

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Song of Security**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 80-91

Well, as you know, we've been having the wonderful privilege of touching the mountain peaks of Paul's letter to the Romans. In my nearly 23 years of ministry at Grace Church I have taught through the book of Romans on two occasions and now I find myself in the last month or so drawn back to touch the mountain peaks of this great epistle because we have so many, many new people in the church who need to know its great and ringing truths. And as we have touched these great truths regarding our salvation, we find ourselves now in chapter 8 and I invite you to turn there, if you will, in your Bible, Romans chapter 8. We're going to be looking in our study at verses 31 through 39.

As we began last week a study of the security of the believer and looked at verses 28 to 30 which set the theology of that great truth, we now come to verses 31 to 39 which, in a sense, are the doxology of that great truth. Paul laid the foundation for it doctrinally in verses 28 to 30 and now he extols it and honors it and praises it and exalts it in verses 31 to 39. You would almost think after last week's study that there could be nothing more said. The tremendous truth of verses 28 to 30 sums up the theology of the security of the believer as no other portion of Scripture does and really says all that would be necessary to be said to make the point. But Paul can't leave it at that. It's as if he knows there must be a few more critics lurking around in the shadow somewhere who need to be exposed and whose questions need finally and forever to be answered. Paul is very concerned that we understand that salvation is forever but once a person becomes a Christian that never changes but lasts forever. And he has made it very clear in verses 28 to 30 that God has secured us from eternity past, foreknowledge and predestination, through time, calling and justification into eternity glorification that we are from eternity to eternity secure in the love of Christ. The salvation He planned for us, the salvation He gave to us, the salvation He will complete in us yet in the future. And so he has raised and answered many issues already in this eighth chapter.

Now remember the chapter began with a statement, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." In other words, if you are in Christ, you have put your faith in Him, you belong to Him, your life is His life, His life is your life, He is your Lord and Savior, there will never be any condemnation. But he anticipates all kinds of queries and questions and so forth and so he launches off of verse 1 really into a whole chapter to strengthen our confidence in the security of our salvation.

Now he comes to the climax. He comes to the pinnacle, the high point. And it has a kind of a doxological feel to it. It's less rational, reasoned, erudite, carefully laid out, logically theology and more

praise and joy and exhilaration. And that's why I tend to feel about verses 31 to 39 as though they are more doxology than theology, although theology is certainly the component of the doxology given here.

Let me read these verses to you, you follow along and then we'll discuss them. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather who was raised who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us. Who or what shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Just as it is written, For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long. We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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."

Now what he is saying there obviously comes through. There is nothing that can separate us from this eternal love. When Jeremiah said it he said it for all of eternity, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," quoting God, Jeremiah 31:3. This love is a love that is inseparable, unbreakable...so says Paul that we might forever cease asking questions about whether salvation is eternal.

Back in verse 31 we sort of introduced the passage. He says, "What then shall we say to these things?" What things? The truth about eternal security, the truth about our eternal salvation. What do we say in response? What do we say in response, for example, to "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ" earlier in chapter 8? What do we say in response to the fact that we are being led by the Spirit of God as the sons of God to a day when we'll enter into the glory of God? What do we say to that great truth that some day we'll have the redemption of our bodies and participate in the glorious manifestation of the sons of God? What do we say to the fact that we have a hope that is secure and is eternal and we eagerly wait for it? What do we say to the fact that we are secure because the Holy Spirit is making intercession in unutterable language before God on our behalf? What do we say to the fact that our salvation is secure because God works everything, even sin, together for our ultimate and eternal good? What do we say to the fact that whomever He foreknew and predestined He will glorify? What is our response to all of this? How are we to argue against this? How are we to debate this?, he is saying.

And he responds, "Since God...literally should be since...Since God is for us who is against us?" In other words, successfully who can withstand us? You see, his point is what are we going to say after we know this much? It amazes me that people can read Romans 8, study Romans 8 and somehow

still believe you can lose your salvation. But how can you say that?

Well, Paul wants to follow his argument up a little further. So let's push it to the ultimate extreme. Let's push it as far as we can push it so we silence any critic. And let's just say that there may be...there may be some ways in which we can lose our salvation, some...some persons who can take it from us. So Paul says, "let's go through the catalogue."

