

**Honeyridge Baptist Church****#14 – Romans 8:31-39****Loved to the End... God's Unstoppable Plan!****Introduction**

In my ministry as a pastor, I often have people who come to see me who are struggling with various things in their lives as believers... and it would not be an oversimplification to say that many of the issues which Christians are struggling with emotionally and spiritually... are connected in direct proportion to their lack of understanding ... and practical faith in what we are going to look at in these verses today.

The challenge with counselling is that often when people are in the midst of some kind of emotional or spiritual crisis, they are often in a space where they are less receptive to biblical truth. Their emotions are in turmoil... their head space is cluttered... and so the very means which God has given to help them is the one resource which they are not really open to.

Now, I am telling you this because one of the very real benefits of sitting under the regular expository preaching of God's Word on Sundays, and attending bible studies in the week... is to be aligning your heart and mind to the Gospel in regular rhythm of life... so that when the times of difficulty come... when things happen in life which cause confusion and hardship... when suffering and persecution comes... when the evil one shoots his flaming arrows of Doubt ... and Anxiety... and fear... at you... it is then that your Shield of Faith needs to be ready to deflect his attacks... and your sword of the Spirit which is the word of God... needs to be drawn, and ready and sharp to defend your soul.

Think about it like this... If your sword is never removed from its sheath... and it lies in the corner... collecting dust... slowly rusting away in the damp... Then it is not going to be a very effective weapon when the enemy attacks!

No... It is in times of peace that we need to be attending to our weapon... making sure it is clean and sharp... and strapped to our side... so that when the enemy attacks... we have God's word immediately at hand... and we are skilled in using it to fight for our souls in the battle.

And so Romans 8:31-39 is portion of scripture... a portion of biblical truth which when rightly wielded as the Sword of the Spirit has the power to cut down the attacks of Satan at the knees... and to deliver you from your very darkest hours in the spiritual fight.

So we come today, to the closing verses of Romans Chapter 8... which brings to a conclusion the section which Paul started in Romans 5:1-11.

And there is a strong parallel in these verses to Romans 5:1-11 – where Paul introduced us to the Benefits of Justification... a theme which he has been exploring and expounding and explaining for 4 chapters... and as a good teacher does... he comes now to conclude this whole section by returning to, and driving home his main idea.

So vs 31 starts with a question... and there are a lot of Questions which Paul asks in this section... to which he wants us to give real thought... real consideration... so that we can find great **encouragement** and **assurance** in our faith as we contemplate the answers...

***Romans 8:31 (ESV) — <sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things?***

Now the “these things” could be referring to all that he has said since 3:21... or more likely is referring to what he has been saying since 5:1... but certainly refers to what he has just been saying in 8:18-30 which we considered last time.

### 3.

Paul has been occupied in the previous section with suffering and trials in this present world... an experience which every believer understands... and he has been intent on showing us that the sufferings and trials of this world... as tough and intense as they may be at times... are not worth comparing to the weight of glory which is stored up for those who are in Christ.

Paul has shown us that God is sovereignly at work in **ALL things...** including the evil and brokenness of this world... in order to accomplish his purposes in us... which is to conform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ... so that we will be glorified with Jesus in the resurrection... when Christ returns.

So – now he wants to wrap it all up... with a conclusion which is meant to drive away all doubts... all fear... all uncertainty ... any anxiety which we may have... so that we can live between our conversion... and our glorification... with the joy and confidence that God intends for his children.

So in the first place then, I want us to see:

#### **1. The Facts of God's Love (vs 31-34)**

The key idea or theme running through this whole final section is that of **God's eternal love**... his unstoppable.. unbreakable love for those whom he has called and justified...

Three times in this section, Paul explicitly mentions the Love of God or the Love of Christ toward us... but I would suggest that even before Paul mentions this love... it is on his mind... and it is driving all he is saying...

Lets see this in vs 31-32...

**Romans 8:31–32 (ESV)** — <sup>31</sup> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* <sup>32</sup> *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 – where do we see the love of God in these verses?

Well – it’s right there in vs 32...

*“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all”*

Turn back with me to the beginning of this section.. to Chapter 5:8... so see what is in Paul’s mind when he speaks of God giving up Jesus to die on the cross for us...

**Romans 5:8 (ESV)** — <sup>8</sup> *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

You see – the gospel is not just the good news the Jesus died on the cross in our place... the really good news is that God **loved us** so much that he gave up his only son... to die in our place... so that we might become the adopted sons and daughters of God the father.

So Paul is wanting us to get the facts straight... because he knows that when suffering comes... when trials come... when the devil tempts us to despair... when he accuses us... and throws our sinfulness back in our faces... Paul knows that we will doubt!

