

The Hymn of Security, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 8:35–39

Code: 45-68

INTRODUCTION

In Jeremiah 31:3 God says to the Israelites, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." As the object of God's love, the apostle Paul could say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). In Romans 8:35-39 Paul declares that all true believers are the objects of God's love. Because that is so, neither people nor circumstances--no one or nothing--can revoke our salvation.

REVIEW

I. NO ONE CAN REVOKE OUR SALVATION (vv. 31-34)

A. We Are Secure in God (vv. 31-32)

1. He protects us (v. 31)

a) 1 John 4:4--"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Because of God's greatness, we are secure in Him.b) Hebrews 13:6--Any believer can say, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me."c) Psalm 4:8; 56:3--David said, "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.... When I am afraid, I will trust in thee."d) Deuteronomy 33:27--Moses said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."e) Psalm 91:1-2--David said, "He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow [protection] of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him will I trust."f) Deuteronomy 33:29--"Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency?"

2.He loves us (v. 32)

a) By giving His Son (v. 32a)To deny the believer's security is to misunderstand the heart of God, the gift of Christ, the meaning of the cross, and the biblical definition of salvation. Romans 5:8-10 says, "God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."b) By giving every spiritual blessing (v. 32b)God blesses us by supplying our every need (Phil. 4:19). A person's greatest need is salvation, which includes glorification. Even when we sin, God's grace abounds toward us (Rom. 5:20-21; 2 Cor. 9:8).

B. We Are Secure Against Satan (v. 33)

No accusations before God's tribunal will cause Him to revoke our salvation. The prophet Isaiah said, "He is near who justifieth me. Who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me. Who is he that shall condemn me?" (Isa. 50:8-9).

C. We Are Secure in Christ (v. 34)

1.Because of His death (v. 34a)

Christ won't revoke our salvation because He died for us. Hebrews 9:14 says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Christ, the perfect High Priest, offered the perfect sacrifice, which gives us perfect standing before God. To deny our security is to deny the

sufficiency of His atoning work.

2. Because of His resurrection (v. 34**b**)

3. Because of His exaltation (v. 34**c**)

4. Because of His intercession (v. 34**d**)

LESSON

II. NOTHING CAN REVOKE OUR SECURITY (vv. 35-39)

"What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

A. Our Adversities (v. 35)

"What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

In verse 33 the Greek term tis is translated "who," but in verse 35 it's translated "what." That's because the former deals with people and the latter with circumstances. "The love of Christ" (v. 35) refers to Christ's love for the believer, not that of the believer for Christ. Paul was asking, "What can make Christ stop loving you?" The implied answer: Nothing.

First John 4:19 says we love God because He first loved us. John 13:1 says that Christ, "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Second Thessalonians 2:16-17 says, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

In Romans 8 Paul specifies various adversities that the believer might experience. Not one can separate the believer from Christ's love.

1. Pressure

In Romans 8:35 the Greek term translated "tribulation" (thlipsis) speaks of pressure from external difficulties. That includes suffering from false accusations, rejection, or bodily harm. Not even severe pressure can separate us from Christ's love.

2. Temptation

"Distress" (Gk., stenochoria) refers to internal pressure. It literally means "narrowness of room" and pictures someone who is caught in a narrow space or hemmed in with no way out in sight. I believe it's a specific reference to temptation. First Corinthians 10:13 says that when we face temptation, God will enable us to endure it and provide an eventual way out. Not even strong, internal temptations separate us from Christ's love.

3. Suffering

"Persecution" (Gk., diogmos) refers to physical or mental suffering at the hands of those who reject Christ. No such suffering can separate us from Christ's love.

4. Hunger

Can going without food, even to the point of starvation, separate us from Christ's love? Never.

5. Poverty

Can a lack of clothing or shelter separate us from Christ's love? Not at all.

6. Danger

"Peril" speaks of danger. Enemies were always plotting against Paul, so he was especially relieved to know danger could never separate the believer from Christ's love.

7. Death

The Greek term translated "sword" (Gk., machaira) refers to an assassin's dagger. Not even

imminent death can separate us from Christ's love.

Paul experienced much adversity in serving Christ: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Those trials never broke the bond of Christ's love for Paul, and no adversity will ever separate us from Christ's love either.

B. Our Perseverance (v. 36)

"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

That is a quotation of Psalm 44:22 from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Adversity has been the lot of God's people through all generations, so it's no surprise that we encounter it. Rather than breaking us away from God's love, it shows that we are part of God's family. Second Timothy 3:12 declares, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

"For thy sake" in Romans 8:36 implies a willingness to endure adversity. First John 2:19 says all true believers will remain loyal to Christ. They will deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ (Matt. 16:24). Hebrews 3:14 says, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Christ said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Perseverance during adversity is the mark of a true believer. He or she will be willing even to die for Christ's sake if necessary.

