

SING THE SONG OF SECURITY
ROMANS 8:31-33

Most of us probably don't feel as secure as we did a few years (or decades) ago.

When I was 8-years-old my family lived just north of downtown Dallas (not a good neighborhood now, or then), and on a Saturday morning, I would tell my folks where I was going, get on my bike, and be gone for hours and they would have no idea where I was at a particular moment. No one thought about accidents or criminal behavior against children like we do now. When our children were young I wouldn't let them play unsupervised in my front yard in Granbury, TX (ostensibly a much safer place than downtown Dallas).

We lock our houses and our cars and have security systems on both. We have passcodes on our computers and our cell phones and dozens (hundreds?) of passwords for various websites and technological devices. Seemingly every week we hear news of another major internet company that was hacked and lost millions of credit card numbers or passwords and logins to cybercriminals. We have apps to keep bad guys from getting our bank information and computer access and we have other apps to keep us from going to bad places on the web.

We have devices that turn lights on and off in our homes at different times and door bells that are cameras to help us evaluate who is coming to our home. We have fences and gates around our homes and lock boxes and safes inside our homes. And we have weapons in those safes to protect us should things go suddenly wrong in our homes.

A few years ago I was talking to a neighbor about some of those weapons and I innocently asked, "how many guns do you have?" "I have no idea," he responded, which I thought was kind of curious. A couple of minutes later he said, "I don't know how many guns I have, but I know it's over a hundred." "Wow." Then he paused and thought a little more — "I can reach seven guns without getting out of bed." I didn't know whether that made me feel more safe or more insecure! (We do have a good relationship with him.)

Too often we feel unsafe and insecure. But no insecurity is as great as any insecurity experienced by the believer in Christ. Perhaps that's why the apostle Paul crescendos Romans 8 with a song of the believer's security. As we've noted, this chapter is about sanctification (as are chs. 5-8), and it is about the work of the Spirit of God particularly to sanctify us. But because it is about sanctification and the Spirit, it is also about the security of the one who belongs to Christ and the assurance we should experience, being His.

As we begin examining this final section of the greatest chapter in the greatest letter in the greatest book ever written, we will see this morning that,

BECAUSE OUR SALVATION IS GOD'S WORK OF SALVATION, WE ARE SAFELY SAVED.

This passage builds on the work God did from eternal past to eternal future to save us (vv. 29-30). Since God has saved us, how should we think of that salvation?

Paul answers that question by asking six of his own questions (I combine the two questions of v. 35 into one question). Those questions are oriented around two themes — we are secure because of God's judicial provision (vv. 31-34) and we are secure because of God's provision of love (vv. 35-39). We want to look at the theme of God's justice in securing us this morning.

When you are questioning your position in Christ, here are four questions to ask yourself, and answer from God's Word (and from this passage):

1. What Should We Think About Our Salvation? (v. 31a)

2. Who is Against Us? (v. 31b)

3. Will God Give Us What We Need? (v. 32)

4. Who Can Justly Accuse Us? (v. 33)

5. Who Can Condemn Us? (v. 34)

6. What Will Separate Us from the Love of Christ? (vv. 35-39)

1. What Should We Think About Our Salvation? (v. 31a)

- What are *these things* that Paul is referring to?
 - ✓ He certainly means the things he has just spoken of in vv. 29-30.
 - God has foreknown us to salvation — God has loved us from before the foundation of the earth and in love has chosen us to be His.
 - God has predestined us to salvation — He has designed, purposed, and planned our salvation.
 - God has called us to salvation — He has graciously drawn us irresistibly to salvation (Jn. 6:37-40, 44). He has not only called us as an expression of His love for us, but we are a love gift from the Father to the Son as well.
 - God has justified us in salvation — He has declared us, who are not righteous, to be righteous in Christ. And He considers and treats us as if we are fully justified.
 - God has glorified us in salvation — He not only has promised to take us to Heaven, but He already sees us as present in Heaven with Him.
 - ✓ If all those things are true, what should we say to that? We should say that we are not only secure, but we are loved and treasured by the Trinitarian Godhead.
 - ✓ But Paul is probably looking further back than just the previous two verses. He is looking back at least to the beginning of this section (5:1ff) and asking for a response to the truths about salvation. And he is likely also looking even further back than that to the beginning of the book.
 - ✓ What should we say about sin, salvation, and sanctification?
 - What should we say about our need for God? (1:17 – 3:20)
 - ... Without Christ, all men are rebels against God, who attempt to suppress God's truth (1:18-20)
 - ... Even Jews who have the truth are under condemnation without Christ (2:1, 4)
 - ... There is no one who is righteous and able to be right with God (3:20)
 - What should we say about God's gift of salvation through faith? (3:21 – 4:25)
 - ... God has declared us just by grace alone through faith alone (3:24-25, 28)
 - ... God has declared us just through Christ's death and resurrection — because of our sin and for our life (4:25)
 - What should we say about God's provision for sanctification? (5:1 – 8:39)
 - ... He has saved us from the domain of Adam and placed us in Christ (5:15-16)
 - ... He has saved us from the power of sin so that we can obey (6:8-12)
 - ... He has saved us with hope that even when we struggle with sin we have provision (7:14-25)
 - ... He has saved us with the confidence that even when we sin, there is no condemnation (8:1)
 - ... He has saved us and is saving us (through sanctification) by the Spirit's ongoing work to confirm our position as adopted sons of God (8:13, 16)
 - What do we say to these things? How should we respond?