We'll start, first of all, with just somebody else, some human being. Can some human being take away our salvation? Look at verse 31 again. "What shall we say to these things? If God is for us who is against us?" In other words, who successfully is against us? If God is on our side, what person can succeed in being against us? If God says we're not condemned, what person can get our condemnation? What person can secure our damnation? What person or persons can come along and take away our salvation? Are there any such persons? Is there anybody in the world that can do that? How about the Judaizers in Galatia who wanted to take away the salvation of the Galatians because they didn't keep the ceremonial law? How about people around us? You know, there are people who would like to take us out of salvation. They would like to remove us from this Christian preoccupation and way of life, you can be sure of that.

You say, "Well who would ever want to do that?" Well let me give you a little list. There are probably some of you who have people in your family who would like to do that. You're maybe the only Christian and it's really an irritant to your family. And if they had their way they'd get you out of this brainwashing that goes on at Grace Community Church every week. And they'd get you to reject Jesus Christ and recant your faith and get away from this kind of stuff because it's turning you into a fanatic and you're very difficult to live with because you don't enjoy the things that they enjoy and you bring a guilt trip on them frequently. And they would really like to get you out of this, believe me they would. Can they?

And then there are people in secular education who would love to do that. They would love to convince you that there is no God and if there is He doesn't care. The world was not created but the world evolved out of a puddle somewhere in the great, great past. They would love to say that there's no God. They would love to take your young people when you send them to the universities of our country and the world and they would love to attack their Christian faith and their Christian conviction and question all their beliefs and fill their minds with doubt and wonder and therefore steal their faith.

And then there are the purveyors of lies and filth and immorality and pornography and trash in the media today, all the way from what is in print to what is visually available to you in films and on television. And those people would love to get you out of Christianity so that you could become a consumer of their products. They would love to hook you on their stuff. They would love for you to abandon the morality and the integrity and the virtue of Christianity and fall into immorality so that you can feed their coffers.

Then there are the legalists. There are those people who would love for you to abandon salvation by grace, chuck the whole idea that you're saved by faith and buy into their thing that you're saved by baptism or you're saved by ceremonies or you're saved by rituals and get you off this grace kick and back onto the law.

And then there are those people who bicycle around your neighborhood two-by-two in white shirts and black ties. They would love to get you to renounce Jesus Christ as God in human flesh. They would love for you to deny that He is in fact the redeemer and Savior of the world. They would love for you to join their association.

Then there are those people who come and knock at your door sometimes with children. And they want to do a Bible study with you and the Watchtower Society. They would love for you to recant your Christian faith, salvation by grace, belief in the deity of Christ. They would do that in a minute if they could. They would get you to abandon that if they had some means. And they make a major effort to try to do that by sucking people into Bible studies and endeavoring to create doubt, confusion in their minds.

And then there are all those other false teachers and false religions who want to take you away from the truth and confuse you with their lies. Hey, there are plenty of folks out there who would really like to have you lose your salvation. They want to undo in you what Christ has wrought.

Throughout the history of the church you can see the record of that. Take, for example, Martin Luther. He faced men who said to him, "We tell you you either recant your belief in salvation by grace through faith or you die." And he said, "Here I stand. I can't do that." But the major effort was made not only on him but on thousands of other people to get them to deny their faith or die. There are a lot of people who would like to get you to reject Christ, turn your back on salvation, walk away, chuck the whole thing, write it off.

Can they succeed? Those who are against you? Can those who are against you succeed? Well look back at verse 31, "If God is for us then who in the world is going to be successful against us?" If God, the great power, our stronghold, our Savior, our refuge, our deliverer is for us, is there someone more powerful than He who in opposing Him is the victor? Obviously the answer is of course not. God is for us, that we're confident of. He is for us. And since He is for us, who can successfully be against us? That is why 1 John 4:4 needs to remind us again that "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." There is nothing in this created universe that can stand up against the living God who dwells in you.