We will doubt our salvation... we will doubt our eternal security... we will lose our assurance... and may even lose our way...

So he wants to counter the attack of Satan... by telling us **to think!**

**“Think about the facts!”** says Paul... God has made you to be rational being... he has created us to be thinkers... and although we are also emotional beings... and our feelings are a big part of who we are... Paul is wanting our **feelings** to become subservient to the **Facts!**

**Genuine emotions... Good emotions** are those emotions which are experienced because of **Truth**... Any other emotions or feelings – as real as they may seem - are a lie... and part of Satan’s deception... they are irrational emotions... and yet sadly many Christians are living their lives being controlled by irrational emotions... because they have not allowed the Truth of God’s word to stir up the True emotions.

So Paul is saying to us... Consider the Facts!

**Fact #1 – vs 31: If God is for us... who can be against us?** If God is on our side... if God is our team Captain... if God is our Chief negotiator... if God is the commander of our army... If God is our heavenly Father... then Who can possibly stand against us?

And the answer is obviously implied... “No One!” ... Of course its “No one!” ... We have God on our side!

**Fact #2 – vs 32: If God did not spare his own son...** the one of who God said... “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased” ... but gave him up to death for us all... in order to purchase our redemption... and to reconcile us to himself... If he made the ultimate sacrifice of love to save us... *Will he not also with him Graciously give us all things?*

And again, the answer is obviously implied ... “Of course he will!”

This again confirms what Paul told us back in Romans 5:9-10...

**Romans 5:9–10 (ESV) — <sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood [his death], much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be **saved by his life**.**

But that’s not all...

**Fact #3 – vs 33:** Who will bring any charge against God’s elect?

Now this is an interesting question because the verb Paul uses is a **future tense**... and has in mind that day of reckoning when we will stand before God’s judgment seat...

The bible refers in Rev 12:10 to the devil as our Accuser... as the one who seeks to devour our souls on the judgment day... who will present as evidence... all the dirt of your thought life... your speech... and your actions since the day you were born... but especially since the day you rose out of the waters of baptism having professed faith in Jesus... and he will present it all on that day in order to seek your eternal damnation.

**“But”**, says Paul.... “don’t fall prey to his deception” ... “Who is able to bring a single charge against God’s elect on that day?” Who?

And the answer is obviously implied again... “No One!”

Why? Because God himself is the judge ... and he is the one who has justified you!

He is the one who gave up his own son to ransom you... He is the one who, on the basis of all that Jesus has done for you... has declared you to be Righteous! God is the highest court of appeal... He has already issued the final and eternal verdict over your life... If you are a Christians... You are **Justified!**

The devil literally has no leg to stand on! 😊

But wait... there’s more...

**Fact #4 – vs 34:** Who is condemning you? Now, notice, that this is a **present tense verb**... Who is condemning you now? If God is for you... If God has graciously give you everything you need for life and godliness in Christ... if God has justified you and will ultimately glorify you... Then who is there to condemn you in the present?

And again... the answer is clearly implied... “No One!”

Don't you remember what Paul told us in vs 1...

**Romans 8:1 (ESV)** — <sup>1</sup> *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

None! Not now... and not in the future! Why?

Look at Vs 34... For Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God... He indeed is interceding for us... right now... as we speak!

**God** is the **Judge**... and **Jesus** is our **Advocate**! What a TEAM! Who can accuse us? Who can condemn us?

These then are the Facts of God's Love! This is TRUTH for the Christian. Read Them... Read them again... Study them... Memorize them... because this is the truth of the Gospel... This is the reality of who you are in Christ... These are the undeniable... unshakeable facts of God's love to us in Christ.

Now, as important as the facts are... as important as the Truths of the Gospel are... these truths are not simply meant to be filed away in a mental compartment called “God's Love”... No! These facts are meant to permeate all of our beings... they are meant to connect with our heart... and to transform who we are... and how we experience God in this life...

And so in the second place, I want us to see:

## **2. The Effects of God's Love (vs 35-37)**

Now that you know the facts about God's love to you in Christ... Paul wants us to understand what this really means for us... especially in the face of suffering and trials... but also more generally as we live

between the “already” of our salvation... and the “not yet” of our glorification...

**Romans 8:35–37 (ESV)** — <sup>35</sup> *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* <sup>36</sup> *As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”* <sup>37</sup> **No**, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

This theme we considered last week is still on Paul's mind... of God's suffering Children... Destined for Glory...

Last week I read to you a list of Paul's sufferings from 2 Cor 11... and it is this list which I think he is echoing in vs 35...

In the light of the **Facts of God's love**... who or what can separate you from the Love of Christ?

