

Five Unassailable Answers

Text: Romans 8:31–36

Theme: We have a bedrock assurance because of the love of God shown through Jesus Christ

Introduction — Paul, like a preacher going strong

- going with great momentum since 5:1 through 8:30
- his themes have included the glories of justification found in Jesus Christ
- there is the marvel of union with Christ, very Son of God
- ch. 7 brings the daunting battle with remaining sinful desires
- and then comes ch. 8 with the amazing power of knowing you are in Christ
- no condemnation! Free in Christ thru Holy Spirit

Now comes Paul's desire to get a response out of readers

- it's sort of like way a few scattered "Amens" keep a preacher encouraged & going on
- for his readers then—the Roman Christians
- and now—for you & me
- "What then shall we say to these things?"
- what things? Romans 5:1–8:30
- as preacher, it's one thing to preach; it's another concern for proper response to preached Word
- but this isn't the first time Paul's done this in Romans
- find this in 4:1, 6:1, 15, and now here
- so, you learn it's not enough to just sit & hear a message
- that does you little good at all
- response is needed, Monday morning's coming, What do I do with what I've heard?

Paul wants absolute assurance for Christians

- yearns for bold barnstorming of last bastions of sin in our lives
- longs for confident Christian commitment because no threat of separation
- but from where does such assurance and boldness come?
- Paul asks series of five questions to drive us to answer
- what we'll discover is this
- your confidence is not in how you feel or what your experiences are
- those are not unimportant, but not the answer you'll find in Word
- not due to severity of surrounding situations you're in
- not in any bad ones now? Be thankful—they're just around the corner
- in midst of them right now? Be thankful—assurance is sure & certain
- what we'll see here in these verses is that...
- we have a bedrock assurance because of the love of God shown through Jesus Christ

Let's see our first question and answer which God provides for us

I. IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? — v. 31

- well, given everything we've seen just in ch. 8, what should our response be?
- will we be filled with hope or fear?
- yes, sin is great and once had great power over us
- does it still? Or has its power been broken?
- does it keep us from God or God from us?

- **1 John 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

- remember this from what we've learned
- Creator of heaven and earth has poured out His love on you in Christ in great abundance
- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit covenanted together to save you before foundation of world
- covenant is based on the eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son concerning the redemption of the elect, as confession tells us
- **2 Timothy 1:9 "...[He] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began"**

- now Paul isn't asking this in this manner to stir up doubts
- otherwise, some might walk out of here this morning, heads hung low
- wondering, "Well, what if God's not for me?"
- no, Paul uses little word "if" as a condition of certainty here; we've seen this before
- If, Paul asks, God is for us...and expected words left unsaid are these:
 - And He most certainly is
 - then...who can be against us?
 - and the expected answer is? No one, not a thing
 - and this is what he goes on to prove in subsequent questions

So, let's move to second questions and see the splendid truth of this

II. HOW WILL HE NOT...GIVE US ALL THINGS?—v. 32

- **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?"**
- most all of us know John 3:16
- **John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."**
- hear the echoes of John here in Paul, do you not?
- He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all
- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son
- this is the sum of your salvation: only two people involved—God the Father & God the Son
- in eternity past, God decreed that He would call a people for His very own out of all humanity
- Son then covenanted, promised that He would take on flesh like theirs
- He would come, not as first Adam, with propensity to sin
- no, He would be the last Adam, the perfectly obedient one to all God's righteous demands
- and then he would humble Himself and become obedient even unto death, Phil. 2:8
- Paul only had the Old Testament, as we know it, and he loved it as God's Word
- here, he echoes Genesis 22:16, when God spoke to Abraham after offering up Isaac
- **Genesis 22:16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son..." I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring...**
- here is the assurance this brings to you and me
- if God did not spare His only Son
- if God would deliver Jesus up to the ignominy and agony of the cross
- if He would do that...and again, He most certainly did...
- then... of course He will not hesitate to bring about our glorification

- He will make sure to provide everything necessary to get to that destination
- it was ordained of God that each who believes would be conformed to image of Son
- and this is exactly what God has done
- He foreknew you...fore-loved you and chose you for a specific destination—in His Son
- He then called you powerfully, declared you justified and now, here you are
- with the utmost certainty, headed for eternal glory in His presence
- dry-as-dust-doctrine? No, not when you comprehend the enormous love of God for you

