

Subject: *Paul's Profound Questions*

Scripture: *Romans 8:31-39*

This chapter begins with no condemnation and it ends with no separation. It is one of the richest passages of Scripture.

Paul is writing like a Christian attorney as well as a preacher. He is very logical in his presentation and conclusions as he makes a powerful case for the gospel and God's grace in salvation. At the end of this chapter Paul summarizes the truth he has been driving home: salvation is God's work from start to finish; salvation is based on God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; salvation is eternal even though it is accomplished and applied in time; and salvation is eternally secure and guaranteed for all of God's people.

To summarize his teaching about salvation, Paul asks several questions near the end of this chapter. They are rhetorical questions that are designed to make us stop and think. They are questions that are both profound and practical. (When I first started as a pastor, I learned there is a danger in asking rhetorical questions from the pulpit...Aunt Mary). Paul begins with the question in verse 31, "What shall we say then to these things?" In other words, What more can be said? Then he proceeds to ask several more questions that we could put into one overall question: Can any person or can any circumstance cause a believer to lose his salvation?

1. A question about God's sovereign purpose (vs. 31)

If God is for us, who can be against us? To put it another way, if God is for us, everyone else might as well be. If anyone were able to take away our salvation, they would have to be greater than God Himself, because He is the one who gives and sustains our salvation. Can other people rob us of salvation?

Psalms 118:6 *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*

What about our enemies, can they take away our salvation? There are a lot of enemies against us. The world is against us, the flesh is against us, and the devil is against us. But none of our enemies can defeat us. We are secure because God is on our side. That's why all things work together for our good (vs. 28).

2. A question about God's precious sacrifice (vs. 32)

Now points us to the cross. If God did not spare His own Son, but made Him a sacrifice for us all, will He not also give us everything we need for this life and the life to come? It is a powerful argument from the greater to the lesser. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is not only the reason for our salvation, but also the reason for our eternal security.

A wealthy Roman had a son who broke his heart and a slave who won his respect. So he decided to disinherit his son and leave everything to his slave whose name was Marcellus. When he had drawn up the legal papers, he called in his son and the slave to tell him what he had done. "I'm leaving everything to my slave, Marcellus, but my son, you may choose one item from my estate for yourself. Without any hesitation, the son said, "I'll take Marcellus."

If God gave the very best He had, we can be sure He will give us everything else. Remember what it cost God to save us! And Christ died for us when we were sinners and rebels. How could God sacrifice His own Son for us and then forsake those who are blood-bought?

Romans 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

3. A question about God's unchangeable verdict (vs. 33)

This question brings us back into the courtroom before the righteous judge. No charge will hold up in court because the Judge has already made his decision. We are justified by faith in Christ, and God's decision is final. Some may be willing to accuse us, but that won't work. We know Satan would accuse us because he is "the accuser of the brethren." There are many who point a finger of accusation against us charging us of bad words, bad deeds, bad thoughts...the list would be long...enough to sink a battleship. But all to no avail because the Judge has made His ruling.

4. A question about God's perfect Mediator (vs. 34)

This question is a follow up to the previous question. This time the answer is that Christ won't allow anyone to condemn us and He certainly won't condemn us. Christ is the one who came to give us eternal life, not temporary life. He is the only one authorized to pronounce judgment on us, but He died and rose to save us, not condemn us.

John 5:22-24²² *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*²³ *That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.*²⁴ *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Christ died for us. He paid the penalty of our sins. He rose for us. His resurrection is the guarantee that His death on the cross was sufficient. He is exalted for us, seated at the right hand of God. The OT priests offered sacrifices over and over and never sat down, because their work was never done. Jesus went back to the Father's throne and sat down because His sacrifice was enough. To doubt or deny the security of every believer is to doubt or deny the sufficiency of Christ's work and misunderstand the meaning of the cross.

And now He intercedes for us. The same One who died for us now intercedes for us.

1 Timothy 2:5 *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

1 John 2:1-2¹ *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*² *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

5. A question about God's unbreakable love (vs. 35)

Paul begins this chapter with no condemnation, and now he ends with no separation. As soon as he asks this final question, he brings forth a list of seven things or circumstances that might threaten to cut us off from God's love in Christ.

- Tribulation
- Distress
- Persecution
- Famine
- Nakedness
- Peril sword

All of these were very real and present dangers for Paul and other Christians who lived in those days. This is a reminder that we are not immune from these things, but none of these things can affect God's love for us. Sufferings could never separate us from the love of God in Christ. After all, it was through the sufferings of Christ that God proved His love for us. Our suffering for Him should never cause us to doubt His love.

Donald Barnhouse said: "Love that goes upward is worship. Love that goes outward is affection. Love that stoops downward is grace."

Paul comes to his grand conclusion in verse 38-39, "I am persuaded" (I have become and remain convinced, I am persuaded beyond doubt). He then lists all possible things that could separate us from God's love in Christ.

- Life nor death
- Angels, not principalities, nor powers (good and evil spirit beings)
- Things present nor things to come
- Height nor depth
- Any other created thing

The writer of a great song may have had these verses in mind when he wrote:

*Could we with ink the oceans 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 oceans dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.*

George Matheson, a Scottish pastor and hymn writer, was born with an eye defect and eventually went blind when he was 18. His fiancée left him. During that low point of his life he wrote a song with the title, "Oh Love That Will Not Let Me Go."

Romans 8 is the strongest statement in the Bible on eternal security of the believer. We are...

- Secure in our position in Christ (vs. 1)
- Secure in the presence of God's Spirit (vs. 14-15)
- Secure in the promise of God's glory (vs. 17-18)
- Secure in the providence of God (vs. 28)
- Secure in the purpose of God's grace (vs. 29-30)
- Secure in the power of God's love (vs. 35-39)

God could not love us any more than He loves us and He could not love us any less. Our circumstances may change, but God's love never changes. Paul has given us some profound questions to consider, but one more question remains. Does this apply to you as one of God's people? Is Christ your Savior and Lord? This chapter begins and ends with the reminder that no condemnation and no separation are blessings only for those in Christ (vs. 1, 39). What does it mean to be in Christ? It means to transfer our trust to Him, to believe in Him without reservation, and to transfer control to Him, to surrender to Him as Lord without reservation.