So, Paul makes a grand and glorious statement about general truth and it is that God is for us. He's for us getting to glory. He's for us reaching heaven. And He turns everything in our life to a good

purpose and a good end. And He overrules all struggles and all suffering and all sin to bring about our eternal glory. And since He is for us, the great and almighty, all-powerful God, there is no human agency on the face of the earth who in opposition to us can succeed, right?

Now somebody is going to come along and say, "Okay, all right, I'll buy that. That's pretty clear there. There aren't any human beings, there aren't any people out there who can successfully cause us to abandon true saving faith." By the way as a footnote, if someone does abandon it, the faith wasn't real. First John says in 2:19, "They went out from us because they never were of us. If they had been of us they would have continued with us." But he says, does Paul in his mind, "Somebody is going to say...Okay, no human being can do it, maybe God can. Maybe God can just get to the point where He's so fed up or He's so disappointed or He's so frustrated, or maybe He just knows us so well He doesn't love us like He used to and He turns against us. Could that happen? Could God do that?"

Verse 32, Paul says, "Look, God didn't spare His own Son." The Greek verb there, "He didn't hold Him back...He didn't hold Him back." There was nothing that God restrained in terms of the full fury of sin on Christ, so He neither held back His Son as the proper gift for salvation, nor did He hold back the fury of His wrath poured out on His Son. He didn't spare His Son anything. He didn't spare His Son the very active death and He didn't spare His Son any mitigation of judgment. He poured it all out on Him.

Now if God took His own beloved Son, His own personal possession, it uses that very phrase, *edios*(?), His own personal possession, the One who belonged intimately to Him, and if it pleased the Lord as Isaiah 53:10 says, if it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and if God chose to put Him to terrible grief, if God didn't spare His own Son, but He says...look back to verse 32...delivered Him up, gave Him over to the powers of darkness, to death, to sin bearing, to bearing a curse, to being separated from Him, if God gave Him up to all of that for us, will He not also with Him freely give us all things? All things mean it's eternal blessing, eternal glory. In other words, if He already gave us the greatest gift, His Son, won't He give us the rest of what is in heaven as our reward? If He gave us the most, will He not give us the least? If He gave us the best already will He hold back something good? That's his point.

I mean, God already put His position on display, He already put it on the line. He said, "Look, I will give you My own Son and spare Him nothing. I spare nothing." Now if He did that do you think He will not along with Christ also give us everything else? If the Father gave the Son to damnation, abandonment that sin required, if the Father gave His own Son to be made sin for us, will He not give us the blessings which that act purchased? That's obvious.

So he says...Look, God's not about to change His mind. He already made the major gift, He gave you His Son." And by the way, as a footnote, He gave you His Son to die for you when you hated Him and were unworthy and now all He needs to do is give you the blessings now that you're His children,

your condition changes. If He could love you when you were wicked and sinful and give you His Son, the greatest gift, can't He not love you now that you're His child and give you the lesser gifts, eternal blessings? That's his point. Infinite love isn't going to change. God isn't going to change. That's why we're secure. The same God who loved us when we were sinners and gave us His Son is the same God who loves us now that we're His children and will give us the blessings His Son procured for us.

And people would say, "Well, we're not worthy to receive those blessings." That's right. But we weren't worthy to receive the salvation in the first place and there's a sense in which we could say we were less worthy then than we are now. So he says if you're looking at God and thinking maybe God is going to change His mind, He already put His view on the line.

Now somebody will come along and say, "Well here's another option. Maybe God doesn't want to do it but maybe Christ does. Maybe Christ would like to get rid of us. Maybe He's had enough of us." Look at verse 33, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died." Stop at that point.

In verse 33 he says, "Look, it won't be God who will turn against you. We already pointed that out. He justified you." In verse 34 he says, "It won't be Christ who will condemn you. He already died for you, was raised for you, is at the right hand of God in interceding for you." I mean, they've already made their statement pretty clear.

