

Tell Me, 'Who'?

Message 38

Didn't preach previous week's message.

5.25.25

Romans 8:31-39 (CSB)

³¹ What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? ³³ Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. ³⁴ Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

Because of you we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Introduction: If God is for us.

A. Paul assumes that he and his audience are in the midst of a conflict.

1. The only way for them to prevail is with the help of God.
2. We, too, are engaged in a spiritual conflict.
3. Without God's help, without the intercession of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we will not win.

a. The temptation is too strong.

b. The enemy is too cunning.

c. Our flesh is too weak.

4. We cannot defeat the enemy in our own power.

B. If God is for us...

1. This statement declares the most important factor in any difficulty.

2. If God is for us...who can be against us?

3. Every believer can have this blessed assurance that God is for us.

C. No matter what comes our way, we cannot be separated from God's love.

1. No matter the distress, the tribulation, the pain, or the suffering, none of it has the power to separate us from God.

2. We can separate ourselves by living contrary to God's standards and commands, but nothing else can separate me.

D. If we are looking for excuses to fall away, walk away, or neglect our relationship with God, we are going to have to make stuff up.

1. Because there is NOTHING that can make you.

2. There is nothing that has any power unless you empower it.

3. Nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus.

E. Paul illustrates this assurance by introducing several rhetorical questions, asking, "Who?"

WHO:

1. Who can be against us?

A. When you gave your life to Jesus, you gained new enemies.

1. The spirits and forces that you were cooperating with in sin are now turned against you.
2. "The question "who is against us?" then does not assume that God's people have no enemies (cf. 8:35–36, 38–39) but that these enemies cannot be victorious over them, however strong they may seem to be."¹

B. The reason we need not fear any enemy is because "He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all."

1. Jesus is the ultimate proof of God's power and intentions.
2. If God will go to such great lengths as to have His son die upon a cross and then resurrect Him from the dead, then what else will God not do?
3. What will God withhold from us?
4. Will He not grant us everything?
 - a. Again, the answer is, YES!
 - b. God, who gave us His Son, will also give us everything.
5. That blessing is tied to Jesus (with him grant us everything).
 - a. Not because I'm special but because Jesus is.
 - b. Jesus is the VIP and I receive with Him EVERYTHING.
 - c. Jesus is the victorious older brother, and unlike the brother of the Prodigal Son, this brother has no problem sharing it all with us.

¹ Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 421.

d. What is the Father's has been given to the Son and Jesus is sharing that with us.

C. Who cares who is against us!

1. So what if even the very depths of Hell are against?
2. Because if God is for us, WHO CAN STAND AGAINST US?

2. Who Shall bring charges?

Romans 8:33 (CSB) ³³Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies.

A. Not only do we not have to fear enemies coming against us, but the accusations of the enemy don't matter either.

1. If you are living for Jesus, connected to Him and with Him, then we need not fear the accusations or opinions of man.
2. The only accusations that matter are the ones that come from the throne.
3. There is coming a day when we will all stand before God and give an account.

B. It is this future tense Paul likely has in mind.

1. When that future day comes, and Satan the Accuser tries to condemn us before God, the voice of Satan won't matter.
2. Because all of our sins, trespasses, and iniquities are covered by Jesus.
 - a. Only He is worthy, perfect, and sinless.
 - b. Only He could forgive us of our sins, and He has done just that.
 - c. So when the enemy of our souls tries to accuse us before God, we merely point to Jesus the One who is at the right hand of God.

3. And it may very well be that Jesus looks at the Father and say:

- a. Yes, she did that thing, but remember that I paid the price for that sin.
- b. Yes, he is guilty, but I have already taken upon myself the curse and the shame.
- c. Who can accuse us?
- d. If Jesus doesn't accuse us before the Father, then no other voice matters.

C. For some of us here today, we are struggling with sins of the past.

1. Maybe our friends remind us of who we used to be.
2. Maybe our conscience can't forget the things that were said and done.
3. But my friends, those voices need to be silent in the presence of the Voice of Jesus.
 - a. If Jesus has forgiven you, then that is what matters.
 - b. If Jesus has changed you, that is the most important thing.
 - c. Jesus' opinion is the only one that matters.
 - d. Jesus doesn't accuse us before the Father, He intercedes for us.
4. Do you want an accusing Jesus or an interceding Jesus?
 - a. The only difference in these Jesus' is faith.
 - b. If we follow Jesus by faith, then we are forgiven.
 - c. If we reject Jesus, then we are accused by Him.

3. Who condemns?

A. Here is another legal term:

1. Accuse, justify, and condemn are all legal terms.
2. Condemn means to “pronounce a sentence after determination of guilt.” BDAG
3. We are all guilty of sin and deserving of death.

B. But Jesus changed that.

1. For those who call upon the name of the Lord are saved.
2. Saved from what?
3. The condemnation, the pronouncement of the just punishment for our sins.
4. Jesus paid the price for our sin, therefore there is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus (verse 1 says).

C. If Jesus doesn’t condemn us, then what does it matter if someone else condemns us?

1. Yes, there may be condemnation but those things come from the cheap seats and not from the seat of God’s throne.
2. The only condemnation that matters is that which comes from God, and that is laid upon those who are not part of Jesus.
3. In Jesus, there is protection from the condemnation because Jesus was condemned in our place.

Because, in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation, accusations, or judgments against us, notice what Paul says next:

³⁵ Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

Because of you we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor

depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. Who shall separate?