- When Paul says, **what then shall we say...**? He infers there is a logical conclusion to what he has said.
 - ✓ Paul uses this same question several times in this book, and each time he not only means there is a logical conclusion, but there is an overtly obvious conclusion (4:1; 6:1; 9:14, 30).
 - ✓ But given the questions that follow, Paul is not supposing that the answer is so obvious to the readers. Some of them might be tempted to be unsure and insecure about their salvation. They may not feel safe in the arms of God.
 - ✓ What follows, then, is a series of questions that should lead them to rest in the goodness of God and the provision of God. (Here is a prelude to what Paul will conclude —)

“[Paul] hurls [his questions] into space, as it were, in a spirit of bold defiance. He challenges anybody and everybody, in heaven, earth or hell, to answer them and to deny the truth which they contain. But there is no answer. For no-one and nothing can harm the people whom God has foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified.” [Stott, *The Message of Romans*, 254.]

2. Who is Against Us? (v. 31b)

- One of the questions of the doubter is, “Can my salvation be safe with so many people and powers against me?” I face so much opposition, can God and Christ really overcome it — **who is against us?**
 - ✓ We face the enemy of sin and the flesh (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16ff).
 - ✓ We are opposed by death and death is still one out of one. And what about the hardships of v. 35 and vv. 38-39 — those are real and substantial. Our opposition is “most violent.” [Murray]
 - ✓ Paul’s own experience gives evidence that the believer will face opposition both from the natural world and from those who seek to do harm to us (2 Cor. 11:23ff).
 - ✓ Elsewhere Paul promised we would face opposition (2 Tim. 3:11-12) as did Peter (1 Pt. 4:12)
 - ✓ Christ promised that we would face opposition (Jn. 15:18ff)
 - ✓ Satan always is opposed to us and stands accusing us (1 Pt. 5:8; Eph. 6:11-13; Rev. 12:20).
 - ✓ How will the believer stand amidst such opposition?
 - ✓ While there is opposition in the world, the way Paul asks the question anticipates a negative response — “no one” can succeed in their opposition to us. They do not and cannot succeed, not because of their inherent inability, but because of the supposition Paul reminds us of before he asks his question —
- Before asking his question, Paul establishes a premise — **if God is for us.**
 - ✓ Paul structures this statement, “if,” much more strongly than our word “if” suggests. He means, “If, and He certainly is...” He means, “since God is for us...”
 - ✓ When he says, **God is for us**, God is on our side. Paul has already reminded the Romans that God is for us who have believed in Christ’s death and the Spirit’s intercessory work (5:8; 8:26). Someone has said this is also a concise explanation of the gospel.

- ✓ Now, three times in four verses Paul reaffirms that God is **for us** — the believer (vv. 31, 32, 34).
- ✓ God is working to the benefit of those who used to be against Him (and who He also was against because of their sin). Now He is on their team, helping them, defending them.
- ✓ What is the benefit of God being for the believer? Ray Ortlund, Jr. says it well —

Paul “asks, ‘If God is for us, who can be against us?’ And that makes a difference, doesn’t it? The God who is never defeated by evil but always uses evil for good, the God who can never be outflanked or surprised or wearied or perplexed – this God is for us.... And if God is for you, then God would have to be defeated for you to be defeated.” [Ortlund, *Supernatural Living*, Location 1884ff.]

- ✓ Who can be against us successfully and who can overwhelm our salvation? Since God is on our side, no one. Yes, we have enemies, but we have no enemy we should fear. “All the powers of hell may set themselves together against us. But they can never prevail because God is on our side.” [Stott, 255.]