Back to verse 33 for a moment. This introduces another component into the situation and we need to address that as well. But just before we do that, take that little phrase, "God is the one who justifies." Now it's a very simple thing. God declared you righteous, therefore He cannot at the same time declare you condemned, right? Listen carefully to me. He never declared you righteous on your own merit in the first place, so He's not going to declare you unrighteous on your own merit in the second place. You understand that? You were declared righteous on the merit of Christ in the first place and you are continually declared righteous on the merit of Christ. Since it was never your righteousness that made you savable, it is not your unrighteousness that makes you unsavable. It's all bound up in the work of God. And God has already declared you righteous. That's what it means, God is the one who justifies. God has already justified you, said you're righteous. Why? Because you were in Christ, Christ died, the penalty was paid, you rose to walk in newness of life, that is a settled issue. God says price paid, case dismissed, you are righteous in Christ. The God who said that cannot condemn you. He cannot talk out of both sides of His mouth.

Then he goes on to verse 34 and brings Christ into the picture. And he's says, "Look, Jesus Christ died for you." That's his first point, He died for you. Now this you must consider carefully, you must think this through. Christ died for you, shall Christ who died for you turn His back on that very act as to its purpose? I mean, the point is this, that when He died He received the condemnation that was due to you and me. He received the condemnation for sin that we should have received. He never

would have died otherwise. The wages of sin is death. Christ had no sin. He never would have died. He never would have died if He hadn't borne our sin. It was our sin that killed Him.

Now listen, He can't condemn us...follow this...because His death proves that He already took our condemnation. He would literally undo the very death He died. You see, you convolute the whole of redemptive comprehension, the whole thing is totally skewed and misrepresented and confused if you deny the security of a believer because now you've got Christ bearing a condemnation, the condemnation for all your sins and then turning around and because of some sin you commit condemning you when He Himself has already paid for that sin and borne the condemnation. And so, shall Christ that died...he says...is He going to condemn you when He already died as your condemnation? The only condemnation you'll ever know is the one that He experienced.

Then he goes a step further. "Shall Christ condemn you, the one who was raised?" What does he mean? On the cross He blotted out our sins and it was affirmed by His resurrection. And He says, "Because I live you shall live." Then he said, "Look," Paul does, "if you can't see that He can't condemn you in the cross because it's already been done, then look at the resurrection. He promised you in His resurrection that you would live. Now is He going to kill you? Is He going to take away that promise? He died for the covering of your sin. He rose to provide your eternal life. He'd done all that. Is He going to undo that?" That's his point. He died, your condemnation paid. He rose, your eternal life guaranteed.

Third thing he says in verse 34, "Who is at the right hand of God." You say, "What does that mean?" Look, He's been exalted to the right hand of God. He's been exalted. Why did God exalt Him? God exalted Him for two reasons. One, He bore the penalty of sin on the cross. Two, He triumphed in the grave. It was a perfect work and God exalted Him. Now you ask the question, "Is God going to have to send Him back down and give Him a low seat because the thing which He supposedly accomplished on the cross is going bad?" All of the glory and the honor forfeited? The Father lifted Him to His right hand because of His perfect work. Are we now to believe that His work wasn't so hot after all and a bunch of people that He died to save and got saved once are all losing their salvation? And the Father is going to send Him down a few notches? No. He paid the perfect penalty, bore the condemnation and because of what He Himself bore He will never condemn those whose condemnation He bore and He will never kill or give death to those to whom He's already given life and He will never forfeit the glory the Father gave to Him at His right hand.

And lastly he says about Christ in verse 34, "He intercedes for us." He intercedes for us. Constantly making intercession on our behalf, constantly praying for us before God. Like Peter, you remember, Jesus said, "Satan desires to have you." That's right, Satan wants you, "But I prayed for you that your faith fail not." And there He was interceding for Peter and that's how He intercedes for us. Yes Satan wants us. Yes they're human beings that want us. They want to take us away from God and Christ and take away our salvation. But Christ is ever living to make intercession for us and He always prays

according to the Father and according to the Father's will. And as you remember in John 11:42 He says to the Father, "I know You always hear Me," and He always gets what He asks for.

So, God isn't going to turn His back on you, He already declared you just, He can't condemn you at the same time. Christ isn't going to turn His back on you, Christ isn't going to forsake you because He died to provide your salvation, He rose to provide your eternal life. He's at the right hand of the Father wherein His glory lies and He ever lives to make intercession to make sure your relationship with God never ever ceases to be what it is.

