Our Complete Confidence In Jesus Christ
Romans 8:31-39

Introduction

Have you ever been disappointed in relationship? Has anyone ever made promises to you and then failed to keep those promises? They promised to stand with you, to be with you, to never leave you, to always love you. Have you ever made a similar promise to someone else?

What have we learned in Romans 8? As Christians—in Christ we have freedom from judgment—no condemnation—freedom from defeat—no obligation freedom from discouragement—no frustration.

We discovered in verse 29 God ‘foreknew us’. God knew everything about us in advance. Do you believe God knows all the good about you and all the bad? God knew in advance the pain and the sorrow, the joy and the pleasure. God knew and chose in the sovereignty of his will to bring you to a place of conformity to that will. God predestines the saints for glory, to be conformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. God calls us with the sound of His word, the invitation of the gospel. God justifies us, that is God gives us a right standing before Him, not just the cleansing of sin, but the right standing in relationship. God makes us clean and pure and holy—so much so—that no power in heaven or earth can bring any accusation against us. God not only calls us with the sound of his word, but also he places us under the shadow of his wing, and the splendor of His world. God glorifies us. The word glorified in verse 30 is in the past tense! This means from God’s perspective your glorification is accomplished, over, done with! We do not have to wait to die to see whether or not we are going to heaven!

What about all the years between the believer’s conversion and consummation?

Will God walk out on me? Will God make promises and break them? Other people made promises and didn’t keep them. Other people made promises to never leave, to always love—and maybe—just maybe—I deserved it. Maybe I said something or did something, or believed something that cause that person to stop trusting me, stop believing in me, stop loving me. Can I do something that would cause God to walk out, give up, abandon the plan of my conformity to Christ and eventual glorification? Is there some test or trial that I may face or am facing that could cause God to walk out on me?

Paul argues in this passage the believer is not only predestined for glory, but also preserved for glory. All who begin—will finish! 100% of those he foreknew—100% will he glorify! No one left behind.

Is there some road, is there some avenue, is there some way that a person forfeits eternal life? Paul walks down several roads and at the end of each road; we see the way guarded by the grace of God!
**God’s Commitment To Withhold Nothing From Us (vv.31-32)**

(v.31) “What then shall we say to these things?” What things? All the things listed in Romans 1-8. Most specifically to the golden chain of redemption listed in verses 28-31. God is causing all things to work together for God’s good. God foreknew us, predestined us, committed to making us like Jesus, called us, justified us, glorified us—

(v.31b) “If God is for us, who can be against us?” In the Greek language—the word ‘if’ in this sense might more properly be translated, ‘since’—Since God is for us who can be against us! If implies there might be some doubt. During the Civil War someone came up to President Lincoln and said, “Oh, Mr. President, I am most anxious that the Lord should be on our side!” Lincoln replied, “That gives me no anxiety at all. The thing I worry about is being on the Lord’s side!” Lincoln was right in his application of the moment!

The Christian does not have to worry about whether or not he or she is on God’s side! Are you in Christ? God is for you! You can put your name in verse 31. God is for Gino Geraci. The Son is for us (Rom.8:34). The Spirit is for us (Rom. 8:26).

How do you know? How can you have such assurance? How can you talk with such confidence? Paul gives three arguments—(1) God promises to withhold nothing—to supply everything we need in order to take care of us! (2) God promises to allow nothing to condemn us (vv.33-34). (3) God promises to allow nothing to separate us from his love! (vv.35-37).

(v.32) “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

**Do you understand Paul’s argument?** He is arguing from the lesser to the greater! If God sacrificed His own Son, while we were sinners, how much more will God give us everything we need as sons, daughters, saints!

What was God willing to sacrifice in order to insure your salvation?

One of the most heart-wrenching stories in the Old Testament is Abraham’s call to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar on Mount Moriah.

Abraham began his pilgrim walk with God by giving up his father. Abraham’s high point came when he was asked to sacrifice his son. Most of us cringe when we read the story.

“Lay not thine hand upon the lad,” said God, “neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son. Thine only son from me” (Gen.22:12). In the Greek Septuagint the word translated withheld is translated spare here in verse 32.
Abraham did not spare Isaac. God did not spare Jesus. Paul may be drawing a deliberate parallel. What would Abraham hold back from God if he was willing to sacrifice his own son? What would God hold back if he was willing to spare his own Son?

