

God is on Your Side!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 April 2019

Preacher: Fred Stone

[0 : 00] When I was in elementary school, the best part of my day was recess. And I'm sure that's true for a lot of you. Every day, it seems, all the boys in my class, we either played football or baseball.

Softball, actually, because they wouldn't let us play baseball. Every day began the same way. Two boys would pick teams. They would alternate choosing one boy.

You know how that works. When I picked a team, I always picked David or Greg. They were the best athletes. The goal is to win, right?

So you pick the best athletes to be on your team. If someone else chose a team, I always wanted to be on the team with either David or Greg. We didn't get to do it together, all three, but one or the other.

You know from your experience, just about everything we do, there are certain people we want to have on our side.

[1 : 02] If you have to do a project at school this week, in a certain class, as soon as it's announced there's a project, I want you to work in groups.

Somebody comes to your mind that you want to work with. You want to be in your group or on your side. You want that smart kid who's going to do all the work for you.

I know everybody knows how it works. It work even. It's your job. If you've got to work with someone, that person's name's already popped into your mind.

Everything in life. We want to make sure that we're on the right side. We want to make sure that the right person is on our side.

Well, when it comes to just living life in this world and being ready to live in eternity, who do you want on your side?

[2 : 01] If you're a Christian, you obviously want our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus to be on your side.

And what I want to ask you right now is, are you confident that God the Father and the Lord Jesus are already on your side?

Do you have any fears? Do you have any doubts? Do you have any doubts about whether or not they are? I want you to turn with me this morning to Romans 8.

And if you're a Christian, hopefully this will clear up any doubts. This will cause any fears to go away. Romans chapter 8.

We find one of the strongest statements in all the Bible that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are on our side.

[3 : 01] We have just completed a study of Romans 8 on Wednesday nights. When we came to the last section, 8 verses 31 through 39, I thought then, I want to come back to this, at least a part of this, when we observe the Lord's Supper.

It was already planned. Because this is a powerful statement. Excuse me. Of God's love. God's favor.

And I want you to read with me. Romans chapter 8. This morning, just verses 31 through 34. What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us? 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?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

[4 : 16] More than that, who was raised. Who is at the right hand of God. Who, indeed, is interceding for us. Thank you very much.

I think some of those guys singing up here are wearing perfume or something because I hadn't had any trouble until the first service.

I started preaching and right at the very beginning. So, I'm not saying anything, but I have some suspicions this morning. I hope you see in these verses, there is a strong emphasis that God is for us.

In fact, we're his elect. God chose us to be on his side, to be his children. If you read verses 29 and 30, you'll see a strong emphasis in God doing that in us, for us.

Right now, I want us to focus on God is for us. And he promises, he demonstrates it, as we'll see in a moment. He will never allow anyone or anything to separate us from him and his love.

[5 : 36] Let's look at it. Number one, God is for us. Before we look at that on the screen, but the way Paul goes through this, he answers, he actually asks questions.

That he doesn't expect anyone to answer because the answer is obvious, rhetorical questions. And so, he asks questions that, as Christians, we know the answer.

What I want to do is I want to focus on his answers. Number one, God is for us. Therefore, no one or nothing can prevail against us.

Look at verse 31 again. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Now, we need to just be clear.

Paul is not saying, he's not even implying that no one can be against us because we know that's not true. People are against us. Many people are against God and against God's people.

[6 : 38] You may know some people that have already come to mind that you know they have an end for you. So, God, this passage is not saying, since God is for us, no one can be against us.

What it is saying is, though, listen. If Almighty God is for us, it doesn't matter who else might be against us.

Because if God is on our side, the win is guaranteed. God's already at work in our lives, even in the midst of difficulty. One of the most well-known passages in all the Bible, but especially in Romans 8, is verse 28.

Look at it. I'll put it on the screen. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Paul is telling us more than the fact that God is working for us.

He's making the point that God's always on our side. God is always working in the life of his people. If you are trusting in Christ, he is your Lord and Savior.

[7 : 44] God is always at work in your life, even in terrible, in the midst of terrible things, evil things. But he's working according to his good plan, what we could consider his ultimate good purpose for you and in the universe.

The story of Joseph is an excellent example of this. Most of you know the story, so I'm going to give you just some of the highlights. Joseph grew up in a godly home.

He was taught about God and things of God. But he had sorry brothers. I mean, they had evil in their heart. They hated him. They were jealous of him.

And they so despised him that they sold him into slavery. Sold him to slave traders who took him from their home to a different country, to Egypt.

He was there. A foreign land. Foreign culture. Didn't know the language. A slave. But he didn't rebel against God.

[8 : 50] He continued to trust God. God's hand was on him. The man that he worked for prospered. But then he was falsely accused of a crime he didn't commit and imprisoned.

