

GOD FOR US

Romans 8:31

We are returning this morning to the book of Romans, and in particular the best chapter of the Bible, Romans 8. What better way to begin a new year in our sovereign Lord's care?

Now how does one conclude the best chapter of the Bible? I believe you cannot come up with three more profound words than those in our Sermon Title = God For Us!

Three profound words and three very practical words! Not only God *With Us*, or God *By Us*, or God *Over Us* or *In us* – all these are wonderful, rich, powerful and comforting; but God **For** Us!?

God for us is the conclusion of what has gone before - the mountain peak of God working all things together for our good; of God loving us from all eternity; of an eternal new world where we are being brought as sons and daughters of the true God.

This God who loves us and shown that love to be high, eternal, planned, almighty, perfect and glorious – is shown now to possess a complete love, a love of totality. He is for you believer! He is your complete Advocate. He is your complete Protector so that none can be against you!

This is the very peak of this great mountain, the Everest of the Bible! This is the top 29 feet of the 29,029 of that great elevation 5 ½ miles high!

“God for us!” is how Paul concludes. So simple in the Greek – literally ‘Since God for us, what against us?’ There are no verbs! Then followed by Paul's famous line – used only by him: ‘what shall we say

to these things?’ Found only 7 times in the Bible, all of them by Paul and all of them in the Book of Romans.

This is a summary then of the gospel. What shall we say of the gospel? It is that God is for us so that nothing is against us!

God demonstrated all along in this letter that He is for us. He is for us though guilty, providing a full divine pardon of all our sins. Although great debtors to him, he is for us in giving life as a gift by faith. Though alienated he calls us children of God, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus. He is for us. And while we were sinners, Christ shed his precious, loving blood for the ungodly. He is for us. We have been united to Him and He lifts us out of the depths and carries us into heaven by his resurrection, because He is for us. He loved us from all eternity, electing, predestinating us to be conformed to His Son, because He is for us. You have been released from the prison of sin, from the law’s bondage, forever, because God is for us. And glorification is yours already – a glorious crown of immortality upon your unworthy head! Because God is for us!

What shall we say, asks Paul. Since God is for us, what then is against us?

Let us explore the this part of the verse briefly.

First: *There is truly much against us*, which makes this verse so precious. How we need God to be for us because of all against us.

What a formidable mountain range stands in your way! Who can detail in full what the three dark mountains of the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil** have against you! The **world** – its traps and quicksands, seeking to mold you to itself while eclipsing the true God by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Our flesh, our own **natures** in Adam still opposing us, indwelling sin still in us, as Romans 7 says – the great struggle between the new me and the old

me. Then the devil – that serpent, that lion, that dragon, and his great malevolent host; who can tell all his evil and schemes and devices?!

Noah's ark did not take away the flood – it overcame the flood; your ark is Jesus who bears you up and out and over and beyond all that could drag you down to hell. But God for you is so much greater than all against you. While the opposition is present, it can be of no account. God's mountain crushes all lesser mountains.

Matthew Henry: *And, if so, who can be against us, so as to prevail against us, so as to hinder our happiness? Be they ever so great and strong, ever so many, ever so mighty, ever so malicious, what can they do? While God is for us, and we keep in his love, we may with a holy boldness defy all the powers of darkness. Let Satan do his worst, he is chained; let the world do its worst, it is conquered... Who then dares fight against us, while God himself is fighting for us?*

And that leads us to the next point.

Second: *There is no end to the marvel of God being for us.*

What a marvel that He is for you, for all believers. It is the boldest statement imaginable; can anything be higher than confessing that God is for me?

It is partly so marvelous since He had every right and power to be against you! And he was against you in your sins! This is the only other option to not having God for you is to have him against you. Let us flip this statement: 'If God be against us, what can be for us?!' This isn't a speculation. Ezekiel 21, 26, 29, 35 – "I am against you! I am against you! I am against you! I am against you!" This is part of the wonder of this passage, that He who had every reason to be against us, has now become so completely for us!?

Then it is marvelous that such a God who is so high and exalted, so above all his creation, to whom the mountains are like dust to him, and

people are like bugs, stars are the work of his fingertips, who makes everything by words, who has to stoop down to heavens, much more the earth! should be for any of his lowly creatures!

Oh what wonderful absolutes are here though! If such God is against you, what does it matter what you have for you? No matter what else you think you have, God against you takes all of that away. But if God be for you, it is no matter what has been, what is, what will be against you; no matter what you lack; no matter what you don't have.

We need more wonder in this as Paul had. **Matthew Henry:** *He speaks as one amazed and swallowed up with the admiration of it, wondering at the height and depth, and length and breadth, of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. The more we know of other things the less we wonder at them; but the further we are led into gospel mysteries the more we are affected with the admiration of them. If Paul was at a loss what to say to these things, no marvel if we be.*

This leads us then into our last point:

Third: This is not just some high, mysterious and out of reach thing, but is to be a most practical, real, gripping truth and authentic part of your daily life. You need this. This is to grip you, inside and out, heart and mind: "Since God is for me; I am saved, I am invincible!"

