

# Christ's Inseparable Love

"God will always love you." Those words may be the most life-changing words for us as believers in Jesus Christ. Maybe that is why God spends so much time repeating it in scripture.

In Romans 5 we read **"love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us,"** and **"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

John 3:16 says it so beautifully, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."**

Jeremiah 31:3 says, **"I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."**

Psalms 136 repeats it 26 times, **"His steadfast love endures forever"** (ESV).

1 John 3:1 – **"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"**

But even with all these assurances of God's love, have you found yourself in circumstances of life which have made you doubt God's love? Have you found yourself, having done certain things, which make it hard for you to believe that God loves you, still loves you, and will love you to the end? Has your assurance been undercut by situations that you have gone through in life which have been so painful and so inexplicable that you have not been able to make sense of them. Well the apostle Paul had been through those kinds of experiences himself as a believer, and yet he had a fullness of assurance of God's love.

Five times here in at the end of Romans 8 the apostle Paul has asked questions to draw out the amazing privileges of belonging to Jesus Christ. Verse 31: **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"** Verse 32: **"how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"** Verse 33: **"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?"** Verse 34: **"Who is he who condemns?"** And now today verse 35: **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"**

The answers are so plain and so wonderful, Paul lets us supply them and rejoice in them. Verse 31: No one can be successfully against us – because God is for us. Verse 32: God will supply everything we need, because He did not spare His own son for us. Verse 33: No one can make a charge stick against us, no matter who accuses us because God has justified us. Verse 34: No one can condemn us because Christ has died for us and is also risen interceding for us at the right hand of the Father. And today in verse 35: No one and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

## Romans 8:35-39

**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 Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."**

**37 Yet 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 principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,**

**39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

I want you to notice here first, the emphasis in this passage is on Christ's love for us. And of course, ultimately on God's love for us, as we see in verse 39, not on our love for God.

1 John 4 says, "... **God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**" (1 John 4:8b-10)

It is not our love for God that gives us assurance and confidence in the trials of life, it is God's love for us that assures us. So because our security resides in God's love, there's no circumstance that can interrupt it. There's no circumstance that can defeat it. There's no situation in life that can overthrow it.

### **1. No earthly circumstance can separate us from God's saving love.**

In verse 35 Paul lists some of the circumstances of life that seem like they are enemies who are trying to separate us from the love of Christ. He asks, "**Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**"

Let's look at Paul's list: First, he mentions tribulation. He's speaking of those strong external pressures that sometimes come upon us in the difficulties of life. Jesus used this word when He said (John 16:33), "**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**" Paul used it when he strengthened believers and encouraged them to continue in the faith in Acts 14:22 he said, "**We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.**"

Second, he says distress. This word pictures a narrow or confined place. So distress or hardship are perhaps the inward pressures that accompany those external pressures on us. When things are going badly on the outside, when we're facing unbelievable grief or suffering or trial on the outside, they tend to produce inner turmoil. So it's not simply what you're facing out there, it's what you are facing in here which threatens to remove you from God's love.

Next is persecution. The word literally means to pursue someone to harm him. It is the verbal or physical abuse that we suffer because of Christ. Jesus said (Matt. 5:11-12), "**Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**" Paul promised (2 Tim. 3:12), "**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**"

Famine and nakedness go right along with persecution. In many countries today, if you're a Christian it can be difficult for you to get a job to provide for your family's basic needs. And in some places, famine is a reality that believers suffer.

Next is peril which means danger. Paul uses this word eight times in 2 Corinthians 11 to describe the many dangers that he had faced in his labors for Christ. Paul says he was,

**... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**

Paul knew all these circumstances of Romans 8:35 and more. The final one on his list is sword which refers to execution or death. Paul would finally suffered this for his faith as well. Then in verse 36 he quotes Psalm 44:22 to show that it is for the Lord's sake that His people go through these terrible circumstances. God's people have always endured suffering. It is nothing new. We should expect it.

Some teach that because you're a child of God, He will protect you from trials. But read the Bible and study church history. In His sovereign purpose, God often allows His faithful servants to suffer and even be persecuted unto death. Those who teach that if you have enough faith God will heal all your diseases and give you a pile of money to live in luxury are false teachers. By faith God delivers some, but by the same faith, others are destitute or tortured or sawn in two (Heb. 11:33-39).

Paul is showing that no matter how difficult the trial, even to the point of martyrdom, God's love for us is a rock solid foundation.