A. The answer is, no one.

1. Some take this to teach "once saved, always saved".
2. I don't think that means what you think it means.

B. If you mean that no power on earth or in hell can separate me from God's love, then you are right.

1. If you mean that I can rest in blessed assurance each night because I know I am in Christ and Christ is in me, then right on.
2. If you mean that there is no situation so terrible, no pain so great, no tragedy so massive, or circumstance so power that it can wrench me from God's love, then I agree.
3. If, however, you mean that I can live how I want and choose but because raised my hand in church or said a prayer at vacation Bible school and therefore "I'm good", then you couldn't be more wrong.

C. Nowhere in Romans does Paul ever excuse willfull or permissive sin.

1. No where in Scripture is there a security for those who intentionally walk away from Jesus or refuse to remain in him.
2. To know to do right, and not do it, is seen.

D. Yet, here is the grand message.

1. There is nothing created, no angel or demon, disaster or trouble, that can wrestle me out of the loving arms of God.
2. The Apostle Paul had known trouble and hardship.
 - a. He knew pain and heartache.

b. But he was persuaded, that nothing could separate us from the love of God in and through Christ Jesus.

5. In Christ Jesus...

A. An important phrase is found in verse 39: from the love of God that is "in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1. When we see phrases like "in Christ Jesus" or "in the Spirit", the phrase assumes a relationship.

2. This word "in" is "a marker of close personal association-'in, one with, in union with, joined closely to.'"

3. To be "in Christ Jesus" means I'm as closely tied to Jesus as I possibly can be.

B. All throughout Scripture, we are invited to enter the family of God by being closely associated with Jesus.

1. When we are connected to Christ, the benefits and blessings that are his are shared.

a. Through Jesus, we are sons of God and coheirs with Christ Jesus.

b. Through Jesus, God never leaves us, we have access to the throne of Grace, and more promises than I possibly can say in a sermon.

2. But apart from Christ, we are separated and severed from those blessings.

3. So we must ask an important question of ourselves:

a. According to the truth and standard of Scripture, are we presently "in Christ Jesus?"

b. What do our words, deeds, thoughts, and actions demonstrate about our relationship with Christ?

c. Am I in love with Jesus, as long as I get what I want?

d. Am I living a life that is contrary to His standards?

4. Paul describes here in Romans 8 all of the things that cannot separate me from Christ's love.

a. No amount of hardship, persecution, affliction, or distress can separate me from God's love.

b. No demon, angel, power or proposition can make me less than a conqueror because Christ's rule has been assured and declared.

c. The only thing that can separate me from the love of Jesus is my sin.

C. Any member of the Body that separates itself from Christ dies.

1. Jesus taught this painful truth in John 15, that those who are not connected to the vine are thrown into the fire.

a. The Apostle Paul has repeatedly stated that those who live according to the flesh will die.

b. Those persons who choose to live life apart from God do not share in the promises and blessings of God.

2. The love, power, and promises of God are true and valid for the Body, but if I'm living my life apart from Jesus, then I'm missing out on what God has guaranteed for those who love God.

3. I have a lifelong friend and classmate named Shawn.

One summer, he was working in his grandpa's sawmill and the one of the belts took off the end of one of his fingers.

I'm not sure why it wasn't sewn on but it wasn't.

Because this happened in the summer, he had no good way of showing his friends at school what happened.

So, he did the logical thing for a high school boy:

He put it in a jar filled with alcohol till school started.

He comes walking into school with his fingertip in the jar and starts showing us around.

But after a while, we got bored with it. So, what do you do with a severed finger when you go to a rural school?

Naturally, you feed it to your dog....

3. Apart from our hand, the finger dies.

a. The finger no longer had any purpose or use because it was separated from the body.

b. Apart from Christ, we die.

³⁴ Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.

6. WHO IS Jesus?

A. The one who died

1. The one who was raised

2. The one who is at the right hand of God

3. This reminds me of Job, who after questioning God for hundreds of verses, is silenced by the questioning of God.

a. God asked Job, "Where were you when..."

b. Romans 8 isn't worried about where you were, but who you are with.

B. If you have Jesus, the other things don't matter.

1. Yes, there may be persecution, but it has no power to separate me from the Love of God.

2. Yes, weapons are formed against me, but those weapons are powerless to cause God to stop loving me.

3. In Jesus, we are more than conquerors.

a. Through all these things, vs. 37, we win.

b. In spite of all the turmoil, we win.

c. All we must do is reach out to Jesus and He carries us through.

Close. Hold on, victory is guaranteed.

A. Do not grow weary in doing good, because we will reap a harvest in due season, if we don't quit.

1. The Church, the Bride of Christ, will not be defeated.

2. Jesus is King and is crowned with many crowns.

3. We win too, if we stay connected.

B. And the good news is that because of the Spirit and all the help we have been given, we can stay in Christ Jesus.

1. The Spirit intercedes for us with wordless groans.

2. Jesus intercedes and advocates for us at the Father's right hand.

3. Our responsibility is to keep believing and trusting God and walking in the light He has given us.

C. One of my favorite ways to illustrate this is the image of a child walking with their father in a busy theme park.

1. The father reaches down and has the child place their hand in his.

2. He tells them to hold on tight and not let go, but we all know it isn't the kid's strength that keeps them but the fathers.

3. The child could pull their hand back and run off.

4. But when they willingly offer up that little hand, NOTHING will separate that child from the Father.

5. How much more does the Heavenly Father love us?

D. Who can separate us, accuse us, condemn us, or come against when we have the Heavenly Father who loves us and takes us by the hand