C. Our Victory (v. 37)

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

The Greek term translated "more than conquerors" (hupernikao) refers to an overwhelming victory. With Christ's help we triumph over all adverse circumstances. That's because adversity refines us by increasing our love for righteousness and our hatred of sin. We see not only our own inadequacy, but also Christ's sufficiency for every situation, confident "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Adversity works for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). The refining process makes us recipients of a great reward in heaven. In the meantime God grants us His grace through the Spirit of glory, who rests on us (1 Pet. 4:14).

Safe in the Arms of the Savior

Many believers in Rome surely began to wonder about the security of their salvation when people began leaving the church because of persecution. But rather than draw the true believer away from Christ, persecution instead reveals the genuineness of his or her faith (cf. Matt. 13:5-6, 20-21). The blood of believers soaked the sands of the Roman coliseum. Some Christians were mauled by wild beasts; others were soaked in tar and used as human torches for lighting Emperor Nero's night parties. Yet they faced death singing praises to Christ, knowing they were safe in the loving arms of their Savior.

D. Our Confidence (vv. 38-39)

"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

That's Paul's capstone to the theme of justification by grace through faith. It's as though he were taking a paintbrush to enhance an already beautiful picture. "I am persuaded" speaks of a confident

declaration or settled conclusion. Paul expresses that same kind of confidence in 2 Timothy 1:12: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." Along with Paul, our confidence is that nothing can separate us from God's love.

1. We are secure against death

Death can't separate us from God's love. Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The Lord is with us as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps. 23:4).

Death Is Only a Shadow

When his wife died, minister Donald Grey Barnhouse tried to find a good way to explain the situation to his young children. As he was driving home from the funeral, a truck passed his car, casting a shadow over it. He asked his children, "Would you rather be run over by a truck or the shadow of a truck?" They answered, "The shadow because it doesn't hurt you." He said, "Mommy went through the valley of the shadow of death. There is no pain there." Instead of separating us from Christ, death will bring us into His presence (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8).

2. We are secure in life

Life--in spite of all its dangers, difficulties, temptations, and troubles--cannot separate us from God's love (cf. Rom. 14:7-9).

3. We are secure against angels

Paul was probably making a hypothetical reference to good angels. Galatians 1:8 says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." A good angel can't separate us from God's love.

4. We are secure against demons

Although "principalities" (Gk., arche) refers to both good and fallen angels in the New Testament, here it probably refers to the latter (cf. Eph. 6:12). No demon can separate us from God's love, neither can any of their "powers" (Gk., dunamis), often a reference to miracles or mighty deeds.

5. We are secure for both time and eternity

"Things present" and "things future" mean that nothing in this age, future ages, or eternity can separate us from God's love.

6. We are secure against everything in the celestial realm

The Greek terms translated "height" (hupsoma) and "depth" (bathos) are astronomical terms.

"Height" refers to the location of a star at its zenith and "depth" at its nadir. Nothing in all the celestial expanse can separate us from God's love.

7. We are secure against everyone and everything

"Any other creation" brings us back to our original outline: no one or nothing can separate us from God's love. Paul allowed no loopholes or exceptions. Even the believer can't separate himself from God's love.

CONCLUSION

"The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom. 8:39) means that the Father and Son's love are inseparable. Christ said it like this: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17: 23-24). Christ prayed that His disciples might be with Him in heaven. Because God hears and answers that prayer, our salvation is eternally secure.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What does "the love of Christ" refer to in Romans 8:35?
2. What does 1 John 4:19 tell us?
3. What is "distress" a specific reference to (Rom. 8:35)?
4. What does 2 Corinthians 11:24-27 tell us about Paul's experience in serving Christ?
5. Why should it be no surprise to encounter adversity?
6. Rather than breaking us away from God's love, what does adversity show us?
7. What does "for thy sake" imply (Rom. 8:36)?
8. According to Matthew 16:24 how is the true believer to respond to adversity?
9. What does "more than conquerors" refer to (Rom. 8:37)?
10. How does adversity refine us?
11. Adversity works for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of " (2 Cor. 4:17).
12. What does adversity reveal (Matt. 13:20-21)?
13. What verses are the capstone to Paul's theme of justification by grace through faith?
14. What do "things present" and "things future" mean (Rom. 8:38)?
15. What does "any other creation" bring us back to (Rom. 8:38)?
16. What does John 17:23-24 teach?

Pondering the Principles

1. God's Word says the believer is secure in God's arms and will someday be glorified in heaven. What effect should that have on your behavior and your thoughts about God? Get together with your family or a Christian friend and share your answers to that question.
2. Are you encountering any difficult circumstances in your life right now? In light of Romans 8:35-39 what perspective should you have regarding your situation? Does that perspective apply to every situation you might encounter? As a Christian, you have every reason to be optimistic. Don't allow adversity to obscure God's promise that all things will ultimately work out for your good.
3. Meditate on Romans 8:38-39 and commit it to memory. Doing so will help bring joy and hope to your life.

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