## **2. We are super-conquerors through God's love for us.**

Here's the surprising thing that Paul wants to tell us. Verse 37, **"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."** He says we are more than conquerors, hyper-conquerors, super-conquerors in all these things.

Go back to the list in verse 35. He says pile it up, all those things. You are more than conquerors in all these things. It's not that you just sort of barely get by, by the skin of your teeth. You overwhelmingly conqueror. And it's not just in the good things. It's in all these things. It's in all those bad things, all those adversities, all the adversities of your life. In those things, God has made you to be more than conquerors.

How? We are made more than conquerors not in spite of those experiences, but in them. It's not that something bad happened, and you were still a conqueror anyway. No it's precisely because that bad thing happened that God made you to conquer in an extraordinary way.

It is not through those things themselves. It's through Him who loved us. He's done it through the love of Jesus Christ. Through Christ's love as exercised and exhibited in the cross, you are more than conquerors. It wasn't the trial itself that produced the character in you. It was the grace and love of God working in the trial. It was through Him who loved us. That is what made you to be more than conquerors.

God's great love for us is not diminished or terminated by our failures, shortcomings, or sins, since it is rooted in God's love for His only begotten Son. Ephesians 1:6 says that **"He has made us accepted in the Beloved."** God accepts us because He loves His Son. The greatest proof of His love was at the cross.

So God's love is not threatened or undermined by the worst adversities or trials imaginable.

### **3. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love in Christ.**

In verses 38 and 39, Paul tells us that he has a firm conviction that no created thing whether it's time or heavenly hours or space or distance can divorce us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ.

Listen to it again,

**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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

When Paul says he is persuaded, he is expressing the fullness of his confidence about this reality. He has already told you in verse 35 that no earthly thing can separate you from God's love. As if his list in 8:35 were not enough, Paul adds a series of contrasts to reinforce his conviction that absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love. Now he's saying there is nothing in the invisible world of spiritual reality that can separate you from God's love.

Paul knows that every Christian knows that there's more to life than meets the eye. There's a bigger battle going on. Job tells us that, the book of Job tells us that. Daniel emphasizes that, that in the midst of the story of Daniel and the captivity there's a bigger picture, there's a bigger conflict.

First, neither death nor life can separate us from God's love. If Christ has saved you, death ushers you into His presence. In Philippians 1:21-23 Paul writes about his assurance,

**For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.**

Life cannot separate us from God's love. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8:14), Jesus identifies the thorny ground as "the worries and riches and pleasures of this life," which choke out the word so that it does not bear fruit. C. H. Spurgeon commented on our text (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit [Pilgrim Publications], 42:558), "I am not so much afraid of dying as I am of sinning; that is ten times worse than death." But as God's children, if we fall into sin or worldliness, His love will discipline and restore us. Life cannot permanently separate us from God's love.

Then Paul mentions neither angels, nor principalities. There are no spiritual powers, good or bad, that could possibly separate us from God's love—not an angel in heaven or the devil of hell.

Neither things present, nor things to come, refer to everything that can possibly happen to us. No bad circumstance now or in the future can separate us from God's great love.

Nor powers. Can anything Satan does, can any supernatural manifestation of Satan, can any miraculous act of Satan, somehow destroy our faith? The answer is no. Can any power do that? No. Can any power you will ever encounter do that? No.

Neither height nor depth, However high or low you go, you can't get away from God's love (see Ps. 139). He is everywhere!

Then, as if Paul were afraid that he had missed something, he throws in a catch-all: nor any other created thing. He is saying, "Name anything that you can conceive of. God will work it together for good for His saints, and so it cannot separate us from His love."

We come now to the end of Romans 8. Paul said, "I am persuaded, convinced." "I am sure. Nothing in all the universe can separate the people of God from the love of God." What are the grounds of his persuasion? Not sentimental optimism or happy-ever-afterism. It is based squarely on the fact that God loves us and proved His love in the death of his Son. After Calvary, no one can ever doubt the greatness of God's love. The cross proves the love of God.

And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

Refrain:  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!

Paul said, "I am persuaded." I say to you that I am persuaded. Are you persuaded? Paul was convinced. I am convinced. Are you convinced? Can you truly say, "I no longer have any doubts? I know that God will keep me safe to the very end?" If you are not certain, it is because you are looking to yourself and not to the Lord. Take a good look at Jesus and you will be convinced. I am persuaded and I am glad that I am. What about you?