Now you say, "Well not wait a minute. No persons are going to take you out of God's hand and God's not going to let you go on His own and Christ isn't going to let you go on His own, there's somebody else that might do it. Satan." Paul wants to deal with that, I think, here and he does it in a veiled way. Look at verses 33 and 34 again. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" Verse 34, "Who is the one who condemns?" Now stop there for a moment.

Let me ask you a question. Who is the accuser of the brethren? Satan. Who is up there whenever he has access at the throne of God complaining about Christians? Satan. He is up there accusing us saying we're not faithful, we're not loving, we're not obedient, we're not righteous, we're not holy, we're not worthy and he constantly day and night accuses us before God. Why? Satan wants to get us unsaved. Do you understand that? That's right. He wants to steal us. And he's in league, by the way, with many of those human agencies that are after us that I mentioned earlier. But let's just take Satan.

Satan goes up there and maybe others of his demons and they bring charges against God's elect and they bring condemning railing accusations. Is God going to listen to them? No because God has already declared us...what?...righteous. Is Christ going to listen to him? No because Christ has already paid the penalty of all the sins he's accusing us of. They're already covered. So I'm sure God says, "Look, I've made my decision already, there's no use in you appealing to me." You see, Satan is like a...is like a defeated lawyer and he's got...he just keeps wanting to go to a higher court. He just keeps wanting to go and appeal his case and God says there's no court of appeal. It is over. I said they're righteous, that's it. You're wasting your time. And you can bring all this condemning stuff in here you want and I will only introduce you to Jesus Christ who has borne all the condemnation for all the stuff you're telling me about. It's already paid for, it's already covered, they're declared righteous, case dismissed.

No human being can take your salvation. God's not going to turn His back on you. Christ isn't going to forsake what He's done on your behalf. And Satan is absolutely unsuccessful because God has already rendered the verdict and there's no court of appeal and Christ has already covered all of the sin.



Now somebody says, "Now wait a minute," and I've heard this, I've heard this... "No, you're right, nobody can take your salvation away. God won't forsake you. Christ won't forsake you. Satan himself can't do it. But you can do it yourself." I've heard preachers preach on John 10 where Jesus said, "No man is able to take them out of My Father's hand," and say, "But you can take yourself out of the Father's hand." Oh? Well let's find out. Verse 35, let's find out if we can do it. You ask... somebody says, "Life can get so tough, so bad, so hard, so difficult that you just bail out, it's just not worth it."

So let's see what Paul says. "Who," or "what" would be a better translation of tis here given the context, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword?" Now he's listed some heavy stuff here. Now there are some people, you remember, who make a commitment to Christ superficially and as soon as trouble comes they're gone, right? Matthew 13, that rocky soil. Or because they don't want to let go of the world and suffer the loss of things as a Christian, they're like that weedy ground. They have a short little emotional reaction but no real salvation. But here we're talking about a true Christian and into his life comes tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, all bad things, is that going... is that going to make him abandon God? Is he going to say, "I don't love You anymore. I don't want anything to do with You." Is that going to make him separate, as it were, from the love of Christ? Can he do it himself?

What if we fail? What if it just gets too tough? Well let's find out. Let's look at these seven words. Tribulation, thlipsis, means pressure, outward difficulty. It could be accusations, rejection, you know, people turning on you, you're feeling alienated, ostracized. All of a sudden life becomes difficult. Living your Christian testimony before unbelievers is tough. Maybe you don't make as much money as you used to. You don't get the promotion you want. You feel pressure from family and friends. You're being rejected. The word in the English is from the Latin root "flailing," which was a wood/leather instrument used for beating chaff out of wheat. You just feel like since you became a Christian you're just getting beat on all the time. It's just... it's just not easy living the Christian life in your environment. Will that cause you to abandon Christ?

How about distress? Distress is inward difficulty. Thlipsis is outward, distress is inward. It means a narrow space. You've been hemmed in, confined in. There's no way out. You just... you're struggling. And this could deal with temptation. This could deal with a circumscribed life of obedience and godliness and virtue that is yours to live and you're battling sin and you're just squeezed into this... into this pressure of trying to overcome sin all the time and conform to God. Can that do it? Will you just get weary of the battle and bail out?

What about persecution? That's a direct word, it means actual bodily harm or abuse verbally, suffering at the hands of those who reject Christ.