3. Will God Give Us What We Need? (v. 32)

- Before we ask the question of this verse, Paul will have us remember the work of God in our salvation. It is important and essential to remember the essentials of our faith and little is more essential than what is in this verse:
 - ✓ *Remember the unsparing act of God.* Paul says that God **did not spare His own Son**.
 - Only two other times is the word **spare** used with God as the subject, and both times it refers to His acts of judgment or discipline — in **Romans 11:21** of God not sparing Gentile believers from discipline even as He did not spare Israel; in **2 Pt. 2:4-5** of the judgment of rebellious angels and the judgment of the world in Noah’s day. Both point to the certainty of judgment; similarly, there was a certainty of judgment of Christ when the Trinity established the eternal decree to redeem sinners for His glory.
 - God did not withhold judgment from His Son. He did not pull back from the agonizing cup of wrath Christ drank for us (**5:6-8**). “That bitter cup, Love drank it up. It’s empty now for me.”
 - ✓ *Remember the cost of God’s own Son.* Paul is emphatic that this was God’s unique Son.
 - God has many sons. Paul has just talked about the sons that God adopted (**8:14-16**).
 - Did God subject any of those sons to His wrath? No. It was His own particular Son. Not just any son would do. It took the second member of the Triune Godhead to absorb God’s wrath.
 - This same language is used in the Greek translation of the OT in **Gen. 22:12, 16** — Abraham and Isaac. In that story, God spared Abraham’s son Isaac by providing the ram; in the gospel story, God refuses to spare His own Son from death.
 - We, His sons who went astray and rebelled and did not love Him, He spared.
 - Christ, the eternal and infinite second member of the Trinity who always loved and was always loved by the Father, God did not spare. God refused to spare Him. This is the cost of salvation. And it is difficult to comprehend or accept by us —

- We agree with Katie Luther who said of Abraham offering his son Isaac on the altar in Genesis 22 — “I do not believe it. God would not have treated his son like that!” “But Katie,” Luther is said to have replied, “He did.” Again, that is our salvation’s cost.
- ✓ *Remember the wrath of God. God **delivered Him over**.*
 - God not only didn’t spare Christ (didn’t stop His death), but delivered Him to death (sent Him to His death). God put Christ to death. God delivered Him to death.
 - Other verses state that Christ was delivered to death by Judas (Mt. 10:4; 26:21), the chief priests and elders (Mk. 15:1; Lk. 24:20), and Pilate (Mt. 27:26). But supremely, it was God.
 - But God did not just deliver Him over to death; there is a sense in which God, in love for Christ and in love for redeemed mankind, delivered Christ to Himself and His awful wrath and judgment. God delivered Christ to Himself to absorb the infinite horror of His wrath. Just as we have been saved by God from God (and His wrath), so Christ was delivered over by God to God (and His wrath). *The Father delivered the Son to Himself for wrath so that He might deliver us to the Son as redeemed sons.*
 - The delivery of Christ by God to God’s wrath is a repeated theme in Scripture: **Is. 53:10**; Acts 2:22-23; **Col. 1:19-20**; Tt. 1:1-3.
 - The suffering of wrath *for sin* from the Father’s hand, and *being made sin* (2 Cor. 5:21) is what was made Christ pull back from the cross in Gethsemane (**Lk. 22:41-44**).

“Two things there are which man has no arithmetic to reckon, and no lie to measure. One of these things is the extent of that man’s loss who loses his own soul. The other is the extent of God’s gift when he gave Christ to sinners...Sin must indeed be exceedingly sinful, when the Father must needs give his only Son to be the sinner’s Friend!” [J. C. Ryle]

- ✓ *Remember why the gift of Christ was given.*
 - The way Paul structures this verse, he is emphatic about one phrase — **for us**. “But for us all He delivered Him over...” Paul wants us to recognize the purpose and intent of God’s delivery of Christ to the cross. It was for us. We are a gift to the Son (Jn. 6), and here we see that He and His salvation are a gift to us.
 - This gift is not for all mankind, but Christ and salvation are a gift only to those who are God’s sons. He is a gift for all who have faith in Christ alone and have been made God’s sons.
 - There is also a unity to this gift — He is for all of us — male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free. Regardless of social standing, race, sex, or nationality, He give Christ to all who are His.
 - And He gives Christ to each person individually — He does not save nations or people groups. He saves individuals. “God does not save men in the mass. He deals with each individual in his particularity. And this is to be taken into account in the Father’s giving up of his own Son. The Father contemplated all on behalf of whom he delivered up the Son in the distinctiveness of the sin, misery, liability, and need of each.” [John Murray]