We must say something in the face of these things, says Paul. We must live differently, right? We must live more confidently. I must place myself and all my many enemies, before the blazing, powerful, full, complete, reality of this peak of peaks truth!

There is a well-known lack of oxygen at the top of Everest. Let these heights choke out what would otherwise choke you out! I am to have this truth in me until there is no room for fear; no room for frustration; no room for unrighteous anger; no room for worry; no room for dark depression; no room for discouragement; no room for rebellion; no

room for pining my ‘what if’s’! God is for me! What can be against me?

But this must not be negative only. There is a richer oxygen found in heavenly heights. A light that kills all dark bacteria but also bathes and nourishes and warms even the littlest members of the kingdom. A little children can grasp this and rejoice, which makes us holy and good!

The famous emperor, Maximillian, had this verse written over his dining table. Indeed this should season all of our food and drink. This would make every child of God live like the prince and princess He has made you! Every room of our lives; every relationship, every duty, every endeavor, every step, should glow with this bold reality:

- Since God is for me, all things must work together for my good;
- since God is for me, all things are mine in Christ Jesus my Lord;
- since God is for me, nothing in heaven above, hell beneath, past, present or future, can stand successfully against me!

The children of Israel had a giant and mighty pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to protect and illumine them. How much more we as we walk through this world? When people ask us in the grocery line, ‘how are you today?’, we should almost break into laughter – “honestly, I don’t know how it could be any better – God is for me!”

How to do so?

Well, beware of ripping this phrase out of its context. This is a phrase that seems to belong more in heaven than on earth. This feels like all enemies are now bowing the knee, and every tongue confessing Jesus as Lord. As though there are no enemies, and that is not the case. So don’t fall into that false mysticism that waves a wand and you can do whatever you want; as though this were a lucky rabbit’s foot! God is not your genie in a bottle!

But don't fall on the other side, thinking that God is for you if and when you are for him; as though it depends upon you, and that God is for you only partially. To say that God is for us because we are for God is the same as God helps those who help themselves.

You are weak in yourselves until you draw your last breath! That is the beauty of this passage. If God is your strength, what other strength do you need? But this is known, and felt, and acted on, by faith, in hope, based on God's own promise. If we try to see it with our eyes, we will be like Elisha's servant, when they were surrounded by a great host of enemies armed against them. But Elisha said, 'There are more with us than with them,' and had his eyes opened.

Dear ones, you have a whole army of angels around you; but more – you have the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are not only with you but for you.

Get **grace** firmly in your heart – understand the gospel; that He has found such a clear, full, perfect way to be your mighty friend forever, through His Son. We will see this next week in verse 32.

Get **faith** in his promises – you have to be in the Word; the Word acts as your eyeglasses to see what cannot otherwise be seen! Cast the anchor of your soul in this best chapter! This is the foundation of your life, your soul, your eternity!

Get **God** to be yours **by the blood of His Son**.

God is all-sufficient. Get him for your portion, and you have all – then you have infinite wisdom to direct you; infinite knowledge to teach you; infinite mercy to pity you and save you; infinite love to care and comfort you; infinite power to protect and keep you. If God be yours, all his attributes are yours; all his creatures, all his works (of providence) shall surely do you good, as you

have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory portion; He is an ever-living, ever-loving, ever-present Friend.” John Mason

I wish to close with an illustration from Lord of the Rings. Maybe it has bothered you that at the end the eagles rescue Frodo and Sam from the lava. Why didn't they just fly one of those birds over the mountain in the first place and drop the ring in?

But this serves to show us an important truth. God could swoop in and take up each of his children to glory upon their conversion. Every Christian right now is ready for heaven! Nothing needs to be added beyond being born again, and pardoned of all sin by faith!

But the Lord has a purpose for your ups and downs in this life. Paul wrote earlier that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory God is bringing through them! So see on the one hand that there is an expiration date on EVERYTHING that stands against God. So we say, why not speed things up and be done with them?

But we don't look at them as part of God's plan. But He does. We look at it and say – when will it be over; when will I put this aside and really fly with the eagles? But God says that his glory is taking flight in your growth and trials. And these are doing you great good for eternity. The greater the hardships endured for his name – the higher the blessedness to come! How will we look on those things which brought such grief and difficulty and pain and struggle here, when we see Jesus saying to us, ‘well done’ in the world to come? And further, we can say even to these present afflictions – they are not greater than He that is in me, He that is for me!

Prayer: Father, we have heard how you are for us; please make us to be for you, for your Son, by your Spirit, to be for you in devotion – that our hearts would be offered to you daily, hourly – especially at the start of this New Year, and on your Day. Let us be for you in our

minds, hearts and bodies – a living sacrifice. Help us our Lord to be for you in everything – to glorify such a great and good and gracious God as you are – that whether we eat or drink, work or play, study or rest, laugh or cry, in activity and stillness – all would be done to your glory – for all things are of you, through you and to you – and you have shared all things with us – for your glory. In Jesus’ precious name. Amen.