*Can tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?*

And again... Paul's rhetorical style of questions with implied answers continues... “Of course not! Nothing can separate you from the love of Christ!” Nothing!

Now, I said this list represents Paul's personal testimony of sufferings... but notice that there is a prophetic word in vs 35... because the last item in his list refers to death by the sword... the capital punishment of execution... something which Paul hadn't yet experienced... but something which he would soon experience... in Rome... in the very city of the people to whom he is writing... where it is believed that he was most likely beheaded by the Emperor Nero.

Nevertheless – Paul is unwavering in his commitment to **the facts...** There is NOTHING... not even death by execution... which can separate the believer from the Love of God in Christ!

Now if this reality doesn't have a profound impact on your heart... then either you are not yet saved... or you are clearly not thinking biblically about the facts!

If you don't feel loved by God... if you feel alone... and you feel miserable... and you doubt... and you are filled with fear... and there is no joy... Then according to Paul... you haven't considered the facts! I'm not saying you don't know them intellectually... but you have not really considered them!

**According to Paul... Feelings follow Facts!** (I know Karen would say... "That's the engineer in you speaking!")... but it's the Word of God speaking!

Feelings follow facts... Anything else is a lie of the devil and you are caught in his deception!

**Consider** the Facts Says Paul! **Meditate** on the Gospel. **Meditate** on the love of God to you in Christ.

The great spiritual battle being fought in the heavenly realms is the battle for our hearts... and it is a battle which is real and is raging... and for some of you it is being lost at the moment because you are not considering... and not believing ... the Facts of God's love!

Listen to how Paul puts this in 2 Cor 10...

**2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (ESV)** — <sup>3</sup> *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.* <sup>4</sup> *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.*

*<sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

Do you see where the battle for your soul is being fought ? It is in our Minds! Every thought... every opinion of Satan or his earthly agents... everything which is raised against the knowledge of God... against the facts of the Truth of God... We take these thoughts **Captive** to obey Christ!

Some of you here today are being ruled by your emotions... and you are losing the spiritual battle!

You are losing the battle against **Sin**... you are losing the battle against **Joy**... you are the losing the battle against **Hope**... because you are not taking your emotions... and your feelings... and your ungodly thoughts and desires... and the deceptive lies of Satan... and you are not subjecting them to the **Truth** of the Gospel... you are not taking them **captive** to obey Christ!

Instead... All these false emotions... and irrational thoughts... are taking you captive to the deception of the devil and to despair.

What you need.... is to **know** and **experience** ... **LOVE!**

Not the Love of a man... or a woman... Not the love of a Parent or a child or a friend... Those are weak and temporary loves.

What you need to experience... is the LOVE of GOD for you!

And notice what this knowledge of the Facts of God's love... which sinks down into the heart... Notice what this produces in us... Its effect... vs 37...

*<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

Do you see it? **It produces Victorious living!** We are not just meant to “survive” until Jesus returns... We are not just meant to “plod along” ... grinning and bearing it.

“We are meant to live” says Paul... “in all these things” ... in the midst of all these trials and sufferings and disappointments and challenges... in all these things... “we are **MORE THAN CONQUERORS**... through him who loved us!”

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The word which Paul uses in this verse to describe our lives as Christians is one which needs some consideration...

The word translated “we are more than conquerors” is one word in the Greek, and it means to be completely and overwhelmingly **victorious**...

Now, we must understand what Paul is NOT saying...

He is NOT saying that a victorious Christian life means you will never suffer, or have hardships, or have to go through some very trying and lonely times... but what he IS saying is this... that it is in the midst of these things... as we go through these times in our lives... that the Love of God in Christ for us... and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit who lives within us... will produce in us an overwhelmingly victorious life.

**2 Corinthians 4:7–10 (ESV)** — <sup>7</sup> *But we have this treasure [of the gospel] in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. <sup>8</sup> We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; <sup>10</sup> always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.*

**2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (ESV)** — <sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

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The **facts** of the Gospel... must produce the **Effects** of the Gospel... because the Love of God is something which changes us.

You cannot experience the Love of God... the intimate, personal, sacrificial love of God and not be changed... because his love for us actually transforms us... it actually imparts new life to us... and causes us to see this world for what it really is... and to see eternity with Jesus for what it really is.

Illus: You often hear people talking about a couple in love... and they will say something like this... “Aahhh... He or she is looking at the world through rose tinted glasses.”

I’m sure you know what they mean... When you are in love... and loved by another person... the circumstances around you in the world take on a different hue...

Well that is something of what Paul is saying here... but on a whole other level...

When we live in this broken world... this suffering and hurting world... with a genuine knowledge and experience of God’s love for us... When we look at the chaos around us through the lense of Gospel... through the lense of God’s love for us in Christ... everything changes!

