Romans 8:31-39

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[0:00] Please do open up your Bibles back to Romans chapter 8, verses 31 to 39.! See that in verse 35?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? And verse 39? Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
As Paul closes this amazing chapter, he's doing it in this way because he is telling us you cannot, you must not miss this in the Christian life.
That there is something always present with you. Not only the Spirit, not only hope, not only certainty, but in the Christian life you always have the love of God.
And what is God's love? I think we can be mistaken about it. Because sadly, the idea of love, it is so misused in our culture, isn't it?
[1:22] We can hear love is love, which is meaningless. Or love is just about our feelings. It's just that fuzzy feeling, which makes love just selfish and fleeting.

And even God's love can be misused when people say, well, God, surely he loves and accepts everyone. There's no need to repent. The world is so confused about love.
And so when we come to God's love, we can miss just how glorious it is. And this is what it is. God's love is when God is determined and committed toward his people.
God's love, it's his faithful loyalty toward his church. For those in Christ, God's love is his unbreakable commitment to save you and forgive you and protect you and bring you to the finish line of glory.
God's love is God's love. That is God's love. And that's why in the Bible, God's love, it's always tied together with his covenant and his promises and his mercy and his compassion, that they're all connected together.
[2:39] And you see that in the Bible's imagery of God and his people. God is like a husband vowed to protect and serve his wife. Or God is like a mother determined to never, ever forget her children.

God's love, it's his commitment toward you. But it's also more than that. God's love, it's not only his commitment, it also involves a warmth and affection toward his people.
We are his children. And so as any father would, our God, he actually delights in his family. He delights in your faith and your obedience, however imperfect.
He delights that you belong to him and he belongs to you. God's love, it's this commitment and affection. In a word, when God loves you, he is for you.
Did you see that in verse 31? God is for us. That is the deep, unchanging reality of the Christian life. God is for us.
[3:55] But we can so easily forget or just not feel that. In our sin, we can so easily think, well, God's stopped loving me.

But when life is hard, we think God's love, well, it's turned into hatred against us. Or you might be here today thinking, how could God love someone like me?
We know about his love, but we're almost reluctant to claim it for ourselves. Well, this is here as the climactic end to Romans 8 to make us reclaim God's love in the Christian life.
Paul ends on this note so that we know it may not look like it. We may not always feel it, but beneath the surface, for the Christian, God loves you and he will always love you.
And those are the two things I want us to see today, just two points today. God loves us and nothing can separate us from God's love. And so first, let's not miss this.
[5:01] God loves us. Look at verse 31 with me. Paul begins to sum everything up in the Christian life. What then shall we say to these things?

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Now, these things, it refers to basically everything Paul has said from pretty much Romans chapter 5. But in particular, he's got in focus this chapter so far.
Given everything that we've heard about the Spirit setting us free and dwelling in us and no condemnation and adopting us and transforming us and transforming creation one day.
And the Spirit even praying for us and guaranteeing glory for us. Given all that Christ has done for us and all that the Spirit is doing for us. What then shall we say to these things?
What must we take from this? What is the big conclusion that we cannot miss in the Christian life?
Well, he answers with another question.
[6:03] A series of questions, in fact. This whole passage is filled with rhetorical questions.
Questions that are not to actually ask something, but to make a point. And all these questions are unpacking how God relates to you in the Christian life.

What it means that God loves you. Which is why the final two questions end all on God's love. Each question are kind of like layers on a cake.
Building up the glorious reality of God's love. And what is the first layer? Verse 31. If God is for us, who can be against us?
Now, he's not saying if, like it may or may not be true. No, he means since. Since God is for us, who can be against us? And the answer is no one.
Something has happened in the Christian life. Something radical. God's position toward us is now and forever locked in one place.
[7:13] God is for us. In sin, we were against him and he was against us. Enemies divided in opposition. But now God says, in Christ, I am for you.

And that language of for you, it means I'm on your side. Your interests are my interests. Your cares are my cares. And that is love, isn't it?
Think of someone who you know loves you. Who you know loves you. So kids, think of mum and dad. They do everything for you, don't they?
Everything with you in mind, but with your best interests at heart. When you're not well, I hope you realize mum and dad are always thinking about you.
When something isn't right at school, you need to know deep in their heart that they are just wanting everything to go well for you. Even when the kids go to bed.
[8:15] Us parents, we just talk about the kids, don't we? And we just look at cute videos of them. Our desires and our hearts and our prayers, they're all for you. In sports day, would your dad ever not cheer for you?