From the time he was 17 years old until he was 30 years old, Joseph was away from home, away from family. He was suffering as a slave or as a prisoner.

But God's hand was always on him. God was working. It was evil what happened to him. God was always working in the midst of that evil though for what Joseph would live to see was God's good purpose.

When he was 30 years old, God providentially worked in such a way that he was elevated to the place of being second in command over all Egypt. And in that position, Joseph was able to save literally his family from starvation.

And from that family came the nation of Israel. And from the nation of Israel came our Savior. God worked in a great way in the midst of that difficulty, that evil in Joseph's life for what was ultimately his good purpose.

[10:11] And what I want you to understand is if you're a child of God, if you are right now, you may have someone or something pressing against you at this very moment.

But I want you to have confidence that God's mighty hand is on you. And his hand has the power. And his heart has the love to work in your life and bring about what is his good and your ultimately good purpose.

Now you may think to yourself, well how can I be sure of that? It's one thing just to say it. How can I be sure? Look next in verse 32. God gave his son for us and will also graciously give us whatever we need.

Look in verse 32. Look at the actual verse. 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?

[11:21] Now I want you to note what he's saying here. God gave his own son for us. He sent his son into the world to die on a cross and be our substitute and pay the penalty for our sins.

That's what God did. Now do you really think that God, after doing that, after giving his best, do you think that God would do anything less than what is best for you?

You know, Jesus brought up a, made this point, brought up a good question in the context of teaching that we ought to as Christians trust God and pray.

We ought to really believe that God wants what's best for us and we ought to be people of prayer. I want you to look at it. It's in the Sermon on the Mount. It's in Matthew chapter 7. He's already told them that I ought to be praying.

He says, Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? That made people laugh. That's ridiculous.

[12:32] No one would do that. Then verse 11. If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

God delights in giving good gifts to his children. If you ever doubt that, God gave his most precious gift in giving his son.

But let's just pause here for a moment. It says, How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him? How much do you ask God for good gifts in prayer?

What is your prayer life like? What does it involve? Do you really and truly look to God as your gracious heavenly Father? Do you humbly bow before him, worship him, praise him, seeking his will?

And at the same time, making your needs known. Asking him to work in your life in certain ways. In the book of James, James makes a statement that sometimes we have not because we ask not or we don't ask the right way.

[13:53] Paul wants us to see here that God is for us. He has already given us his most costly gift, his son.

Therefore, we can trust him to give us anything else he needs, that we need. He will not give us less when he's already given us his best.

Let's look at one more reason why we need to be confident that God is on our side. Number three, God has justified us and Jesus Christ is praying for us. Here's the questions. Verse 33, who can bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. He says God has justified us, it means he has declared us like a judge in a courtroom. He has declared us to be right with him through faith in Jesus.

And what Paul wants us to see here is nobody can change that. If you're a Christian, God has declared you to be right with him through faith in Jesus and what he did when he died on the cross.

[15:00] No one can ever change your standing before God. No one can actually make you guilty before God.

But let's be honest. Don't you feel guilty at times? Sometimes our conscience throws up old sins and causes us to think.

You can't be right with God after what you've done. It may be five years ago. It may be something that happened before you became a Christian. It may be something that happened that you truly poured out your heart to God in confession and repentance.

You know you were forgiven at that time. But something happens. Maybe somebody makes a comment. Maybe you see something happen. You read something.

And you think, how could God forgive me after I've done something like that? Or maybe somebody throws it up to you.

[16:12] Maybe someone that you're close to. Maybe somebody that you know doesn't like you. But they want to throw up something from your past. Something that you've been forgiven for.

And you get to dwelling on it. And you feel guilty. I want you to understand that if you are united to Jesus by faith, God has declared you not guilty.

Jesus paid the penalty for that sin that somebody's throwing up to you. When he died on the cross, that which you remember that you did, that your conscience is bothering you about, that which you confessed, repented of, Jesus paid the penalty for that.

He took the punishment that it did deserve, that you deserved. Jesus has lived a righteous, perfect life for you. God's credited that to your account. Look up how this chapter begins, Romans 8, 1.

It assures us that if we're trusting Jesus, look at it. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. You are not guilty by virtue of your faith in Jesus and the fact that he has paid the penalty for your sins.

[17:30] Now, let me pause here for a moment. This does not mean that we as Christians never sin. And it certainly doesn't mean that our present sins don't matter.

They do matter. Right now, if you are in the midst of rebelling against God in any particular area of your life, if there's sin in your life right now that you just refuse to admit, confess, and turn from, you ought to feel guilty.

Because your fellowship with God has been broken by your rebellion against him, by your willful disobedience. That's why it's important for us to confess our sins throughout our lives as Christians.