Someone may be foolish enough to think—“well God did his part. God gave His Son. Now I will do my part. I am willing to make a contribution to my own salvation. From now on I will be good. From now on I will keep the commandments. From now on I will go to church, read my Bible, give to the poor. I’ll stop being bad. Can you imagine how disgusted God must be with our attempt to contribute to the salvation kitty?

I heard the story of a conversation between a hen and a hog when they passed a church and observed the subject of the pastor’s sermon. “How Can We Help the Poor?” After a moment the hen said, “let’s offer them a ham and egg breakfast!” The Hog replied, “that’s easy for you to say. All you have to do is make a contribution, you’re asking me to make a commitment”.

John Phillip’s tells the story; “A wealthy Roman had a son who broke his heart and a slave who commanded his admiration. He decided on his deathbed to disinherit his son and leave everything to his slave, Marcellus. He drew up the papers and called in his son to tell him what he had done. “I have deeded everything to the slave Marcellus,” he said. “However, you may choose one item from my estate for yourself.” “I’ll take Marcellus!” was the son’s reply. When we take Christ, we take all” (Romans p.138).

God’s Contract To Dismiss All Condemnation Toward Us (vv.33-34)

(v.33) “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”

A charge is an accusation. The Greek word is engkalesei KJV “shall lay to the charge of” “to call in” (literal) to bring a charge against or impeach. Thank God Christ is our lawyer and God is the Judge. If we are in Christ we have nothing to worry about.

What is the worst accusation that can be leveled against you? You shouldn’t be saved. You don’t deserve to be rescued. Justified means ‘declared righteous in Christ’. Who are God’s elect? Republicans? No! God’s elect are those who are chosen in Christ Jesus and accepted in Christ Jesus!

Who might accuse you? The most famous accuser in the Bible is the devil (Zech.3:1-7). Your conscience might accuse you. Your wife or husband or children or friends might accuse you. Your family might accuse you. Even your church may accuse you.

You are not worthy to be saved. You did not hand out enough tracts.
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But would if my own conscience condemns me? What if my bitter disappointments and failures and sin accuse me? What if my pain leads to doubt and my doubt to unbelief?

You are in big trouble—if—and look carefully—if you are in charge of your own justification. If you are saved by your good deeds—if you are saved—by keeping the rules—if you can justify—yourself—you can condemn—yourself—but if it is God who justifies—then it must of necessity be God who condemns.

How can I know if I have a right relationship with God? How can I know if I’m really saved?

“And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved of our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God” (I John 3:19-21).

“If accusations are brought against us, we need not fear, for the charges are silenced by the upraised, pierced hands of our Intercessor. If we are to be condemned, it will have to be over Christ’s dead and now resurrected body, which actually is the basis of our salvation! How is that for confidence?”(R. Kent Hughes Romans p.170).

“O.K. smarty pants—what if God accuses me? What if God condemns me?” Let’s think this through. Unless you come to Christ—you are condemned already. But if you come to Christ—why would God condemn you? It is God who justifies. For Him to accuse us after He saved us—would mean that His salvation is a failure and we are still in fact in our sins! When God declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ—the declaration never changes.

I was at a retirement party for the County Sheriff. When the Superior Court Judge came up to talk about the Sheriff he said; “As I judge I don’t give out plaques, I hand down sentences. I hereby order the spirit of excellence and integrity begun by this Sheriff live on in this department”. He may have overstepped his authority. But God the Father is the Judge of the whole universe!

God’s Covenant To Allow Nothing To Separate Us (vv.35-39)

(v.35) “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

The question begs another question—does Christ really love us? Paul answers the question in an earlier chapter 5:8-9; “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His own blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”
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O.K. God can’t fail us. Can we fail God? Is there some trial, test, circumstance, failure, sickness, disease, mental or emotional, personal failure that can separate me from the love of God?

Paul offers some suggestions; “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Look at the word ‘distress’. Stenochoria. Stenos means narrow—and chora means space. The literal meaning is closed in, need room, we might even think it terms of tight squeeze. Another meaning in our modern vernacular would be “in a bind”. It means hemmed in by hard circumstances until you find yourself in trouble! The word persecute—means to follow after—we might even say, ‘in hot pursuit’ (its not paranoia if they really are after you!). The word famine means the absence of food. Nakedness means more than just no clothes—it could mean indecency on parade. For Paul it meant inadequate clothing for the cold. The word peril means ‘risk’ or danger. We may not have the same perils that Paul faced, but we face spiritual dangers and we are at risk.

