

The invincible love of God in Christ

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.
(Romans 8:31-39 NKJV)

1. The love of God revealed and demonstrated

The love of God was and is revealed through the birth, life, death, resurrection and intercession of Jesus Christ. God sent His only begotten Son to this earth 2000 years ago to live a perfect life, fulfill all righteousness, exhibiting and demonstrating the love and

righteousness of God, giving His life as an atoning offering for sin, bearing the wrath of God because of sin and satisfying His justice. Hallelujah! Then by the glory of the Father was He raised from the dead conquering death, Satan, sin and hell and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God, having all authority in heaven and on earth, rulers and powers being made subject to Him. The gospel of God was not just embedded in history, (it started there which was crucial), it is ongoing through the Mediation of Jesus Christ in heaven. Jesus is ALWAYS interceding for His bride and the ingathering of His people, His elect, among all nations (verse 34).

The love of God is not just a fluffy, warm feeling. It is revealed in a Person, the Godman - Christ Jesus. According to the theologian Wayne Grudem, the love of God means that God eternally gives of himself to others and continues to give Himself to those who believe.

The love of God is one of the great themes of Scripture: Here are a few Scripture verses to show us that the love of God is CENTRAL to God's redemptive plan revealed in the Bible: this is however not an exhaustive list:

Psalm 36:7 "How precious is your lovingkindness O God, therefore, the children of men put their trust in the shadow of Your wings."

Psalm 103:11,17 "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him" (ESV)

"But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children" (Psalm 103:11, 17 ESV).

Jeremiah 31:3 states: "The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

John 3:16 declares: "For God SO loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but everlasting life."

John 13:1 reveals: "when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

Ephesians 2:4,5 states about the believers: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)". (Ephesians 2:4-5 NKJV)

1 John 3:16 states: "By this we know love because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren".

1 John 4:10 reveals: "Herein is the love of God, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and gave His only begotten Son to be a propitiation (removing the wrath of God) for our sins."

Romans 5:9 declares: "God demonstrated His love to us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."

And Romans 5:5 states about the believers: "God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

The love of God has been revealed in the life, death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of Jesus Christ at God's right hand of omnipotent power. And God continues to pour out His love into the hearts of believers through the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit throughout the centuries until today.

This is the love of God that has been hidden throughout the ages but has NOW been revealed to us in Christ Jesus. No greater love has there ever been in the world, is there in the world at this moment, and no greater love will there ever be.

2. The love of God embraced

-- My friend's many people know OF the love of God, but this love does not possess them, this love of God does not own them.

Can we use such a word? Should the love of God possess us?

Many people are strangers to God's love in their souls. It is not a revelation in their souls. Paul, however, was owned by this love. Listen to what Paul prays in Ephesians for the believers in 3:14-20 "that you may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may live in you by faith, and that you may be GROUNDED and ROOTED in love, that you may know the love of God which surpasses knowledge, the height, breadth, depth, and width and be filled with the fullness of God..."

The fullness of God by the Holy Spirit is intimately connected to knowing the love of God! They are inseparable. Therefore, we see also that in the preceding verses in Romans 8 that Paul spoke about the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. And then at the end of this great chapter the love of God is mentioned three times (in verse 35,37,39) directly and indirectly a few times in verse 32-34.

-- In 1 Corinthians 13 we also see Paul saying that the love of God is the greatest of all things!!

He gives us definitions of what love is:

Love is patient, love is kind, love is not puffed up, love does not boast, love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth, love keeps no record of evil, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. We see the full manifestation of the love of God in the life of Jesus Christ.

--Have YOU seen this friend? Is the love of God a present reality in your life? How tragic it would be to know OF the love of God but not to know it experientially by the Holy Spirit? And this love of God is what Jesus is interceding about, that the love within the Trinity becomes the

love within our souls towards God and our neighbors. Jesus prayed this to God the Father for the believers before He died: "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26 NKJV).

-- Back to our text: Our text says in verse 31: If God is for us who can be against us?

The great question: How do I know God is for me? How do I know that no charge will be brought against me now and on judgment day? How do I know that I'm one of the elect of God?

Answer: You have grasped the meaning and are savoring the reality of verse 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?"