Our source of confidence grows as we hear question #3 and its answer in v. 33

III. WHO SHALL BRING ANY CHARGE AGAINST GOD'S ELECT?

- over past several years, we've heard the word "impeachment"
- been used against presidents, cabinet members, and others
- usually, charges are brought, or at least, threatened
- here is Paul asking, "who will impeach those whom God has willed to be His own?"
- impeaching one of the sons of the High King of Heaven? Ha! Ridiculous! Cannot be!
- how could any prosecution stand with Christ as our Advocate, our defense attorney?
- Christ poured out His own precious blood for our salvation
- who will dare stand in court of God as Judge and point a finger "They're guilty as sin!"
- Paul's OT awareness coming to mind here, I think
- he knows that great enemy of the church, Satan, delights to accuse saints of unrighteousness
- back in Zechariah, we see this happening, in ch. 3 of Zechariah's prophecy
- Zechariah is given to see Joshua, the high priest standing before Christ
- and there's the Accuser of the Brothers, Satan, shouting away against the high priest
- hear the accusations: "He's unworthy! He is wicked! Just look at his clothes!"
- and true, Joshua's clothes were covered in filth and stains
- but the Lord rebukes Satan, then turned to Joshua
- but He did not condemn him; rather, Lord justifies him—declared him righteous!
- He told those standing there to take away excrement-covered garments from Joshua
- then He clothed him with pure garments, Joshua's iniquities taken away entirely
- even Zechariah, as he sees this shouts out, "Bring him a pure turban for his head"
- Joshua had no fears of the devil's accusations for he was righteous in His Lord
- so Paul asks, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?"
- against those whom He chose before the world began
- yes, out of all sinful humanity that should have rightfully been left to suffer eternally
- God chose some—millions & millions, myriads upon myriads—out of that rebellious group
- if you are in Christ today, you were among those God gave to His Son back there
- **John 6:37-39 "37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."**
- in Christ, God has justified you! Declared you righteous
- not because of anything you've done, in fact, in spite of even your best efforts
- no, it is the righteousness of Christ that is on you like Joshua's new garments
- your assurance is anchored in Christ and can never, ever be taken away
- for Christ Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever

Question four follows right on the heels of the third

IV. WHO IS TO CONDEMN?—V. 34

- Phillips paraphrase asks the question in this manner:
- Who is in a position to condemn?
- the answer? No one but Christ...and He is the One who died for you
- and He will not...remember: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus
- no condemnation! Instead of harsh, but just and fair, judgment, we receive Christ's mercy
- think of Stephen in Acts 7
- he has been falsely accused and condemned by his fellow Jews
- these Jewish leaders were the highest judicial and theological court for the Jews
- with what had he been charged? Following and proclaiming Christ
- but even as he is being stoned to death, Stephen saw Christ standing at right hand of God
- that is the one place of judgment that matters
- and what was Christ doing? Interceding on Stephen's behalf, as we see here in v.34
- sure, men may seek to condemn us who are in Christ
- but our status as “justified” before God’s throne gives us courage, even unto death
- recall these truths to mind when you’re feeling low, inadequate, overwhelmed
- when you think your pursuit of godliness is in the tank
- Christ intercedes for you: Father, you have forgiven them, declared them righteous
- God loved you when you were still a sinner
- He chose you to be one of His precious children long before you came to faith in Jesus
- you were ungodly when Christ died for you
- but He obeyed when you would not and died in your place when you could not
- now, your hope is in that extraordinary love of God

As we come to our last question, I trust you are encouraged, strengthened, even emboldened in Christ.

Now, let's see Question #5

IV. WHO SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST?—VV.35–36

- we know what the answer is going to be, but put yourself in the Romans shoes
- who was on the throne of Roman Empire at time? Nero!
- Christians were on the growing end of hatred and being blamed for all sorts of things
- and then there were just the normal hardships of life to deal with
- so, answer in their mind was actually another question
- yes, Paul, but what about...
- tribulation, distress, or persecution; those are all very real for us right now
- and then there are famines, lack of decent clothing or shelter
- which presents all varieties of dangers...including being killed by sword of soldier
- to which Paul would simply say: nope, none of that, nothing can separate you
- God has gone to such great lengths to make you His
- He gave His own Son for us all...so there's nothing He will allow to take you away from Him
- then he uses Psalm 44.22 to speak to this realm of suffering
- we do just about anything today to avoid even the smallest form of suffering
- **Psalm 44:22 Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.**

- Jesus had taught Paul well: the life of the Christian is the way of the cross
- we follow in His footsteps; the world hated Him, they won't like us either
- suffering is to be expected
- **Matthew 16:24 ...Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”**
- which means we must never view cross as symbol of defeat
- it is the sign of Christ's victory over sin, death, and the devil
- the apostle also knew that God's grace, power, and strength were greatest when weak
- **2 Corinthians 12:9 But [God says to us], “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore [we] will boast all the more gladly of [our] weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon [us].**
- this is how we are conformed to image of Christ
- God carves off all that doesn't look like Christ...thru trials and sufferings
- but what is left is glorious

Conclusion – So, today, even this day, be strong and very courageous

- do not be afraid: we have the All-Powerful God & His Almighty Son on our side

Let's close by singing "Jesus Never Fails" – hymn #721