What about famine? What happens when you don't have enough food and you've been deprived and you've been sent to Siberia and you have to eat on a meager diet of bread? What happens when you don't have any clothes and you're naked and the cost of your discipleship is that high. Or you fall into what he calls peril, kindunos, danger, treachery. Or the sword itself. I mean, you literally die, that's what that means. You lose your life. Is that going to do it?

The worst possible stuff, is that going to make a true Christian bail out? Is it going to drive him to doubt in rejection and sin? Is that going to break the bond?

Then in verse 36 he quotes Psalm 44:22 from the Septuagint and says, "Just as it is written, for Thy sake we are being put to death all day long, we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." You know what he says? He says, "Look, all that stuff I just mentioned in verse 35, that's par for the course. The psalmist even wrote that it's true of God's people in all ages, we just have it tough, we're going to be put to death all day long, we're sheep to be slaughtered. All saints have to endure that to some degree, alienation, persecution, hostility. Jesus said if you're not willing to take up your cross and follow Me, don't even think about being My disciple. Don't even think about it, Matthew 10.

So the question I ask you, beloved, is this...does that kind of stuff in a Christian's life make them abandon their faith? No. It doesn't produce abandonment of faith, it produces spiritual strength, right? That's the kind of stuff that doesn't make you weak, it makes you strong. That's the kind that brings out the reality of your redemption. That's the kind that shows the truth about who you belong to. You want to find out of a Christian's real, put him through that little list...tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword...you'll find out, you'll find out if he's real. It's not going to make him abandon his salvation, it's not going to sever that relationship because God holds him, Christ holds him, the Spirit holds him and he clings with the...with all of the zeal of that inner man renewed in Christ. He's not going to let go.

You can burn him at the stake, you can boil him in oil, you can crucify him on a cross, you can do all kinds of things, he's not going to deny if he's real. He's not going to be separated from the love of Christ.

People can't do it to you, God won't do it to you, Christ won't do it to you, Satan wants to do it to you but can't succeed and you can't even take yourself out of the love of God. The hold of God is too tight and your new inner man clings to Him

Quite the contrary, verse 37, Paul says the very opposite is true, "In all these kinds of things...like tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword...in all these kinds of things we overwhelmingly...what?...conquer through Him who loved us." We're infused with the spiritual power of the God who loves us and we're given the ability to conquer all of that stuff and sustain our faith.

That's why we can talk about faith enduring to the end. That's why we talk about that a person is saved if they endure to the end, as in the book of Hebrews, Colossians chapter 1, because true saving faith endures, that is one of its characteristics.

There are moments of doubt and there are moments of fear but the faith endures. And we are hupernikamon, super conquerors. The word "Nike" comes from that verb root. We use that for shoes and missiles, things that are supposed to go fast, suppose to conquer, suppose to win victories, overwhelming victors here. He says...We are...we are super Nikes, super conquerors through all of this. The trials work to our greater good. The trials drive us to a deeper relationship to God. The trials produce eternal glory. The trials make us strong. The trials make us humble, and so forth. It's just a glorious, glorious conclusion.

So he says, "Look, you can argue all you want. Tell me people can take away your salvation, I'll tell you no, they can't because God is stronger than they are. Tell me God might change His mind and I'll tell you no he won't, He said you're justified and made righteous, He doesn't change. Tell me Christ might change His mind, not so or He would undo His whole redemptive work. Tell me Satan might be able to succeed, not at all, he can't successfully condemn you, God won't allow it and Christ won't either. Tell me you think you can take yourself out of God's hand, I'll tell you on the one hand He holds you too tightly and you hold Him too tightly.

By the way, Paul writes this during a winter in Corinth and neither he nor the church at Rome could know how short a time would elapse before they would stand in need of this very comforting truth. Paul would himself be killed by a sword and his readers would reach the point where their blood was shed to soak the sand of the great Roman Amphitheaters. But the honor of Christ is always safe in the hands and the heart of a true believer. The honor of Christ is always safe in the hands and the heart of a true believer. They didn't fear to die. They were mauled with wild beasts, they were naked, soaked in tar and burned like torches. They fought with men and beasts. But they were always safe in the love of Christ. They never fell out of it. And so, Paul says there isn't anything or anybody that's going to take away your salvation.