As God's children, with faith and trust in Jesus, the penalty for our sins has been paid. But our ongoing fellowship, closeness with God, it can certainly be interrupted when we turn away from God, when we ignore him or just flat out disobey him.

That's why Jesus taught us in his model prayer, pray, forgive us our trespasses or debts. John, in his first letter, he tells us if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[19:04] John says that because we as Christians sin, and it's a serious thing. But when we confess our sins, he does forgive us. He cleanses us. He wipes the slate clean.

We are not guilty because Jesus took our punishment. Do you have trouble overcoming guilt? From past sin?

Look at verse 33. He says, who 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.

Jesus has not only paid the penalty for our sins, he is at the right hand of the Father now speaking up for you. The idea is that Jesus is in heaven. He's paid the penalty for our sins.

He has risen triumphantly over sin, death, and the devil. His presence before the Lord, beside the Lord in heaven, that is a constant intercession for us that we are forgiven.

[20:12] We are right with God. Our sin is no longer to be held against us. If you are trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you've been forgiven so you can believe God's word every day, it will not change.

You need to trust Jesus Christ every day. He will not change. God is for you. If you're a Christian, one with Christ in faith, God is for you.

And nothing in this world or beyond can separate you from his love. I want to tell a story that greatly, just perfectly illustrates this.

It's true. On August the 16th, 1987, Northwest Airlines flight number 225 crashed just after taking off outside the Detroit airport.

One hundred and fifty-five people were killed. One person survived. She was four years old. Her name, Cecilia.

[21:23] News accounts say that when Cecilia was found, they didn't believe she'd been on the plane. They thought no one could survive this crash.

She must have been in one of the cars on the road that the plane crashed on. But then they checked the passenger list, and sure enough, her name was on it.

She was on the plane. She survived. And so, as the crash investigators began to work, trying to piece together the details of the crash, and talked to this little four-year-old girl, Cecilia, the mystery of her survival was cleared up.

It was cleared up by the story of what her mother did. Listen, the reason the experts say that Cecilia survived is that as the plane was falling to the ground, her mother unbuckled her own seatbelt, got down on her knees in front of this little girl, and wrapped her arms around her as tight as she possibly could, and refused to let go as they approached death.

That mother's thought, as that plane was crashing, nothing is going to be able to separate Cecilia from my love.

[23 : 01] True story. True story. This is the kind of love our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus have for us. You can read it through all of chapter 8 of Romans.

The Lord's Supper now is an excellent symbol of that love, that God is for us. When you take the bread, that symbolizes the broken body.

When you take that cup, that symbolizes the shed blood of God's most precious gift, His Son Jesus, that He sent into this world to save us.

I want to read a few verses of Scripture that will be on the screen. As we prepare to observe the Lord's Supper right now, it's important for us to understand this is a very serious matter.

Would you look with me, Romans, or excuse me, 1 Corinthians 11, verse 27. Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord.

[24 : 11] Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. This is the Lord's Supper that we're observing this morning.

And so if Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you are invited to participate. You do not have to be a member of our church. But the Scripture is very clear that we just read, you see it on the screen. This is not to be taken lightly. It's only for committed Christians who are serious about living in a right relationship with the Lord and with one another.

So we need to examine ourselves before we begin. If you're not a Christian, please do not partake. If there is sin in your life, and what I'm talking about is, you know how you're living in disobedience to God, and you're just unwilling to do anything about it.

You won't stop it. You won't confess and repent of it. Don't observe the Lord's Supper. But if you are trusting Christ and Him alone for your salvation, for your right standing with God, and while none of us are perfectly following Christ, if you know there's nothing in your life that you're in rebellion about, then you partake.

[25 : 28] The Lord Jesus makes us worthy through His death for our sins, through His righteous life that is now counted as ours through faith in Him.

So with this in mind, I want to have a prayer. Then our musicians are going to play a short piece. And as we pray and they are playing, let's continue in an attitude of prayer and prepare ourselves to observe the Lord's Supper.

Father, thank you for choosing us to be on your side. Thank you, Father, for such promises in your word that through faith in Jesus, we are forgiven.

We're no longer guilty. Help us, Lord, as we observe the Lord's Supper this morning, to let it just sink in. How great is your love that you sent Jesus to die.

Lord Jesus, help us to let it sink in. How great is your love that you gave up your life to die for our sin. Lord, if there are people in this room who are not Christians, cause them to realize how serious their guilt is from living life their way instead of your way.

[26 : 58] Lord, so work in them to give them the desire to admit their sin, to turn from it, to trust Jesus as their Savior and call upon Him to save them now.

For every Christian in this room, help us to so prepare ourselves that this is truly a time of worship, expressing gratitude, and joining together as a church family to proclaim the gospel.

And just in an attitude of prayer, let's listen to the Lord and prepare to observe the Lord's Supper. Amen.