

Is There Any Chance That God's Love For Us Could Fade?

Romans 8: 31 – 32

- Last week, we began our study of Romans 8: 31 – 38, we saw that Paul was asking a series of rhetorical questions.
 - As Paul asks these questions, he is calling us to a response of faith and trust in the precious promises of the Gospel. Promises that he has so clearly delineated for us in the first 8 chapters of the book of Romans.

Romans 1: 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes

- We need to constantly be reminded that the Gospel is God's power for salvation. It is not my power, it is not your power, it is not even the church's power. It is God and God alone who takes us from being dead in our sins to alive in Christ.

Ephesians 2: 4 – 6 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

- We don't and can't save ourselves. Why? We are dead in our sin. God and the power of God must be the thing that saves us.

"Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to the cross I cling. Naked come to these for dress. Helpless look to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me savior or I die."

- By grace we have been saved. It is the power of God through the grace of God that saves us. Not the labors of our hands. But our sinful default drive is to go back to trying to save ourselves.
 - Why do we do that? Well, pride for one thing. We need to feel like we are doing something. But I think another reason is the simple fact that we are not secure in God's love. We know how easy it is for us to stop loving someone, and we wonder, if the same might be true with God?
 - So, we constantly feel the need to prove ourselves, justify ourselves before a holy God because deep down inside, we know we aren't that easy for God to love.
- If we fall into disbelief, if we stop trusting in the promises of the Gospel, and go back to relying on self, there is no power, because we are spiritually dead. The more we rely on ourselves, the more we rob the Gospel of its power.
 - The great tragedy of the world we live in, the great tragedy of the modern church is that so many people are looking for self-help/self-improvement programs, and churches have fallen into the trap of teaching self-help/self-improvement. But those programs are powerless, and empty, because apart from the Gospel there is no power in us. We are spiritually dead.
 - The power is there to be had, but the only way to have it is to put all of our trust in these precious promises of the Gospel. That's why Paul begins this section of Romans with the words, "What then shall we say to these things?" How do we respond to these great and precious promises?

- Do we merely nod our heads in agreement and then go back to trying to save and justify ourselves, or do we put all of our trust and complete reliance on these Gospel promises? Paul asks these questions to prompt a response of true faith from us.

Romans 8: 31 – 38 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He 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? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who 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. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor 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.

- What do we say in response to these things? How does our faith in the precious promises of the Gospel change how we live?
 - To draw that response out of us, Paul asks five rhetorical questions:
 - If God is for us who can be against us?
 - How will He not also graciously give us all things?
 - Who will bring any charge against God's elect?
 - Who is He who condemns?
 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
 - These five questions get to the heart of any fears that we may have concerning the power of the Gospel to bring us to a final state of glory.
 - Is there any power that might rob us of our glorification? V 31
 - Is there any danger of God's love to us diminishing? V 32
 - Might not someone finally convict us of sin and yet bring us to a state of final condemnation? V 33-34
 - Might we not fail or falter owing to our weakness and the troubles of life? V 35 – 37
- Last week, along with Paul, we asked and answered the first fear: Is there any conceivable power that might rob us of our glorification? And the answer is no.

John 10:28 – 30 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one.”

- There is no power that can snatch us from the hand of God because our God is greater than all of our enemies.

Colossians 2: 13 – 15 God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

- Because God is the one doing it all and there is no power greater than Him, our calling, justification, and glorification are an absolute certainty.
- Okay, so nothing can overpower God and thereby rob us of our glorification, but what if God's love for us were to fade away or stop completely? Wouldn't that make God stop working for us? Wouldn't that undo our glorification?
 - Well, I guess if that were to happen that could undo everything, but there is zero chance that once God set His electing love upon you that He will ever stop loving you. How can I say that with such certainty?

Romans 8: 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?

- The more we understand what Paul writes here in verse 32 and what it means for our lives, the more certain we will be that not only does God have the power to do whatever it takes to bring us to glory, but He also has the love-driven will to do whatever it takes to bring us to glory.
 - Let's start with Paul's concluding phrase and work backward to see the logic.

1. Graciously give us all things

- From last week's discussion, we know that God certainly has the power to give us all things. Why? To put it in the words of:

Job 42: 1 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

- Because there is no god that compares to the true and living God, there is nothing that can thwart His purpose. If God's purpose is to give you all things, then you are going to get all things.
- The question is never does God have the power to do that. The only question is does He have the love-driven will to do it.
- So just what does Paul mean by the phrase all things? Often, in our minds when we hear that phrase give us all things, we are thinking of good things. Blessings.
 - In real estate the mantra is location, location, location. In understanding Scripture, the mantra must be context, context, context. You cannot just rip a verse or a phrase out and make it mean whatever you want it to mean.
 - So, what is the context of all things in verse 32? Well, the context would be the verse that comes right before.

