

**Salvation Is Irrevocable, Part 1**

Scripture: Romans 8:31-32

Code: 90-182

Romans chapter 8, we've been in this chapter for a number of months. We have been so blessed and so thrilled with the great truth of this chapter...Life in the Spirit. It's a chapter about our eternal security, about what it means to be saved eternally and to possess the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of that eternal promise.

We come now to the end of the chapter. We've gone basically through Paul's discussion of this great theme of security in the Spirit, and that has all sort of come to a glorious culmination in verses 28 to 30 where there is the single greatest statement anywhere on the pages of Scripture about the security of the believer. "God is causing all things to work together for good," and remember, I told you that good is our eternal glory. Everything that happens in our lives God causes to work for our eternal glory. Why? Because that's His purpose that we be brought to glory, "For whom He foreknew He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son that His Son might be the firstborn, or the premiere one among many brethren."

The purpose of God then was that men and women would be saved, brought all the way into the image of God's Son in eternal glory in order that Christ might be the chief One among many who were made like Him. "Therefore, whom God predestined He called, whom He called He justified and whom He justified these He also glorified." That is the monumental summation of the security of the believer that talks about the plan and purpose of God to choose, to call, to justify and to glorify that He might bring us to the very image of His Son in His presence forever. And therefore He works everything that happens to that end...good things and bad things, righteous things and sinful things. He works them all to our ultimate glory.

Now you would think that after that there's nothing more to say. But there is. Verses 31 to 39, one of the most wonderful doxologies in all of Scripture, and it really is a sort of a doxology, it's sort of a paean of praise, a song of praise, but it's more than that. There is more to say because Paul knows at this point, having stated all that he just stated about this matter of eternal security, about the matter of a salvation that can never end, that can never be forfeited, or removed, or taken away, he knows that there are going to be some people who may pose some questions. Well, what about this...and what about that...and what about the other? And we know that's true because we face those questions all the time. So, from verses 31 to 39 in kind of the motif of a doxology with kind of an anthem of praise, he answers all the possible arguments. He really wants to nail the truth down solidly. And he's been giving it to us in tremendous clarity all through this chapter.

In fact, the doctrine of eternal salvation really started to unfold in chapter 5, all the way back in chapter 5 when he talked about six great realities that come with salvation: peace with God, standing in grace, the promise of glory, the assurance of love, the certainty of deliverance, and ultimate and final joy. And chapter 5 shows how those are all ours in Christ. And then he moves through other aspects of the glories of our salvation in chapters 6 and 7 and finally in chapter 8, comes to this great discussion of the eternality of our salvation and presents an unparalleled case for our security. But it's really been mounting all the way from chapter 5 on.

And as we come in to these final verses, a kind of lyrical approach to it, almost like a song of security, almost like a hymn of triumph, there's an element of argument still contained in this and it's an element of argument in which Paul anticipates and answers all of the possible objections to what he has been teaching. In classic style, he has presented the doctrine of the security of the believer on a positive note and now he moves in a triumphant way to answer all the possible arguments that people might pose against this doctrine.

Now the whole thing begins in verse 31, and that's where we'll begin. And it begins with a question, "What shall we say to these things?" What is going to be our response, or our reaction to what has been said, this great presentation of our security? How do we act? How do we respond? What conclusion do we draw from these truths about our security? Just that phrase, "What then shall we say to these things?" these things referring to the truths about eternal security. How do we react? What do we say?

Well, he anticipates that some people are going to object. Some people are going to argue...No, no, a believer can lose his salvation, it is possible for a believer to perish, it is possible through sin or willful rejection to forfeit his salvation.

Is that a proper response? It's an inevitable one and it's still going on today. There are still people who are making that argument. Paul knows the argument will come up and so he answers the objections.