If God did not spare His only begotten Son if God did not spare his greatest gift, His most precious gift, which is Jesus, how will He not give us all things? In other words those who have grasped that Jesus Christ is the greatest gift, the most precious gift of all, that God could offer, and embraced salvation in Christ, and the Spirit of Christ within, then and only then can you have the assurance that nothing will separate you from God (verse 35,38). The revelation must sink in deep. CHRIST is the greatest gift...greater than riches, greater than a faithful marriage partner, greater than family members receiving Christ, greater than children, greater than family, friends, a good paying job, success, academic accomplishments, or big gifts...He is the Greatest Treasure!! Do you know this friend? Are you satisfied with all that God is for you in Christ Jesus? Are you abundantly satisfied with Christ Jesus and the rivers of his pleasures (Psalm 36:6-9)?

Do you live as if He is the most precious Being in the Universe? That was what Paul believed. "If God did not spare His own Son, how much more will He not with Him give us all things?"

-- There is, of course, a great misunderstanding to what the “all things” of verse 32 point to. Wealth, health and prosperity preachers would say: “you see this verse says God wants to make you rich and wealthy! The ‘all things’ in this verse, of course, means all the things that will work for our Christlikeness and conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (verse 29). And that will include suffering as our text indicates. The “all things” in verse 32 refer to all things that we need to live godly, Christ-exalting, Christ-conforming lives.

3. The invincible love of God in Christ

-- Our text makes it clear that the love of God is indestructible, invincible and unassailable. It is indestructible and invincible because it is the love **IN** Christ. God and Christ are indestructible and therefore God’s love is indestructible as well. And it is invincible for the elect only. And who are the elect? Those whose greatest treasure is Jesus Christ, His finished work, and His Person.

-- Is the greatest attribute of God, not His love?? (See John 3:16, 1 John 4:9, Romans 5:5, Romans 5:9). That might be wrong to say because we know that God is a unity and unchangeable in all His divine perfections as the church fathers would say. God cannot be divided. It is interesting though that Paul makes the comment and says not that nothing will separate us from the justice of God, or the wrath of God, or the mercy or grace of God, but from the LOVE of God! In other words, nothing will separate us from God’s intention to bless us and give of himself to us forever! We know that no-one in this world ever is separated from God. Those who are going to hell will experience the wrath of God forever. They will experience His punishment. They will not be separated from God! When Paul says nothing will separate believers from the love of God, it means nothing will separate us from God and all of His goodness and mercy. But why did Paul by the Holy Spirit use that word: love? Is it not because the love of God is most closely connected to the plan of God's redemption and our eternal hope in glory? It is the love of God that gave Jesus Christ to this world,

and it is the love of God that is being poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). The first section of the fruit of the Spirit is love according to Galatians 5:22.

And to underline the invincibility of this love, God wants us to know that the following 17 things would not be able to separate us from His love in Christ:

-- Note that our love for God is not that which is invincible, but the love of God in Christ towards us. We should always boast about the perfect invincible love of God in Christ and not about our feeble, imperfect love, but the love that God pours into our hearts that enables us to love Him and our fellow human beings.

-- This text lists 17 things that will not separate the elect of God from God's love: (Point 1-7 from Commentary of the Bible by Adam Clarke)

1) **Tribulation**, “grievous affliction, or distress of any kind; from φλιβω to compress, oppress, straiten, &c.; anything by which a man is rendered miserable”.

2) **Distress**, “στενοχωρια, a word of nearly the same import with the former, but more intense in its signification. It signifies straitness, being hemmed in on every side, without the possibility of getting out or escaping; from στενος, strait or narrow, and χωρος, a place” signifies internal affliction e.x. anxiety, panic attacks or depression.

3) **Persecution**, “διωγμος, from διωκω, to pursue, press upon, prosecute, signifies such pursuing as an enemy uses in order to overtake the object of his malice, that he may destroy him”: affliction from the outside from human beings.

4) **Famine**, “λιμος, from λειπω, to fail; the total want of bread, and all the necessities of life.”

5) **Nakedness**, “γυμνοτης, being absolutely without clothing; forcibly expressed by the derivation of the word γυιαμοναεχων, having one's limbs only, being totally unclothed.”

6) **Peril**, “κινδυνος, a state of extreme and continued danger, perplexing and distressing with grievous forebodings and alarms; derived from κινεῖται σοδυνας, it excites anguish; because much evil is felt, and much more feared.”

