

The Security of the Believer

(Romans 8:31~39)

This morning I want to speak to you on the subject, “*The Security of the Believer*”...or as some refer to it as, “*Eternal Security*,” the teaching that once an individual becomes a part of the family of God, that he is forever a part of the family, that nothing can separate him from God. It is a subject matter that has sparked great controversy among evangelical Christians. For there are many who adamantly reject this teaching, arguing that you can be lost again. It is a debate that has been going on for centuries. And tragically in our day, which side you are on, depends largely in part to how you were raised. If you were raised in a Baptist church, you probably believe in “*Eternal Security of the believer*.” But if you were raised in a Holiness, Pentecostal Church, you probably believe “*you can be lost again*.” But as I like to point out with these kinds of things, somebody is wrong. It is not possible for the scriptures don’t teach both views, right? I mean, it is either true, or it’s not. So having said that, my aim this morning is not, to argue this point from a “*Baptist Perspective*”...but a “*Biblical Perspective!*” My aim this morning is not to argue that “*We*” are right, and they are wrong, but rather to find *the Truth*”...to find not, what the Baptist say, or the Pentecostal say...but rather...“*What saith the Lord*.”

Having said that, let us look to the scripture... Here in Romans 8:31~39, I am convinced that this is the very subject that Paul is speaking to. Everything he says here, every question he asks, all point to the one truth that he declares in verse 38~39...³⁸*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*³⁹*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Everything he names here can all be summed up in that “**Absolutely NOTHING**” can separate us! Even though he doesn’t say the word “Nothing,” that is clearly the intent here...³⁸*For I am persuaded...that neither death, nor life,* (think about that, nothing that death may bring to us...nor anything we may face in this life)...*nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,*(that pretty much covers all the powers that be!)...*nor things present, nor things to come,*(nothing at this current time...nor will there be anything in the future)...³⁹*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature...bottom line... NOTHING....shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Beloved, Paul’s point is clear...we who are “*In Christ*,” are held safe and secure in the arms of God, and that there is NOTHING or NO ONE **can separate us from His grasp!** Amen, what a glorious truth! Jesus made a very similar statement to that very truth...**(John 10)** ²⁷*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:* ²⁸*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* ²⁹*My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.*

That beautifully illustrates what Paul is teaching here in Romans...how that all those who are “*In Christ*,” are eternally safe and secure, in the arms of God. Nothing or no one is able to separate us from his hand!

Well this morning I want us to take a few moments here, and look at what Paul is saying here, because it’s not enough to simply declare the truth of eternal security, because unless you understand for yourself, as to why this is absolutely true...you will still struggle with it, and doubt. I want us to look at this and see what it is that caused Paul to “**be persuaded**” as he says here, of the certainty of the “*believers eternal security*” in Christ.³⁸*For I am persuaded*...Paul says. What is it, that “*convinced*” Paul, that beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there is absolutely nothing that can ever separate us from God.

Ironically, the answer is found in a series of questions... Here Paul asks a series of seven questions, all aimed at the same point...to affirm the great truth of the “*Security of the believer*”...that NOTHING shall be able to separate us from God. (What is the significance of the number 7? ...number of completeness.) I think that these “*seven questions*” that Paul poses here, are aimed at “*removing any question*” that anyone might have concerning the certainty of the “*Security of the believer*.” To the end, that all of our questions, all of our doubt might be removed...that we might walk in full confidence, knowing we are forever safe and secure in the arms of God.

We begin with the first one, a very general question... (Vs 31) **31** *What shall we then say to these things?*

What things? Well, this is a reference to the truths that Paul has been declaring up to this point... Now I want to pause here just a moment, and emphasize the importance of this. When Paul says here, **What shall we say to these things?** That could be stated, *“If these things be true in a man’s life...what does that mean?”* Now here is the most important part of correctly understanding this matter of eternal security. When you understand what Paul’s saying here, you realize that what he’s saying is, there’s a prerequisite to the promise of eternal life in a man’s life. In other words, there are some things, that must be true in a man’s life, in order for the promise of “*eternal security*” to be valid in his life. **31** *What shall we then say to these things?* *What does all of this mean...What can we conclude from all this,* Paul says. And then he proceeds to declare the promise that those whom he’s just described, are “*eternally secure in the arms of God!*”