Romans 8: 28 – 30 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

- Now ultimately what are those verses about? Well look at verse 28, and what do we see? The phrase all things. What did we say about that phrase all things when we were looking at these verses? All things mean everything. And what is God doing in all things for those who He has called according to His purpose?
 - Well, look at verse 29. He is using those things to conform us to the image of His Son. The long and short of it is that God is using everything in our lives to

accomplish His purpose in our lives, and what is His purpose? To bring us to a state of glory by conforming us to the image of His Son.

- But now we see that God is not just using all things, He is the author of everything that comes into your life.
- This may be terribly hard for some who are going through difficult and even painful times right now. But everything in your life, from the family you grew up in, to the church you attend today, to the job you have or don't have, to the illness you are suffering, or the marital strife you may be enduring, and on and on is a good gift from your loving Heavenly Father for the purpose of conforming you to the image of His Son.
 - Nothing just randomly happens in your life. God allows whatever comes to pass in your life, and if you belong to God, then all things that come to pass, even the awful things, are good things, necessary things, that God knows you need so that you will be transformed with ever increasing glory into the image of His Son.
 - It takes a great deal faith to believe that. But it is absolutely true.
 - I would like to think that I was a good father who gave my children everything they needed to be successful in life. Now I know I didn't do that anywhere near perfectly, but just use your imagination.
 - What does everything mean in that context? I saw to their health and well being making sure they were clothed, had food to eat and a roof over their head. That they had proper medical care. That they had a good education. That they had recreational activities to be engaged in, a good church to grow up in, that they knew God and God's word, and we could go on and on. Those are all things that my kids would say are good things.
 - But that is not everything that I gave them. If it were, they would just be spoiled brats. Along with all those good things, I gave them things that they might even say were bad things.
 - I gave them grief. I gave them chores to do. I gave them discipline, at least some of the time when they needed it. My children didn't like any of those things, but they too were good things and part of everything that was needed for them to be who they are today.
 - Now I wasn't perfect in doing that, but God is.

Matthew 7: 9 – 11 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

- God is graciously giving you all things, even things that we think are bad things, to bring you to glory, so therefore, everything is a good thing.
 - And no matter what you are dealing with in life right now, remember this. When God promises in Romans 8:32, to give us all things, among those "all things" are all the promises of God in the Bible for his elect.

Matthew 28: 20 I will be with you till the end of the age.

Hebrews 13: 5 Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

Isaiah 41: 10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

- Whatever you are going through, God is with you. Why?

1 Corinthians 1: 20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.

- All the promises of God are yes in Jesus because God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all.

2. Gave him up for us all

● Think of the logic Paul is using here. What did God do to secure your salvation? He gave up what was most precious to Him. His Son.

- Now think about that. God traded the life of His Son for you.

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- In order to redeem you from sin and give you life, God held nothing back.

Matthew 13: 44 The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

- What would cause a man to sell everything in order to buy some other thing? It would be that he sees that other thing as being of greater value.
 - Normally when you hear teaching on this parable, it is from a perspective of what we must be willing to do. We must see Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven as being of such great value that we are willing to give up everything else that we consider to be precious in order to have it.
 - There is no question that is a right and true interpretation of that parable. But isn't also equally true that there is another right and true interpretation? And that is from the perspective of what God gave up to have you as His own. You must be a treasure to God because God gave up His Son to have you.
 - God saw you dead in your sin, and said, “I want that man; I want that woman; to be part of my family and I will give up whatever it takes to have them, including that which is most precious to me—my son.” Think how loved and treasured by God you are.
- God gave up His Son to have me! And make no mistake, that is exactly what God did. Satan and man certainly had a hand in taking the life of Jesus, but it only happened because God gave him up for us.

Acts 2: 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

- God delivered up—gave up His Son for you and your salvation. Now if God did that—gave up what was most valuable in order to have you, could there conceivably be any lesser thing that is needed for your good, for your glorification, that God would withhold from you?
 - So whatever joy, whatever sorrow, whatever good, whatever bad, whatever hardship, whatever comfort, remember this, God gave up His Son to have you as His forever, and if He did that when you were dead in

your sins, then He will certainly do whatever else it takes to finish the work and bring you to glory.

- Last week I mentioned the banking crisis of 2008. Do you remember why the government said they had to prop up certain financial institutions? They were too big to fail. So, the government did whatever it took to keep them afloat.
- Don't you see the same is true with you? Oh, you are not too big to fail. If the nations are as dust before God, how big can any of us be? We aren't too big to fail, but we are too loved by God to fail, and God has already invested too much in us to allow us to fail.

Philippians 1: 6 He who began a good work in you will see it through to the day of completion.

- God himself handed over his Son. Nothing greater has ever happened. Or ever will. Think why God did this. It was so that ultimately God could be our God—that is what it truly means to be glorified.