It's unthinkable. When someone loves you, they're never plotting against you, never trying to make your life worse, never hoping you fail. No, they are for you.
Well, so is God. All his plans, all that he's doing in our lives, he is for us. His heart longs for you. Working together all things for your good.
Bringing you one step closer to glory every day. Upholding you every step of the way. And that can never, ever be changed. Which is why Paul asks, who can be against us?
Not that there will be no opposition in the Christian life. No, he says lately that there will be opposition. But he means, what opposition can win against us?
[9:25] God is for us. Who can destroy his divine plans? Who can overthrow the powerful work of God in our lives? Who can ever stop us going to glory?

It's impossible. And by asking who, there's a whiff of Satan in this question. Satan plots and plans against us.
He tries to trip us up. He tries to work all things for our bad. But when God is for you, the unstoppable Lord Almighty, he is on your side.
And so even Satan himself cannot stop God's plans for us. But sadly, we so often think the opposite, don't we?
There is a constant temptation in the Christian life to think, God isn't for me. That he's actually against me. When life isn't working out, when tragedy strikes, or when the hardship is just unrelenting, we can think, why is this happening?
[10:35] Why doesn't God love me? And we get those thoughts in our head thinking, well, maybe God is actually cruel. Maybe he's just mean to his children.

Maybe he's against me. But we need to realize those are the lies of Satan. Because even in those moments, God is for you.

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He never shifts away from that position. And just like we thought last week, we don't always know why this is happening. And why not that happening instead.
But we do know everything is happening for us. The Lord Almighty has our best interests at heart. And so who could ever be against you?
And that is love. God loves us. And if he is for you, he will give you everything you need. Look at the next question, verse 32.
[11:36] 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? The answer being, of course he will.

When God is for you, when he loves you, he never holds back from you. Because what has God already given you? His own son.
If you just notice what's going on here, this is an argument from the greater to the lesser. So if this big thing is true, well of course this little thing is going to be true as well.
It's like saying, on your birthday, if your parents have given you all these wonderful gifts and thrown you this amazing party and made you your favorite cake, and then you ask for a glass of water, well of course they're going to give you a glass of water.
Well God has given us his son. So how will he not also graciously give us everything we need? We sometimes speak of love languages, don't we?
[12:42] So we might say, well my love language is words of affirmation or gifts or time or whatever it is. I don't think we should make too much of that, but there is something to it. Gifts convey love.

And a precious, thoughtful gift conveys a great love. Well out of the loving heart of God came the greatest gift of all. His own son.
And we really do need to think of Jesus as a gift. Yes, for the Christian, God has given us forgiveness and hope and meaning and transformation and purpose.
But actually the greatest gift is the son of God himself. When the father sent him to earth, taking on flesh, suffering for us, that was God giving us Jesus.
Not just sending, but giving. He belongs to us. And we see that reality here at the table. God is gifting us his son.
[13:46] This is where Christ shows us and stamps on us. I belong to you. My body, my blood, it is yours. When we were in our deepest need and our lowest point, what did God do?

He didn't spare that gift. He didn't hold back. No. He gave his own beloved son on a cross. And so in the Christian life, in your need, there is no way God will ever hold back from you.
He will give you all the grace that you need for whatever you are going through right now. He will put into our lives all that we need, orchestrating all things.
He is for us. And so the things we are wanting in life, in our need, in our lack, we need to realize that is not God holding back or being stingy.
No, God always gives us exactly what we need. Because he has already given you his son. And so we can, we can now just trust in his ways and in his timing.
[14:57] And however unsettled you might feel right now, we can just rest assured God loves us. And that love also means he will never hold our sins against us.

Look at the next questions, verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? Verse 34. Who is to condemn? What so often eclipses God's love in our lives?
It's our own sin, isn't it? That's Satan's main tactic. He's the accuser. He tries to bring all our sins to God and bring charges against us.
Look what she said. Look what he did. Did you hear what he said? Look at his past. Look what she's thinking right now.
And Satan tries to use that to stop God loving us. To turn him against us. And even our own hearts do that too.
[16:03] The Christian life, this side of glory, it is filled with sins and failures and fighting that pull in our hearts. And when we fall into that sin, maybe even back to those same old habits, we think, well surely that's the last straw, isn't it?

God's done with me. God can't love me now. He must hate me right now. And it's an effective tactic Satan uses. Because he doesn't need to change God's mind in that case.
He just needs to change ours. And it traps us, condemns us. Satan tries to put us back into that prison of sin thinking, well this is hopeless now.

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I'm trapped in my habits. Change is impossible. What's the point? But what is the answer to all of that? No. God has justified you. God has forgiven you.
And look what Christ has done for you. Died. Paid for your sins. Raised in victory over those sins. And sat at the right hand of God as a guarantee those sins are ended.
[17:16] And he's there never condemning us. He's only there ever praying for us. And so your sin can never extinguish God's love for you.