Now there's only two possible ways hypothetically your salvation could be lost. It could only happen in two categories, or two areas...either it could be lost because of something done by a person or something done by a circumstance. That's all you can say, there's nothing more to say. Can some person or persons cause us to lose our salvation? Can some circumstance or circumstances cause us to lose our salvation? Those are the only two possibilities. So, in verses 31 to 34 he answers the question: can you lose your salvation by the influence of a person? And in verses 35 to 39 he answers the question: can you lose your salvation by the influence of circumstances? It's a very simple outline.

For tonight, let's address the issue of persons. Now, if we're just going to make a little list, the list might run like this. Well, maybe there is some human person, some person who could cause us to lose our no-condemnation status. You remember he says in Romans 8:1 that because we're in Christ there is no condemnation, no judgment, but maybe there is some earthly person, some human person that could cause us to lose our salvation, our no-condemnation status. Maybe there is someone.

Secondly, maybe God Himself, He's a person, maybe God could come to the place where He was so disgusted with us that He took our salvation away. Maybe if it's not just a human person, or God, maybe Satan, he's a person. Maybe he could remove us from God's salvation. And what about Christ? Maybe Christ could remove us from God's faithfulness, God's goodness and God's salvation. Those are all you have to choose from.

If you can lose your salvation by the influence of a person, it has to be a human being, God, Satan or Christ. And those are precisely the points that Paul wants to address. It's exactly what he pursues. Look at verse 31 again.

"What shall we say then to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" Now, that implies that there could be someone against us. And the implication here is that Paul is dealing with the argument that says...Well, someone could be against us and cause us to lose our salvation. Is there such a person or persons? How about the Judaizers? The Judaizers went into Galatia and they said to the Galatian Christians, "You're not saved because you haven't been circumcised and you haven't kept all the Mosaic ceremonies and rituals and prescriptions and because of that you aren't saved and you need to reverse yourself and go back and be circumcised and keep the law of Moses and keep all the ceremonies."

Paul addresses that by saying, "Are you going to begin in the Spirit and then be made perfect in the flesh?" And he says to them later in the book of Galatians, "If you follow that path you're no longer in grace." Could the Judaizers in Galatia, can the legalists do that? Can they cause somebody to lose their salvation? What about the false teachers that came into Corinth and disrupted the church and taught a false gospel, a gospel highbred out of the Jewish legalism and a little bit of Greek philosophy thrown in and the Corinthians were enamored by it and drawn to it? Could they be drawn away and forfeit their salvation? What about the Roman Catholic Church with its excommunication that takes people out of grace and damns them? Does the Roman Catholic Church have the power to remove someone from the grace of God and put them in a damnable situation because they have committed some mortal sins? How about the church? When the church confronts someone about their sin and they don't repent and the church treats them like an unbeliever and an outcast and puts them out, is that really the church bringing them to a point of forfeiture of their salvation?

Well what about yourself? If not some other people or groups, what about just people around you influencing you wickedly to sin seriously, severely and perhaps even habitually? And what about yourself, are you a person who can cause yourself to lose your salvation by coming to a point of rejection and removing yourself from Christ?

Well, the question, you see, is really a challenge to God. It's a challenge to the plan and purpose and power of God. Since God planned your salvation, since God purposed in that plan to bring you into the image of Christ and since God has the power to bring the plan to completion, any person who can interrupt the plan must be more powerful than God. And thus the question...if God is for us, who in the world can successfully be against us?

If God on the basis of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification has set in motion the redemptive plan and will bring it to pass, who is more powerful than God? You know, there are those who would like to sever us from Christ. Some of you have unsaved families, parents who are irritated to no end that you've embraced Jesus Christ. Some of you have been put out of your family and if your parents had their way they would sever you from Christ immediately. Some of you are married to an unconverted spouse, maybe you're here in a clandestine way, you'd be amazed how many people, particularly women, that I meet in the life of our church who are here in an almost secretive fashion because they're forbidden by their husbands who would be glad to sever them from Christ.