7) **Sword**, “μαχαίρα, slaughter; the destruction of life, and especially beheading, and such like, done by the order of the civil magistrate; for the word is used in this epistle, Ro 13:4, to signify the authority and power which he has of judicially terminating life; i.e. of inflicting capital punishment.”

8) **Death**, “no kind of death, not any death you may die through sickness, torture, a long sickbed or a sudden accident leading to death, etc.”

9) **Life**, “not any life form or being that exists or the quality of life you now experience.”

10) **Angels**, “not God’s holy angels who are sent to minister to his saints if it were possible for them not to do their duty or be obedient to God’s command or if they become evil.”

11) **Principalities**, “referring to human authorities in government or the demonic world, not any government, evil or good or any dictator or any chief demon or Satan himself.”

12) **Powers**, “referring to lesser powers than principalities, human or demonic.”

13) **Height**, “nothing in space in God’s created order, in the universe.”

14) **Depth**, “probably referring to the sea, nothing in the depths of the sea or anything unknown to us.”

15) **Things present**, “anything that was made by man e.x. a hydrogen bomb or an atomic bomb or any weapon of war or any deadly virus or sickness or machine or Medical invention or pill created for evil or good.”

16) **Things to come**, “anything that can be conceived by man or demon or angel or circumstances or flow of events or anything to be understood as a misfortune.”

17) **Not any other created thing** “anything living, any being, any animal, any bird or sea creature with or without consciousness or anything that we do not know of.”

Is the point clear? If you are born again not even the sin that you battle with will separate you from the love of God! Nothing! There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1).

-- Paul says he is persuaded that these things will not be able to separate us from the love of God! He is convinced! Paul expressed a similar confidence in Philippians 1:6 when he said to the believers in Phillipi “being confident that the good work that He started He will finish” and in 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24 Paul had the same confidence for the believers in Thessalonica when he prayed for the believers: “May the God of peace sanctify you wholly and preserve your body, soul, and spirit faultless unto the day of Christ. Faithful is He who called you, who will also do it!”

Why was Paul thus persuaded? Why did he have such confidence in the believers’ eternal security and salvation? The answer is that he had it because He knew God gave us His best, His Son to die on a cross in history! That was the greatest gift. Therefore the abiding Holy Spirit will be forever with those who belong to God. That is the logic of this whole chapter and the last verses of Romans 8. God gave us His Son, his best, His most precious gift and He gave us His Spirit. And if God gave us His best He will give us all the other things necessary to be eternally secure in Christ.

We are MORE than conquerors through Christ that loved us! Verse 37

Lastly:

-- If God did not spare His only begotten Son, the implication from this text is that He will not spare you too, and all the believers in Christ! Your life as a sacrifice (Romans 12:1,2) will have no saving (atoning merit) effect of course, but it will not be spared in the service to God. The life of the apostle Paul and the early church testified to this fact. The church will advance through suffering, "We are counted as sheep for the slaughter...we are killed ALL day long.. (Verse 36)" Jesus said: Everyone who wants to be my disciple must deny himself, take up the cross daily and follow Me (Luke 9:27). That means daily death to self and death to selfish and sinful desires!

-- Jesus was like a sheep, slaughtered for our redemption. And so will His followers be like sheep among wolves and they will be persecuted and be mistreated and insulted for His glory.

Jesus paid the highest price for our redemption. And so will His followers pay a price to experience His never ending glory. As one preacher said: Salvation is a free gift we must receive by faith, but to enter God's eternal glory will cost us everything.

But rejoice in the Lord disciple of Christ, because nothing a Christian will experience, nothing that he/she has experienced and nothing he/she is experiencing will separate him/her from the love of God in Christ Jesus, because Jesus Christ is ever interceding for them at the right hand of omnipotent power in heaven!

1) The love of God has been demonstrated through the life, death, resurrection, Ascension and intercession of Christ,

2) the love of Christ through the Holy Spirit is being poured out into the hearts of those who have embraced the greatest gift: Jesus Christ and for those who believe in God

3) and nothing and no one will be able to separate the elect, God's people, from this love in Christ Jesus!

God has conquered by the love and blood of Christ in history;

God is conquering by the abiding Holy Spirit within us, and

God will conquer because His love is invincible in Christ as He intercedes for believers!