And then he caps it off with those great words of verses 38 and 39. This sums up everything. "For I am convinced," that's persuaded, confident because of all the reasoning that he's just gone through, "I am convinced," not only that, but also because of his own experience. You know, don't you, he had had tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and ultimately the sword. He had had all of that stuff and nothing ever separated him from the love of Christ and so he said, "From my own experience and from my own theology, on both counts I'm convinced that nothing can separate us." And he gets pretty specific. "Not death," the greatest enemy, the gates of Hades. "And not life." What does he mean by that? No state of being. There is no state of being, be you dead or be you alive, which can separate you from the love of Christ.

And then he says, "Not angels," and he probably means good angels, holy angels, not assuming that they ever would but just to make the general categorical statement. "Not holy angels, nor principalities," and he may mean there evil angels, not any state of being and not any being angelic, be he holy or demonic.

And then he says, "Nothing present and nothing to come," because somebody would say, "Oh well, it's not like it used to be and things are tougher now so you might lose your salvation now where in those old days you wouldn't because things weren't so tough." That's silly thinking in the first place, but just in case somebody would sink...would think that way he says, "No, nothing in the present and nothing in the future is ever able to change this, nothing." No state of being, no beings in the supernatural realm, nothing going on now, nothing that will ever go on in the future.

And then he adds, "No powers." What does he mean by that? I don't know, I don't know what he means, he just means no powers. That word is used in the New Testament in the plural most often in reference to miracles or mighty works. There isn't any miracle, any inexplicable supernatural thing that could happen that could do it.

And then he says "Height couldn't do it and depth couldn't do it." What does he mean by that? Again I'm not sure what he means. He's just...he's off into the doxology now. And he's saying nothing up and nothing down can do it. And he's trying to take us to the edge of infinite space. There isn't any state of being, there isn't any being, there isn't any condition now or in the future, there isn't any power, supernatural or natural, there isn't anything all the way up to the edge of the universe, there isn't anything all the way down to the edge of the universe and just in case anything else isn't covered, "Nor any other created thing," and that includes everything but God. There isn't anything, anywhere that can separate us from the love of Christ.

It boggles my mind because this is in the Bible and people will come along and say, "Yes, but I still believe you can lose your salvation." And you want to as, "Are you brain dead? Are you on a respirator? What in the world are you saying?" How obvious is this? There isn't anything that is ever going to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Back in John 17 Jesus was praying that high priestly prayer and He said to the Father, "Father, I want You to love them as You love Me." What did He mean by that? Same...same thing we've been saying, "Love them with an everlasting love." And that's precisely the love that the Father has for us.

One of the loveliest hymns on the secure love of God was written by George Mathison, Scottish preacher. He was born in 1842. It was just about 20 years later that...not even 20, something before, I think, even his eighteenth birthday, he was prepared to be married and the girl who was his love and finance decided she couldn't marry him. From the age of six on his vision had declined, he had only

partial vision when he was born and close to his eighteenth birthday he was almost totally blind. And she decided she wouldn't marry a blind man. She walked out of his life. Despite this handicap he was a brilliant scholar and graduated at the University of Glasgow and finished seminary, pastored a church of about 2,000 people in Edinburgh, one of the greatest preachers of his time. He never married. He spent his life alone, in the marital sense. But it was George Mathison who wrote these words: "O love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee. I give Thee back the life I owe that in Thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be."

He found a love that wouldn't let him go and so have you and so have I in the everlasting love of God through Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Father, what great joy is brought to our hearts as we recognize the fact that that love which You have granted to us is forever. O God, we have no words to express the gratitude. Lord, the joy, the thrill, the confidence and the peace that comes to our hearts when we recognize this. If...if, Lord, salvation were not forever, then surely nobody would ever be saved ultimately. If salvation were not forever, we would all lose it because we don't have the ability to sustain it. And if it is sustained it is sustained by You and Your working in us. And if that's the case it can never be lost and in that we rejoice. And may we so live to show our gratitude for this eternal life which we now possess in the Savior's dear name we pray. Amen.

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