

God Is For Us

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: 05 April 2020

Preacher: Fred Stone

[0 : 00] Lisa told me a story several years ago about the debilitating power of fear. A family in her community had a break-in in their home.

Several personal items were stolen. Well, from that time on, they lived in fear that it would happen again. They dealt with their fear by never leaving their house unattended.

Either the husband or the wife would always stay at home, as they put it, to guard the house. They took turns going wherever they did.

They took turns going to the store, going to church, even going to family gatherings. Now, everyone who knew their situation made fun of them.

At family gatherings, someone would ask the one who was there, Well, where's Mary? Or where's John? Knowing the answer.

[1 : 07] But the man or the woman, they would always respond very seriously. He or she is at home, guarding the house.

Now, that man and that woman, they were prisoners of their own fears and insecurities.

They apparently had no concept of acting responsibly and trusting God with their lives, their possessions, their everything.

Now, some Christians have similar insecurities. Do you? If I gave you a piece of paper this morning and asked you to write down your honest feelings about your relationship with God, what would you write?

Would it be more, if you're honest now, would it be more about your fears? Or would it be more about the peace and joy you have because of your relationship with God?

[2 : 18] If you were to be totally honest, would you write down more about your doubts or your trust and confidence in God?

Romans 8 is one of the most well-known and well-loved chapters in the Bible because it gives us as Christians reasons why we should be joyful, why we should have peace, why we should be able to live in confidence because we're trusting God.

Now, many Christians consider that Romans 8, verses 31-39 contain the most convincing and comforting promises in all the Bible.

I want us to look at those verses this morning. If you would, open your Bible to Romans 8, verses 31-39, and I want us to see how God so powerfully assures us in these verses that He is for us.

You know, we are going through an unprecedented time of crisis in our country right now. It's something that we can't get away from.

[3 : 38] It's on our minds constantly. It's something that every rational person knows it's real, and we need to take it very seriously.

We as Christians, we have and will suffer loss during this crisis. Not all Christians, but some of us, we will suffer maybe a loss of health, job, money.

Some may even lose their lives. You and I, here even in Pickens County, we may suffer some kind of real loss during this crisis.

But I want us to understand, neither this virus nor any form of evil will defeat you or me if we are God's children.

God's Word is clear. He is for us. I want you to make that personal. I want you to write your name in this line.

[4 : 50] God is for, put your name there. I am confident that God is for Fred Stone. Romans chapter 8, verses 31 through 39, explain why we can have such confidence that God is for us.

Look first in verses 32 and 33. God will never allow anything to destroy us. Let's read these verses. 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?

Now look at that first question. What then shall we say to these things? These things refers to what's been said in the previous verses.

For example, in verse 28, a verse that I have called attention to the last two Sundays. It says, 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.

[6 : 08] Now think about it. Paul introduces the promises of verses 31 through 39 that explain how God is for us by reminding us that God works in all things for our good.

Now look at the second question. If God is for us, who can be against us? Did you note, Paul does not ask who is against us?

Because the truth is, many things are against us. Many things are against God and God's people. The devil is against us every day. And sometimes he stirs up some people to oppose us. There are all kinds of sinful and evil forces that are against us, that we do battle with.

And what we're dealing with right now in our country, this crisis, it is against us. Paul's point is that since God is for us, it does not matter who is against us.

[7 : 22] It doesn't matter who or what opposes us. Having God on our side really is all that we need. But Paul doesn't stop here.

He points out the most convincing way that God has shown that He is for us and that nothing can ever destroy us. Look at verse 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?

God has already given us the greatest gift that He could give. He gave His Son. There's nothing more precious to God than His Son.

Now, if you are a parent, you understand that perfectly well. Think about what Paul is saying. If God has given His Son for us, we can be confident that God will never withhold anything from us that we need to serve His purpose.

For illustration's sake, this is not going to happen, but let's just pretend. Suppose the president of BMW contacts you tomorrow and says that he has chosen you to receive a brand new BMW.

[8 : 50] All you've got to do is come to the Spartanburg plant, show your identification, and you can drive it home. It's yours. Now, what if you go to the plant tomorrow?