Revelation 21: 3 Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

- That is why God is working all things for your good, so that day can come. That is why God is willingly gave up His Son and along with him will give you all things.
- Think back with me to the first time we hear God speak that phrase, "I will be God to you." It was part of the series of covenant promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12, 15, and 17. Listen to what God said.

Genesis 17: 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

- Now notice a few things about this covenant promise. It is an everlasting covenant meaning it has no end. In fact, we can see that from Revelation 21. The culmination of all things is the fulfillment of this promise—God is our God, and we are with Him forever.
- God's promise is not just to Abraham, but also to his offspring. Now just to be clear, we, all who are God's elect are Abraham's offspring.

Galatians 3: 9 if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

- If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise. Heirs of what? The everlasting covenant that God would be your God. Notice though that Jesus is central to that promise. All the promises of God are yes in him.
- But there was one small problem when God made that covenant promise to Abraham. Abraham and Sarah, his wife, were old and they were childless. It looked like all the promises God made to Abraham weren't yes, but no. In fact, Abraham is clearly worried about this in, and he confronts God over his lack of offspring that was integral to fulfilling the covenant promise.
 - Listen to how God addresses Abraham's concerns. First God says:

Genesis 15: 1 "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

- Don't worry Abraham, I got this. I have the power to do what I have promised. But then God went beyond that, and He showed Abraham that He not only had the power to do it, but He also had the will to do it.
- He told Abraham to bring a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon, and then God told Abraham to cut the animals in half and lay out the pieces in such a way that there was a pathway between them. Then:

Genesis 15: 17 – 18 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram

- That's how they made binding agreements in the ancient near east. Usually both parties would walk between the pieces of cut up animal and as they did that what they were saying was, "Like these animals, may I be torn in two, if I do not fulfill all the promises that I making to you." God was cutting a covenant with Abraham.
- But in this case, what was it that passed between the pieces? It wasn't Abraham. He was on the sidelines It was a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch. So, who was binding themselves in this agreement?
 - Do you remember how God led Israel on the exodus? A cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night.
- It was God walking through the cut-up animals. It was God saying to Abraham, "I've got this. I will take care of it. On my own, in my power, I will move in time and space to make a way for you and your offspring to be mine forever, and may I be cut in two, like these animals, if I do not fulfill all that I have promised.
- As you keep reading in Genesis, Abraham finally has offspring, a son named Isaac. Years go by, and one day, as a means of testing Abraham's love, God tells Abraham to take Isaac, the son who was the beginning of the fulfilment of all of the promises God made to Abraham, and to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to God at a place called Mt. Moriah.
 - Abraham is obedient to God's command. He takes Isaac up the mountain, lays him on the alter. In faith he is willing to give up his son. Because he loves God more than he loves even Isaac. But then what happened as Abraham got ready to plunge the knife into his beloved son?

Genesis 22: 11 – 13 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ¹² He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

- Abraham was willing to give up his son, but in the end, God spared Isaac.
- But 2000 years later God would not do that with His own son. 2000 years later Jesus alone walked up a hill, to a cross and there was no one to stay the

hand of those who would slay him. Why? So that all the promises that God made to Abraham would be yes in Jesus.

3. He who did not spare His own Son

- To prove his love for God, Abraham gave up Isaac, but God spared Isaac's life providing a substitute. 2000 years later to prove His love for us, God gave up His Son and His Son was not spared.
 - God held nothing back. Why did God do that? Because, before the foundation of the world, in love God predestined us for adoption to Himself so that He would be our God forever, and there was no other way.
 - We couldn't make that happen only God could. And the only way for that to happen would be for God the Father and God the Son to be torn asunder at the cross, as the Son bore our sins and the wrath of the Father was turned against him and away from us. That is love. That is mega off the charts crazy love. Do you see how loved you are?
 - Because there was no other way for us to be saved so we could be with God forever, God gave up His Son to be:

Isaiah 53: 5 pierced for our transgressions;crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

- As Paul writes in Romans 6: 23, "The wages of sin is death." But instead of us taking the fatal blow, God's son took it for us.
 - Oh, the incredible lengths of love that God went to, in order to fulfill His covenant promise to Abraham. To make us His forever, God already did the hardest thing in giving up the life of His Son for us. The rest is just details
- Do you see Paul's logic now? All of the promises are yes in Jesus. Because the cross proves to us how high, long, wide, and deep the love of God is for us.
 - This is the glorious logic of heaven that Paul is giving us here.
- What then shall we say? We will say that the glorious logic of heaven holds. Since God did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, therefore, he will most certainly give us all things with him.
 - Therefore, all things will work together for our good.
 - Therefore, we will be conformed to the image of his Son.
 - Therefore, we will be glorified.
 - Therefore, no one can successfully be against us.
 - Therefore, no charge shall stick against God's elect.
 - Therefore, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.
 - Therefore, in tribulation and distress and persecution and famine and nakedness and danger and sword we are more than conquerors.
 - Therefore, 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.

Amen and Amen