- He had you in mind particularly when the eternal plan of redemption was set in motion; and He was thinking of you particularly as He poured out His wrath on the Son.
- Since all these things are true, consider now Paul's question at the end of verse 32 is, ***will He not also with Him freely give us all things?***
 - ✓ When he talks about freely giving us things, Paul is talking about "gifts of grace." Will God continue to give us the grace we need and don't deserve for the needs of our lives?
 - ✓ When Paul says ***all things***, what things does Paul mean? Is he referring to "all things" related to our salvation (vv. 29-30)? That's certainly possible. But he has just said that "all things work together for good..." (v. 28). Every situation and circumstance in our lives is working to our benefit to conform us to Christ — and we know God is behind those circumstances, orchestrating His purposes. So Paul's question is whether God will give us all the blessings of salvation and all the our particular needs. A: He will give us freely whatever He sees and deems we need for conformity to Christ (which means I may not receive everything I want but I will always have what I need).
- Notice also the little phrase, ***with Him***. Will God give us Christ and then *not* also these other things? What is Paul doing in this verse? He is argued from the greater to the lesser and He his reminding us that He has given us the greatest thing in Christ.
 - ✓ If God has done so much in providing Christ and if Christ has sacrificed so much, then will God not also give us the lesser things we need?
 - ✓ If God has worked so faithfully to produce our salvation, will He not also do the lesser work of keeping us in that salvation?
 - ✓ Will God pour out His wrath on Christ to save you from sin and His wrath and then leave you helpless? Will He not secure and keep you in your salvation? No. May it never be, NO.
 - ✓ Friend, all you need for salvation you have in Christ. And having given you that, God will give you everything else you need, including keeping you in your salvation.

4. Who Can Justly Accuse Us? (v. 33)

- There is another possible question one might ask about his salvation — perhaps someone will bring a charge against me that cannot be refuted or defeated. Perhaps my sin will overwhelm God's grace. So Paul asks, ***Who will bring a charge against God's elect?***
 - ✓ Who will bring a charge is a legal question: who can bring an indictment and legal accusation against us? While the term is different, this is what Satan is always doing (Rev. 12:10).
 - ✓ We get an inclination of Paul's answer and thinking when he says, ***against God's elect***. These are the ones who have been foreknown, predestined, and called (vv. 29-30). Since God has done that for them, we are to anticipate that there is no charge that will result in a legal sentence against us.

- Paul's answer is very simple: **God is the one who justifies.**
 - ✓ We are not justified on our own. God justifies. God declares righteous. God imputes the righteousness of Christ. God removes the condemnation of sin. We don't do it. God does.
 - ✓ Because God does it, then we are secure in His power and authority.
 - ✓ The accuser does not have to account for our sin, he must account for and find some sin that can overwhelm the righteousness of Christ.
 - ✓ Satan's accusations and all other questions are thrown out of court because God justifies. "When God justifies a person, all accusations at once lose their validity." [Hendriksen]

"When God enters into judgment, the outlook for the opposing party is bleak (Rom. 3:4); but if God takes the side of the defendant, no amount of evidence for the prosecution can procure an adverse verdict." [Bruce]

- ✓ Our justification is not yet complete, but that does not mean that we are still open to being accused. If you are in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is fully yours and your sin cannot be held against you.
- ✓ Once God has justified someone, the statute of limitations for bringing accusations is past. You are free from God's wrath, because God has delivered Christ over to His wrath.
- ✓ If you are not in Christ, if you are not a Christian, then none of this is true for you.
 - If you are not a Christian, then God is still against you (v. 31), God has not given His Son for you and has not given you all things (v. 32), and you are still guilty of all charges against you (v. 33).
 - There is hope for you, however, if you believe in Christ as your Savior from sin. And you must believe. God commands all men everywhere to believe. And by believe, we mean, to trust that Christ did everything God says in these verses He has done for you (absorbing God's wrath against your sin) and that He died to liberate you from sin so that you can live for Him. Believing in Christ means believing that He is better than anything else in this world and you want Him above everything else in this world so you can live for Him.
 - If you are not a Christian, I urge you to begin believing in Him today.

5. Who Can Condemn Us? (v. 34)

6. What Will Separate Us from the Love of Christ? (vv. 35-39)

CONCLUSION: Three and a half centuries ago, Stephen Charnok said this:

"[God's] eternal delights were in him, not only as his Son, but as a Redeemer. God's delight in Christ and Christ's rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and delighting in the sons of men, are coupled together....God delighted in him [and in crushing him] because he delighted in the redemption of man."
[*Christ Crucified*, pp. 138-9.]

Because God delighted to crush the Son, we can sing the song of our security in salvation.

BENEDICTION: Romans 8:37-39