Paul is offering a laundry list of autobiographical circumstances. Paul isn’t speaking as a great theologian or weighty academician. He is speaking as a Christian man who has faced these circumstances and more.

(v.36) Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 to remind us hardship, heartache, pain, trial, sorrow are nothing new for the saint of God! God doesn’t shelter us from hardship! God knows that our difficulties become opportunities for our spiritual growth (see Rom.5:3-5—in case you forgot!). In Romans 8:28 Paul assured us those difficulties are not working against us but for us! God permits trials for our good and His glory! We endure trials for His sake. Will God abandon us because we are experiencing trials, sufferings, hardships, which He has allowed for our sake and His glory? No! It is been my experience that in pain and sorrow—we press close together—I experience a greater sense of the presence of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

For the person who says, “God must not love me, look at all the pain, sorrow misery, persecution, oppression, opposition I face!”

(v.37) “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”.

The original language uses the superlative—super-conquerors—not just victors—super victors. All those sufferings—pain and hardship—God has given to us so that we can experience the joy of being victors, conquerors. The idea is we win—and we win again—and we win over and over again. We are kind of like the NY Yankees—the Yankees win again! How many championships do you need? How many do you have? It all depends on who is keeping score and how the score is finally reckoned in the end.
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When Chrysostom was brought before the Roman Emperor, the Emperor threatened him with banishment if he remained a Christian. Chrysostom replied, “Thou canst not banish me for this world is my father’s house.” ‘But I will slay thee,” said the Emperor. “Nay, thou canst not,” said the noble champion of the faith, “For my life is hid with Christ in God”. “I will take away thy treasures.” “Nay, but thou canst not for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there.” “But I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left.” Nay, thou canst not, for I have a friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee; for there is nothing that thou canst do to hurt me.” (quoted from Kent Hughes p.171—who quotes it from Alan Johnson, who quotes it from Henry Hart Milman, History of Christianity Vol. 4).

(vv.38-39) “For I am persuaded” (perfect passive; pepeismai);
“I stand convinced” or “I am certain”
But some of you are still not persuaded. Jesus Christ loves us and gives us the victory. “Well if I do this—God will do that!” This is not a promise with conditions attached! No one gets left behind. Every person God starts with—He finishes with!

Philipp Melanchthon died in 1560 with verse 31 of this chapter on his lips; “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Exactly 100 years later John Bunyon sat at his desk in a deep depression wondering if he could go on, worrying about the future, when this same text came to his rescue. “I remember,” says, “that I was sitting in a neighbor’s home, and was very sad, that word came suddenly to me. “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?’ That was a help to me”.

Paul was persuaded that death our greatest enemy and greatest fear could not separate us from the love of God. Death’s cold corrupting power can not steal away the love of God and kill Christ’s presence in our soul. Paul stares death in the face and wonders if it blocks God’s love—no.

“Nor life”. All of life Paul? Hardship in life? What about insanity? What about a broken heart, a failed marriage, the death of a loved one? What about a financial crises?

What about pain? Is it a cosmic wedge that separates me from the love of God? What about suffering? What about abuse? How about ignorance and bad theology?

“Nor angels”. Cosmic powers in supernatural realms. Paul visits the dead, the living, the supernatural.

“Nor principalities” benevolent or malevolent

“Nor powers” Governments, churches, organizations.

“Nor things present” What about the real world that I have to live in right now?

“Nor things to come” What about the future? Paul travels through time and space looking for an obstacle so big even God can’t overcome it.
Conclusion

No condemnation. No obligation. No frustration. No separation.
If God is for us, who can be against us?

“Wait a New York minute. Are you saying a person can know they are saved and rest in that assurance?” Yes. Paul believed a person could know if they are saved and rest in that assurance. Peter believed the same thing. John the Apostle believed the same thing.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NKJV)
3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 John 5:12-13 (NKJV)
12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Jesus Christ the Lord believed the same thing. You judge.

John 5:24 (NKJV)
24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

(v.39) “which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” We are in Christ. As long as we are in Christ we are secure. The chapter began ‘in Christ’ and ends ‘in Christ’. Are you in Christ?