original proposition. The “these things” are the sufferings of the saints. Christianity began with a tortured and crucified Christ. His followers should never think being His disciple will be easy. *“Remember the word that I*

said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15:20).

This reminds me of the famous Thomas Paine, who awoke a lethargic 13 colonies with the battle cry of the American Revolution by starting his famous pamphlet *The American Crisis*: "THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value."

Indeed, living as a Christian is a life of a revolutionary. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot only serves when it is comfortable. But to stand now in crisis proves our patriotism to our Savior. What we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly. Let us join the greatest Revolution in history, not to obtain our physical freedom, but our spiritual salvation.

We become "*more than conquerors*" when we refuse to compromise or surrender our love for Jesus. This is literally a term that means "*super-overcomers!*" It is the Greek word HYPERNIKAO. It is defined "to be more than a conqueror; to gain a surpassing victory." The idea is this is more than just one battle among many of a long campaign, but is the defining decisive victory that finally ends the war! It leads the enemy to sue for peace in unconditional surrender. He is totally defeated, never to rise again. You are totally victorious, never to fight again. It is what heaven is to the Soldier of the Cross. The armor of God is forever removed because it is never needed again. You now have the Nike ("victory"). You are considered by God as "Super Saints."

God's Love – I'm Persuaded

*38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,
39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It seems Paul is covering all the bases. He is leaving nothing out. There is nothing in heaven or earth that has the power to separate us from God or Christ. Nothing!

Not **death**. The fear of death has been forever removed. Hebrews 2:14-15 settles the matter: "*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*"

Not **life**. While most fear dying, some fear living because it is too painful with all its groanings and crushing burdens ("*For we know that the whole creation groans and*

labors with birth pangs together until now” – Rom. 8:22). But knowing our coming reward, Christians can “count it all joy” (Jam. 1:2). Do you?

Not **angels, principalities, powers**. These are the spirit beings we cannot see, but know are “out there” somewhere. Some are ministering to saints (Heb. 1:14). Some are threatening saints (Eph. 6:12). But even though they might be superior to humans in many ways, God has full control over their influence over us. They cannot separate us from His omnipresent love. Ever!

Not **things present or to come**. Not things going on right now in my life, nor any future things I cannot foresee. What a relief! Nothing today, nor tomorrow, nor any future person, place or event can cause God’s love for me, nor my love for God, to be separated from our hearts. Just think on that carefully, and prayerfully. Think of any Worst-Case-Scenario Satan might put in your path. God’s powerful love will foresee it and then crush it.

Not **height or depth**. These are astrological terms. The ancients were terrified by the stars and all the unknowns of the vast heavens above or creatures lurking below earth. Astrology or Geology has no power over our destiny because it is secured in God’s love. Celestial or Terrestrial “gods” or powers promoted by the Greeks, Romans, and other empires are myths. The Christian should give them no credit or audience. God is real, not anything above or below earth.

Not **any other created thing**. Animals. Plants. These are things men has feared because they thought such created things could be used by the Devil or mythical powers against us. Magic potions from plants might make us mad and draw us from God. Paul forever dismisses such nonsense from our minds and hearts.

God’s Love In Christ

The hymn I have loved since childhood says it all to my heart:

“The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell;
It goes beyond the highest star, and reaches to the lowest hell.
The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win;
His erring child He reconciled, and pardoned from his sin.

When hoary time shall pass away, and earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;
When men who here refuse to pray, on rocks and hill and mountains call;
God’s love so sure, shall still endure, all measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam’s race – The saints and angels’ song.

Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole Tho stretched from sky to sky.

Chorus: O Love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong!
I shall forevermore endure – The saints' and angels' song.

Conclusion:

The incredible story of Horatio Spafford is a fitting illustration to explain Romans 8. He was a devout believer who lived from 1828 to 1888. In those 60 years he lived through many highs and lows. He was a very successful land speculator, becoming very wealthy by buying lakeshore properties in Chicago. But the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 wiped out his entire fortune. That was only a beginning of his sorrows. His four year old son died. Needing a break, he planned a voyage to England to participate in a religious campaign with Dwight Moody. He was kept from boarding due to a business meeting, but sent his wife and four daughters ahead, promising to join them soon. Their ship hit another ship and sank in 12 minutes. Only his wife was rescued, sending him a telegraph with two words: "Saved alone." He boarded the next ship to join his grieving wife. While passing the spot where the ship sank, he was overcome with thoughts, went below and penned the words to this famous hymn:

"When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea-billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Tho Satan should buffet, tho trials should come, Let this blest assurance control;
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious tho't, My sin, not in part, but the whole;
Is nailed to the cross and I bare it no more; Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.

And Lord haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, Even so, it is well with my soul.

Chorus: "It is well, with my soul, It is well, It is well, with my soul"

Is it well with your soul? Is God's love, demonstrated through Christ's life and death,
strong enough in your heart to make you a Super-Overcomer?

"If God Is For Us!" Let that be our battle-cry. If it is, then nothing ... NOTHING and NO
ONE can accuse us, condemn us, or separate us from our God and our Savior.

Sermon by Rick Lanning
Northwest Church of Christ
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