I am convinced, without a shadow of a doubt, that it is the studied and prepared agenda of many professors and universities in this nation to do everything they can with impressionable young Christians to sever them from Christ. I'm sure the culture would like to do that. I'm pretty confident that all of those who are trying to indoctrinate us with this "amoral" approach to life would like to sever us from Christ and there's this sort of sweeping movement in America to paint Christians as some kind of bizarre troublesome people who interrupt the liberties that we are provided for in the Constitution. The legalists would like to separate us from Christ. The cults would like to separate us from Christ. False teachers would like to separate us from Christ, and so it goes.

Martin Luther faced men whose single goal was to sever him from Christ. They wanted him to give up the gospel and to give up Christ and to recant. Remember that? One writer records something of the drama of that unique encounter. "Luther left Wittenberg believing that it was a summons to death." You remember he had pounded his thesis on the door and he left after doing that and it called the entire Catholic system to account and postulated the gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone. "He left Wittenberg believing that it was a summons to death and he was urged to take refuge, a day's journey away from Worms," which was the town where ultimately he was brought. "He refused to be daunted. He would go on even if there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on the housetops," he said.

"On April 16, 1521 he arrived in the city and made his way through dense crowds to the House of the Knights of St. John where he looked around with his piercing eyes and exclaimed, 'Deist erot pro me.' He was required to appear before the Diet on every one of the next two days, and on Thursday, April 18, marked the crisis when he made his famous speech in reply to all accusations." So two solid days, he spoke in Latin but was asked to repeat it in German. "Friends thought that the further effort would prove too much for him but he went on to add one last word in his own language and this was it," and you remember, "Here I stand." He wouldn't budge, he wouldn't move, he wouldn't recant. God was on his side. God is for me. He knew that his conscience, he said...the English writers put it "Was fold to the Word of God," linked. And he couldn't do anything else. And when the Diet, or the counsel adjourned, German friends formed a ring around him while the Spaniards shouted, "To the fire with him, to the fire." Within a week he was kidnapped by friends and carried off to a castle at Wortburg(?), it was here that he wrote the hymn so well known in English, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

"And that hymn that Luther wrote was based on his experience at Worms and reflects the spirit of triumphant in St. Paul's cry," says the historian, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" That's what Paul is saying exactly here. If God is for us, who can be against us. "If" is a...for a little technical insight...a conditional particle of a full filled condition that can be translated "since." Since God is for us, rhetorical question, who can harm us? Answer...no one...no one. Who is more powerful than God, who is more formidable than God? The answer is no one. Since God is for us, who can harm us?

Listen to Psalm 27, I love this, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life, whom shall I dread? When evil doers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell," and then this, "though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear, though war rise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident." Why? "I have asked from the Lord and I will receive that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple. I asked Him to be my Lord and God, I asked Him to bring me to glory and He will do it no matter how many enemies I have." That's Psalm 27, great Psalm. Similar to that, you can read it yourself, is Psalm 46.

Now it is evident, folks, let me just make this clear, it is evident that God is for us, isn't it? And that's what we've been learning all the way through chapter 8. In fact, you can go back to chapter 3 verse 21 where the gospel of justification is introduced and from 3:21 to 8:30 one point is made...God is for us. That's why He sent His Son into the world, that's why He grants us by faith the righteousness of Christ, that's why He forgives all our sins, that's why He plants the Holy Spirit in us. All that's been said from 3:21 to the thirtieth verse of the eighth chapter indicates that God is for us. Since God is for us, there isn't any person who can successfully be against us.

Now, you can go back into the Old Testament and you will find the same kind of confidence. Over and over again God is called a shield and a buckler. You will read in the book of Numbers, in the book of Deuteronomy, even see in Genesis the Lord is with us, the Lord is for us, our God is our defender...repeatedly. The angel, for example, said to Gideon, "The Lord is with you," that's all you need to know. "No weapon formed against you shall prosper." Remember what Paul said at the end of his life? "All men forsook me, but the Lord stood by me."