You tell them your name. You show them your ID. They take you to where the car is parked. You get in there. You get ready to crank it up, but it won't start.

It won't do anything. Well, you get out, and the people who are getting ready, you know, who are helping you with this, they pop the hood. There's no battery there.

There's no battery in that brand new BMW. Now, that's not going to prevent you from getting the car. If the president of BMW has promised you that car, he's going to make sure that whatever you need to drive it home, you're going to get.

Think about it. If God has already given his son for us, we can rest assured that he will give us everything else that we need, everything that we need to serve him, to be who it is he's called us to be in this world, in our families, in this community.

[10 : 18] God will never let anything destroy us. The next thing Paul tells us, God will never allow anything to condemn us. Look in verses 33 and 34.

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. More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Now, look at that first question. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? Or we could rephrase that, who can accuse God's chosen people?

This question brings up the possibility of a Christian being accused of wrongdoing. Well, that does happen, doesn't it? Sometimes our own conscience even accuses us.

Haven't you ever thought, how can I expect God to forgive me after doing something like that? The devil also accuses us.

[11 : 27] In fact, that's one of his main jobs. He is the accuser. He accuses us, he condemns us, and he tempts us to doubt that God has really forgiven us, even though we're trusting in Jesus and him alone for our salvation.

But Paul wants us to understand that if we are united to Christ by faith, it doesn't matter who accuses us. It doesn't matter if it comes from within or without.

God has, he tells us, justified us. Look at the phrase, it is God who justifies. That means he has declared us to be righteous. He has declared us to be right with him, and it's all through our faith in Jesus.

Now, this does not mean, Paul's not saying that Christians never sin. We do, and we know that we do. But God declares that we are right with him, that we are not guilty before him, because Jesus has paid the penalty for our sins.

He has taken our punishment through his death on the cross. If you have confessed your sins to God, I want you to know that he has forgiven you, and any lingering guilt that you have is unhealthy guilt.

[12:56] In fact, it's false guilt. We can be confident that whenever we sin against God, if we confess our sin, agree with God about it, turn from it, repent, God does forgive us.

He cleanses us, and he restores us to fellowship with himself. Look at this verse from 1 John chapter 1. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you've sinned against God, but you're denying it, you're trying to act like everything's okay, if you've sinned against God, but you refuse to come to him in true, humble confession and repentance, you should feel guilty.

That's real guilt. Now, sin in the life of a Christian does not destroy our relationship with God, but it certainly does destroy our close fellowship with him.

That's why it is so important that we confess our sins as soon as we're convicted, as soon as we are aware that we have sinned against God, we have dishonored him, we need to confess it.

[14:22] We need to talk to God about it. We need to repent of it. Change our mind. Turn from it. Confession restores our real fellowship with our Heavenly Father.

And when we humbly, brokenly confess our sins to God, we're demonstrating to him our desire to please him, our holy and loving Heavenly Father.

Now look with me at the next question. Verse 34, the first part. Who is to condemn? Just like the previous question, there are many sources of condemnation in our lives.

Again, our conscience, the devil, our enemies. But Paul ignores all sources of condemnation by assuring us that our Lord Jesus Christ, he is at the right hand of our Father interceding, speaking up for us.

He's doing it right now. Look at the last part of verse 34. Christ Jesus, the one who died, more than that who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

[15:47] Look at how Jesus is described in that verse. It says he died. He died on the cross for our sins. It says he was raised. Jesus was brought back from the dead.

He was raised by the power of God. And when God did that, he was demonstrating that he has accepted Jesus' sacrifice for us.

The scripture verse says, he is now at the right hand of God interceding for us. Think about Jesus as our defense attorney. He's sitting right beside God the judge, defending us, speaking up for us, letting the Father know, he or she's with me.

I've paid the penalty for their sins. I've made them right with you. And they're trusting me and resting in me for that. I can't imagine a more powerful way to describe how safe and secure we are if we are trusting in, resting in the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

You know, right now, there's much uncertainty about what is happening to us, happening all around us in terms of physical health, financial stability, even our family's safety.

[17:22] We really don't know what God's will is about any of these things. We don't know God's will in advance about such things.

But let's just be honest. The truth is, the reality is, everyone eventually dies. You, me, our family members.