We may not feel it. But the deep reality of the Christian life is that even in sin, God's love is always there. Now that isn't to say that our sin is okay.
No, it matters. It must be put to death. But it means our sin or Satan's charges can never undo Christ's love for you.
Because it can never undo Christ's work for you. Just think. Just think about this. To stop God's love for you. To change him from that fixed position.
Do you realize what that would take? It would require someone to break into heaven. Tear Christ from his throne. Drag him back down to earth.
[18:21] Make him mortal again. Re-crucify him. Put him back in the grave. And keep him there forever. But who can ever do that?

Who is to condemn? It is impossible for God to ever stop loving his people. So if your sin is weighing on you, your past, your present, your habits, your desires, and your heart just feels cold right now.
Christian, you need to know this. In Christ, you are loved by God. He is for you and no one can take that away. And if you haven't yet, you can know this love.
The love of someone who is always for you, who will never hold back from you. The love that will forgive all your sins and never hold it against you. Because everyone here needs this love.
We are made for this love. But we're looking for it in all the wrong places. This is why we are so confused about love. But right now, you can know it and have it and actually be loved by God.
[19:32] All you need to do is turn to him. And trust in his son. It is one thing for God to be in control of your life. It is another thing for him to love you.

It is one thing for God to create the world. It is another for that creator to love you. Well, in the Christian life, there is a profound and deep reality. God loves us.
Which means from now and forever, that will always be true. Nothing can separate us from God's love. That's my second point today. Nothing can separate us from God's love.
With all these layers of questions, we end on maybe the greatest, verse 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Again, the answer is meant to be obvious.
No one. Who is able to change the God of love's heart, would you? Who is powerful enough to undo all that the Savior has done for you?
[20:38] Who is big enough to destroy the plans of the Almighty in your life? Beneath the surface of the Christian life, you see something that just completely envelops the Christian.

Something that is so stuck to us, so deeply tied to our very being, that it cannot be separated from you. It is the love of Christ. It would be like trying to separate light from the sun.
Or separating warmth from fire. It just cannot be done. It's why in Psalm 23, David so confidently says, Surely, surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.
Because God's love follows me all the days of my life. And then Paul just, he lists all the worst things that could ever happen to us.
To almost kind of put this claim to the test, verse 35. Shall persecution separate you? Can a conversion therapy law stop God's love for you?
[21:47] Can someone living in 10 Downing Street change the Almighty's mind? Persecution may well come, but it cannot separate you from God's love. His love, it upholds us in those times.

Shall famine or danger or sword? Can state-funded terrorism turn God against you? Can World War III, can an AI apocalypse? What is all of that to the Lord of heaven and earth?
None of it can even touch God's love. And so what does Paul call us? Verse 37. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
It's an amazing thing to be called. But it also makes you think, how can someone be more than a conqueror? Surely you're either a conqueror or you aren't.
You either win or you don't. How can you be more than a conqueror? Well, it's the difference between winning and the impossibility of losing.

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[22:56] Think of a game of chess. It's one thing to go into a game, play well, and have the odds in your favor to win. Back your opponent into a corner. Make him helpless.

And victory is just a few moves away. You are a conqueror. But it's another thing to actually have your opponent in checkmate.
And he can try to move his king as much as he likes, but it's useless. You cannot lose. It's impossible. You are more than a conqueror.
Well, in the Christian life, God has already cried checkmate. And anything else that happens in this world, anything that Satan tries to do against you, that is just Satan moving his king back and forth, but he can't do anything.
He's lost anywhere he goes. God's love cannot be taken. And our future cannot be taken. And so we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
[23:59] And so the church may look fragile. Our lives may look weak. And we don't know what lies ahead of us. But whatever comes your way, it can never overcome God's love and care and plans for you.

Verse 38. Death nor life. You are loved in this life. And even in death, you go to be in the loving embrace of your Savior.
Christ has turned even death into victory. And an angel himself does not have the power to stop God loving you. All the forces of Satan can be unleashed, but they cannot stop you from getting to glory.
No power, nothing in time or space, nothing in all creation can ever separate you from the love of God. God, the Christian life is utterly invincible.
But it's not because of us. It's because of God. The divine conqueror is for you. But I do want to end with this.
[25:06] If this is who God is, if he is more than a conqueror, if this world is in checkmate, we need to ask ourselves, why would we fight him?

And why do we think we would win? But amazingly, to those who are fighting him, God is so loving. He doesn't say you're a lost cause. He doesn't say your sin is too much. No, he calls you and invites you now to come and be loved by him. To receive the gift of his son, to trust him and know this love in your life.
And you will be loved forever. And so this is what we cannot miss in the Christian life, what we must not forget. Beneath the weakness, even in the midst of darkness, there is a deep, unbreakable reality.
God loves us. And nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. Let's pray. Let's pray.

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