I cannot stress enough the importance of understanding this, in terms of correctly understanding this matter of the “*Eternal Security of the believer.*” Because tragically, we’ve lost the meaning of what it means to “*believe*” in our day. In our day, it means nothing more than you agree with certain principles, you’ve “*made a decision,*” you’ve recited a creed or prayer or whatever, and now you’re saved. Beloved, that is simply not true. The opponents of “*Eternal Security*” argue largely in part, on the basis of “*professing believers*” who live carnal lives, who show no real signs of spiritual regeneration. Citing them for living no differently than the world, thus arguing that there’s no way a man can live like that, and have the promise of heaven. And I need you to listen very closely to me here... I agree with them. Based on what I see in scripture, they are absolutely right! Beloved here when Paul says, **31** *What shall we then say to these things?* he is pointing back to what he has just been saying, concerning those who live a “*Life of Faith.*” (Vs 1) ...those who walk not after the flesh, but the Spirit. (Vs 5~8)...those who are in the “*Flesh*” cannot please God... (carnally minded, seek things of this world, etc) (Vs 9)...any man who has not the Spirit is none of His. (Vs 14) ...they who are “*Led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God.*” (Vs 17~23)...they identify with Christ’s sufferings... (Vs 24~25)...they seek for what they cannot see. (Vs 26~29)...the Spirit of God is ever working in their lives, shaping and molding them into the very image of His Son. Beloved, when you understand everything that Paul has been saying here, he’s simply describing what it means to live a “*Life of Faith.*” The problem in our day, is that we have all but lost the meaning of what it means to “*Believe.*” In our day, a man can merely “*profess faith in God,*” and yet regardless of how he lives is irrelevant. He can continue to live a carnal life, living to the flesh, being just as worldly as those who profess no faith in God...and yet, he is declared “*eternally secure*” based on some “*profession*” he made at some point in his life. Well, according to what Paul clearly declares here in this passage, that is simply not true. Before “*Eternal Security*” is a viable truth in a man’s life, there must be clear signs of “*Spiritual Regeneration*” in the man’s life.

Which brings us to one last statement I want us to look at here, that plays a major role in the doctrine of “*Eternal Security,*” one that kind of serves as the “*Foundation*” for this truth... ³⁰*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Don’t miss what he just said... every aspect of man’s salvation, is God’s doings! **The reason Paul can so boldly proclaim the “*Security of the believer*” is due the fact, that God is the source of every aspect of man’s salvation! HE predestinated...HE called...HE justified...HE glorified... *God established the plan* before the foundation of the world, *God pre-determined* that men would be saved by faith, through the hearing of his word. *God calls* man, he draws man through the Spirit to Himself. *God justifies* man, by the offering up His Son on that tree for our sin! And *God glorifies man*, through the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts, day by day transforming us into the image of His Son!**

I’ll say again... The reason Paul can so boldly proclaim the “*Security of the believer*” is due the fact, that God is the source of every aspect of man’s salvation! And beloved, what He does is ETERNAL!

Let's look at the other six questions Paul poses here...and as we do so, time will not permit us to do an in depth study of every question, but more of just a general overview of them. I'd encourage you on your own time to study this out.

(Vs 31) Paul says...³¹*What shall we then say to these things?... If God be for us, who can be against us?* Now ponder that question just for a moment...*if God be for us*, the idea here is, if God be "on our side"...in the sense of fighting for us, protecting us from the attacks of the enemy...then who will be able to come against us, and overcome us? ***What's the obvious answer to that question?*** NO ONE! Absolutely NO ONE! I the way that is worded...it's like, "If God be for us, if God be on our side...NAME ONE who can come against us and overcome us, or conquer us. Someone may say "Satan"...no match! Listen, though the whole world join hand in hand, along with all the demons in hell, as well as the forces of Satan...still, no match. Beloved, think about it... ***If God be for us, who can be against us?*** NO one, absolutely no one. What a glorious truth that is! What a blessed assurance we have in Christ!

(Vs 32) The next question...³²***He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

Again, what's the obvious answer to this question? Beloved, if God was willing to go as far as to "give up" His own Son for us, do you not realize that means that there is NOTHING He wouldn't do for us! Beloved, if you understand what Paul is saying here, you realize that as "God's children," we enjoy the "Limitless love" of God... Knowing that He offered up His own Son for us, reveals that there are no boundaries, there's no line, there's no stopping point to how far He will go and what He will do for us!