So, Paul makes a grand and glorious statement of general truth, "God is for us, therefore no one can be successfully against us." There is no one, not the legalists, not the false teachers, not the cultists, not the wicked around us, not even ourselves can alter the purpose of God to choose us before the foundation of the world in foreknowledge to predestine us and then to call us and then to justify us and then to glorify us. He will bring us all the way. The Lord did not choose us to the beginning of our salvation but to the end of it...and there is no one powerful enough to overthrow Him.

So no person, human person can remove our no-condemnation status since God is higher than all His creation and has called us to glory. Second, somebody is going to say...Well what about God Himself, He's a person? What about God? Can't God take away our salvation if He wants? The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. It helps if you can quote Scripture out of context to make your point. Can't God just decide...Look, I've had enough out of you, buddy, and you're really more trouble than you're worth, and I'm trying to work heaven out so that it's everything that everybody would want, and if you're there I'm afraid it might not be, I've just changed My mind a little bit about you...can't the Lord do that if He wants? Can't God do that? Can't He see us sinning and see us being disobedient and take back the gift He gave? We'll agree that there isn't any human that can do it, but can't God do it? Isn't it just too much hassle to keep us saved and so finally He just lets us fall back?

Well, the answer comes in verse 32. This is a powerful answer. "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?" Now you say, "Well, I don't understand the connection." You will in a minute.

Listen, the simple statement in the verse is this, "If He gave His Son to save us, won't He give us anything else to keep us, since the giving of His Son was the greatest gift?" He already spent the maximum amount on our salvation, He's certainly willing to spend a lesser amount getting us to glory. This is the greatest proof of God's grace. This is a typical Jewish argument, arguing from the greater to the lesser. God loved us and God chose us in His love before the foundation of the world and predetermined that love relationship to last forever. His love is strong, His love is securing, His love is so strong that in order to make that a reality, He gave His Son. He sent His Son into the world to save us. In Romans 5 he says, "While we were enemies God loved us enough to send His Son." Now if when we were His enemies He loved us enough to give His Son which is the greatest sacrifice, will He not do the lesser things necessary to keep us? That's Paul's point. God has already

given the best, He's already given the most, He's certainly not going to hold back the least. And He's certainly not going to undo the work of the Son. If the Son died on the cross, follow this, and actually paid the penalty for your sins, for God to turn around and let you go would be to depreciate and undo what the Son had accomplished...so say nothing of disdaining the supreme sacrifice that the Son of God Himself would bear the punishment for sin. Since He delivered His Son up for us all to save us, will He not also along with His Son give us whatever we need to get us to glory? Whatever grace it takes? Whatever strength it takes? Whatever wisdom it takes?

And just an interesting footnote. That verse, verse 32, and you probably won't find this in cross references, but it may be a Greek translation of Genesis 22:12. Just an interesting footnote. Genesis 22:12 is all about the sacrifice of Isaac and in 22:12 He said, "Do not stretch," God said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad." Remember he had Isaac up on the altar ready to slay Isaac because God had told him to take his son up there and offer him as a sacrifice? "And do nothing to him, I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me." And it may be that Paul had that even in his mind, that is like a picture of Christ. Abraham, ready to offer his son and plunge the knife into the heart of his son, is a picture of God willing, as it were, to offer His Son. Abraham only had one son, that son was the son of his love and the son of his promise. In that son all the nations would be blessed. Through that son salvation would come to the world and yet he was willing to offer him in death. The picture is an amazing picture. Isaac, however, was spared by divine intervention, remember? There was an animal caught in a bush but Jesus was not...Jesus was not.

So the picture is a comparison and a contrast. The willingness of Abraham to offer up Isaac provides only a faint analogy of God's ultimate willingness to give His Son in sacrifice and not spare His Son the way Isaac was spared. He could have spared His Son, if He had then we would have had to be punished. But in love He spared not His Son...in love, "For God so...what?...loved the world that He gave..."

And so, when it came time for God to give His Son, He didn't spare Him. He didn't hold Him back. God said to Abraham, "Boy, when you lifted that knife, I knew that you feared Me, I knew you loved Me." Abraham showed his genuine faith there but God spared his son, but He didn't spare His own Son.