The truth is, we will leave everything we own behind. our money, our material possessions. We're not going to hold on to these things forever.

They're just a part of life in this world. We're not going to take anything with us when we leave this world. You know, what I'm describing now, this is just a part of living in a fallen, sinful world.

It was true before the present coronavirus crisis, and it'll be true after this passes. But we, as God's children, we can have confidence that right now in this world and for all eternity in heaven, that God is for us.

[18 : 43] God is with us. And God will take care of us. In Christ, united Christ by faith, we are eternally safe.

and eternally secure. Let's look at this last promise. God will never let anything destroy us or condemn us, and God will never allow anything to separate us from His love and the love of Christ. Look with me, if you would, at verse 35, then verses 37 through 39. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that 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.

A powerful statement, isn't it? Paul does his best to describe how nothing in all creation can ever separate us from His love and the love of the Lord Jesus.

[20 : 13] In his book, *In the Grip of Grace*, Brian Chappell tells a true story that's one of the best illustrations of the love of God and the love of Christ that I have ever read.

Listen to this. On a Sunday, August the 16th, 1987, Northwest Airlines Flight 225 crashed just after taking off from the Detroit Airport.

155 people were killed. One survived. A four-year-old girl from Tempe, Arizona named Cecilia. News accounts say that when rescuers found Cecilia, they did not believe she had been on the plane. The crash was so devastating it did not seem possible that anyone could have survived. Investigators first thought that Cecilia had been a passenger in one of the cars on the highway where the airliner crashed. But then they checked the flight's register, passenger register, and there was Cecilia's name.

[21 : 28] As the crash investigators meticulously pieced together the details of the crash along with Cecilia's personal account, the mystery of her survival disappeared in the story of her mother's heroic efforts.

The experts explain that the reason Cecilia survived is that as the plane was falling out of the air, Cecilia's mother, Paula, unbuckled her own seatbelt, got down on her knees in front of her daughter, wrapped her arms and body around Cecilia, and would not let her go.

Nothing could separate that child from her mother and her mother's love. Not tragedy or disaster, not falling from the sky or the flames that followed on the ground, not life or death.

That is the love that the Lord has for us. That is the kind of love that He has for us today.

Think about it. Jesus covered us with the sacrifice of His own body in order to save us.

[22 : 53] He will never let us go. He will never let you or me go. He He has taken care of us.

He will take care of us. Nothing can ever separate us from His love. Not sin, not circumstances, not even the demons of hell.

I want to encourage you. Read these verses, Romans 8 verses 31 through 39 again today and even this week leading up to Easter.

Keep in mind that this is the Word of God to His children. God is for you. That's what this chapter, that's what this passage is telling us, promising us in great detail.

God is for you. He will not allow anything to destroy you, to condemn you, or to separate you from His love and the love of Jesus Christ.

[24 : 06] If you are not a child of God, I want to encourage you to come to Him now. There is no better time than right now. And the scripture makes the way clear.

Listen to this verse, for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Listen to this promise, but to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

That's describing you. If you'll admit your sin, repent, put your trust in Jesus and call upon Him to save you, He will. You can become a child of God now through faith in Jesus.

I want to close with some familiar words that come from a song that most of us learned as children. But these words, they're not just a children's song.

[25 : 16] These words can provide comfort and assurance to us at any age, at any time, and especially during this time of crisis.

Listen, Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Let's pray together.

Father, Father, we are so grateful for such promises of how you are for us, you are with us, and that you will now never allow anything to destroy us, to condemn us, or to separate us from your love.

Father, I pray right now for Christians, members of our church family, who are struggling with doubt, who lack assurance, and the circumstances of this crisis have made those doubts increase.

Lord, I pray that you will assure them that if they are trusting in Jesus and him alone for their salvation, they are your children.

[26 : 47] You will never leave them nor forsake them. Help them, Father, to rest in the promises of your word.

I pray, Father, that you will replace their doubt with confidence today. I pray, Father, that you will help them to look to you, the objective truth, promises of your word.

And, Father, I pray also that you will work inwardly through your spirit to assure them that you love them, that you have chosen them, that through faith in Jesus, they are and will be eternally secure.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.