Not in a superficial way... or an artificial way... or a temporary way which fades... but it genuinely changes everything when we know the Love of God... the eternal and unstoppable love of God to all his children.

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And so now Paul wants to bring this whole section to a final conclusion... in order to give us something which every Christian desires... probably desires more than anything else in this world... namely that of **Assurance**!

**I want to know for sure...** with certainty that I will spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven. I want to know the Assurance of God's Eternal love... I want to know the Assurance of God's Unstoppable Plan of Salvation for me... Don't you?

And so in the final place, we see

### **3. The Assurance of God's Love (vs 38-39)**

I think if we are honest... the thing we fear most in life... and the thing which hurts most in life... is to lose love!

Either we fear losing the love of another person... a spouse or parent or child or friend... or we fear losing the person who loves us.

But even in the best of earthly relationships... the best marriage... the best family bonds... the best friendships... there is this nagging fear that the people we love most... and the people who love us most... won't always be there... or won't always love us.

"But there is a love" says Paul, "which is eternal"... a love which is pure... a love which is unbreakable and unstoppable... and it is the Love of God for us who are in Christ Jesus.

This is true love... the love of which the very best earthly love is only a veiled shadow... and this is the only love which will last forever...

And so the great encouragement which Paul wants to leave us with is that NOTHING can separate us from this eternal love of God...

***Romans 8:38–39 (ESV)*** — <sup>38</sup> *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* <sup>39</sup> *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.*

What more do we need, that we do not have in Christ?

Your and my eternal salvation is secure because every part of it... is **initiated**... and **accomplished**... and **applied** ... and **secured** ... by God.

- He chose to set his love on us before the foundation of the world.
- He chose to send his own Son to die on the cross in our place.
- He poured out his Spirit to make us alive and to irresistibly draw us to himself.
- He gave us a new heart and gave us his Holy Spirit to live within us
- He gave us the gift of repentance and faith to believe in him
- He forgave our sins and declared us to be righteous before him
- And he is the one will raise our bodies in the resurrection to spend all eternity with him

From before the foundation of the world... to the very end of time on this earth... and forever into eternity... the one thing which will never change is God's love for those who are in Christ.

This is the assurance which Paul wants to leave us with... as he brings the first half of his letter to a close. The Gospel is God's unstoppable plan of Salvation... the Gospel is God's eternal love for those who are in Christ... the Gospel means that you and I are loved before we were born... that we are loved every day of this short life... and we are loved to the very end!

## Conclusion

And so as I close... I want to just correct a common misunderstanding which exists in the thinking of many Christians... which is part of the devil's tactics to rob God's children of their joy and security and assurance of salvation...

When Paul says that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord... he means NOTHING!... Not even you!

Listen to how Jesus himself puts this in John 10

***John 10:27–30 (ESV) — <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are one.***

Isn't that such a wonderful confirmation of what Paul is saying here! Your salvation is SECURE! God is greater than ALL... NO ONE is able to snatch you out of the Father's hand!

But there is a common teaching in Christianity which takes these verses... and says... "Yes.... It is true than nothing in all creation can separate you from God's love... Yes... it's true that no one is able to snatch you out of the Fathers hand... but because you have a free

will... You can choose to jump out of God's hand! You can choose to separate yourself from God's love!"

Now – if that is true – then Paul has been wasting his breath for 8 chapters... and I have been wasting my breath for 10 years as a preacher... and there is no such thing as Assurance of Salvation!

If your and my salvation depends on **us** to climb into God's hand in the first place... and then to stay in God's hand... to stay in the love of God to the end... then our salvation is non-starter!

If you doubt that... go an re-read Romans chapters 1-3... and you will see the state of the human heart apart from God... means that not one person who would ever choose to place themselves in the love of God... and even us who have been saved... know that if it was up to us to remain saved... we would never make it to the end.

But Paul's teaching in Romans 8 is intent on driving home the **Good News** of the Gospel! **Our salvation is secure**... because from beginning to end... it is all a result of God's unstoppable love... and it is all a work of his Sovereign power!

And so that is why Paul can write to the church in Philippi... and he can confirm this truth to them in the clearest way possible...

***Philippians 1:6 (ESV)** — <sup>6</sup> And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

God began it... He will complete it!

And so to close today... let me just leave you with a few more verses to encourage you... and to establish you firmly in the **Joy** and **Security** and **Assurance** of God's love for you who are in Christ...

**John 5:24 (ESV)** — <sup>24</sup> *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (ESV)** — <sup>23</sup> *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*

**Ephesians 1:13–14 (ESV)** — <sup>13</sup> *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

**2 Timothy 4:18 (ESV)** — <sup>18</sup> *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*