(Vs 33) Question four...³³***Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.*** Let's go ahead and read the next question along with this, I'll explain in a moment. ³⁴***Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.***

I wanted to read these two together, because these two are similar, in that they both have to do with "Our Guilt." The first two questions we dealt with here, had to do with God's power and God's love. But these two speak to "man's guilt." Paul is hitting at the main source of our doubting the security of our salvation, "our Shortcomings!" These two questions could be combined to say, "**Doesn't our Shortcomings and our Failures separate us from God?**" We may not doubt God's power, nor His great love...but one area that we may doubt, is our shortcomings and failures.

I'll be the first to admit, I fall way short... If you were to spend just a little time with me, it wouldn't take you long to find fault in me. As much as that breaks my heart, it's true. For I long to be all I can be for God, but the truth is, I fall short a lot. But the "**BLESSED ASSURANCE**" that I have IN CHRIST is...even so, they do not separate me from the LOVE of God in Christ Jesus my Lord! In saying, ³³***Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*** Paul is not suggesting that men won't find anything wrong in our lives...for they will! But rather, the point he is making is, that GOD is the JUDGE...and **not Men!** *It is God that justifies!* To the ONE to whom we have to do, the one to whom we are ACCOUNTABLE to... HE has declared us INNOCENT in Christ Jesus! *It is Christ that died*, Paul says...*yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us*... Paul is saying here that me may judge and condemn us, but the one true Judge of all the earth, has declared us innocent, based on the fact that His Son took our sin upon Himself, and was condemned in our stead!

This brings us to the last two questions...³⁵***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?***

All these things can be summed up in one word... **Suffering**... Tribulation...(carries the idea of being squeezed, put under pressure) ...distress...(speaks of a narrow space, being hemmed in...) persecution... (speaks of suffering affliction)...famine...nakedness...(speaking to the lacking of essential things)...what about dangers or even death, Paul says... **Can any of these things separate us from the love of Christ?**

The idea here is, does the fact we endure suffering mean we aren't in the favor of God? Are those signs that God is not blessing us, and that He has removed His hand from us? That's a good question, one that

needs to be answered, because that's exactly how many see it! Paul is speaking to those who see "God's Blessings" as a peaceful life, a life without hardships, a life of plenty... Many have this notion of God, in that He "Blesses" those whom He loves, and punishes those He doesn't. This was especially true in Paul's day. Their thought was, if you were in God's favor, He would bless you. They couldn't imagine being in God's favor...suffering hardships, persecutions, tribulations, not having the basic essentials of life, like food and clothing, etc. In their minds, that simply did not depict the kind of treatment and life of those whom God loved. In their minds, that was evidence of God's judgment, God's punishment on one's life.

If you know anything about Paul, he suffered greatly for the cause of the gospel... He basically lost everything he had, was constantly persecuted and beaten, He was thrown in prison time and time again. There were many times he "*did without*", things like food and water, times he had little to no money, etc. It's no wonder Paul asks these questions here, because no doubt, that's very likely the way he was seen in his day. Certainly not one who was "*Blessed of God.*" But the answer Paul gives here, is amazing. Here Paul affirms, that far from even hinting that his sufferings suggested he was out of God's favor and blessing, Paul points to the scripture and declares, that it rather "*Affirms*" he is in God's will and favor. Look at what he says... ³⁵***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*** ³⁶*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the daylong; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

Paul's answer? Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, dangers and so forth...they actually "*Affirm*" He is in the "graces" of God, because according to the scriptures, all who identify with God in this world, will suffer, just as He did. Jesus came to this world, to lay His life down for those in it, and they rejected Him! And Jesus told His disciples that very thing, how they too would be rejected by this world, for following Him. And basically that's what Paul is arguing here, by quoting from the Psalms. Sufferings, persecutions, and so on, far from signifying you are out of God's blessings...Paul points to them as "*affirmations*" of God's favor on your life...

So, having looked briefly at these seven questions that Paul poses here, we see that every one of them leads us to the same conclusion, the **ONLY Conclusion...**(Vs 37~39) ³⁷*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* ³⁸*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,* ³⁹*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature...(simply put...**ABSOLUTELY NOTHING**)... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What a glorious truth that is...all we who are "*In Christ,*" have the "*Blessed Assurance*" of our "*Eternal Security!*" Having the confidence that there is absolutely NOTHING or NO ONE who is able to separate us from the love of God! Praise the Lord!