Just a thought, back to verse 32, "He did not spare," the word literally means, "didn't hold Him back." In fact, according to Isaiah 53:10, this is really amazing, listen to this, you read it many times but maybe it never struck you. This is what it says about the sacrifice of Christ in Isaiah 53:10, listen to it: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." Isn't that amazing? God didn't hold Him back from death because it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.

You say, "How could it possibly please the Lord to see His Son suffer the just punishment of all the sins of all who would ever believe? How could it possibly please Him?" Because He knew what was being gained by it. Do you know that it even pleased Christ because it tells us in the book of Hebrews that it was in an attitude of joy that He endured the cross? It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He didn't spare His own Son. The little preposition, the possessive pronoun, rather, the possessive pronoun "own" is put in there for emphasis, "His own Son, but delivered Him up..." and that, by the way, is a technical term, and it refers literally to being delivered over to captors, soldiers. And so Jesus by God was given over to the powers of darkness, was given over to Satan and Satan used his weapon on Him and his weapon, according to Hebrews 2, is death. And God made Him sin for us. The Father delivered the Son to judgment and abandonment, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" You ask the question...who delivered Jesus? Somebody might say, "Judas for money." Somebody might say, "Pilate for fear." Somebody might say, "The Jews for envy." Best...Father for love. And He did it, back to verse 32, "He delivered Him up for us all...for us all."

The "us" is the "us" of verse 31. "If God is for us," it's the "us" that God is for and the "us" of verse 31 is the "us" of verse 29, "Whom He foreknew He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." The "us" of the passage goes all the way back to verse 28, "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God who are called according to His purpose." The "us" are those who love God because they've been called by Him to salvation. It's those who love God because they're called according to His purpose, those who have been foreknown to be conformed to Christ, those predestined, called, justified and glorified, those are the ones God is for, those are the "us" that God is for and those are the "us" that no one can successfully be against and those are the "us" for whom God delivered up His Son for all believers.

And then the question to drive home the point, verse 32, "If He's done that, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" If He didn't spare His Son in that, He's certainly not going to fail to give us the lesser things to bring us to glory. And what are those lesser things? Well it's indicated in verse 28, it's just His providential orchestration of all the issues of life working together for our eternal glory. And He gives us all things.

I love to compare "all things" in verse 32 with "all things" in verse 28. That's the parallel you want. The "all things" of verse 32, "He gives us all things," compares to the "All things that work together for good." Whatever comes into our live, it's comprehensive, He just works it to our eternal glory...He works it to our eternal good.

The bottom line then, we have to conclude that there isn't any human, including ourselves, that could ever interrupt the plan and separate us from God and invalidate our salvation. Secondly, God Himself is not going to do it. If God already paid the supreme price, He will certainly pay the lesser price. If from the eternity past it was the purpose of God to give to His Son, to give to His Son a redeemed humanity to praise Him forever and ever, and God paid the supreme price to buy that



redeemed humanity, He's going to make sure He takes care of maintaining them till they get to glory. He will see the plan all the way to the end. In order to do that He has to take the "all things" of life and cover them with the "all things" of spiritual blessing and power. Providentially He gives us all things to cover the all things of life.

Now if He gives us all things to get us to glory, and takes all things and works together all those things for our good, how could anybody be lost? To deny security is to misunderstand the work and the love of God. And would you please notice one other thing and we'll wrap this up.

It's not grudging...verse 32 says, "How will He not also with Him along with giving us Christ freely give us...what?...all things?" It's not reluctant. You know, it's an interesting note here, the verb here, charizomai, translated freely give, is used in the New Testament several times to mean freely forgive. That's right. It's used many times to mean freely forgive. And isn't that basically it? You find it used such in 2 Corinthians 2 verses 7 and 10, chapter 12 verse 13, Colossians 2:13, 3:13 and twice in the book of Ephesians. And isn't that really the all things that we need? I mean, let's face it, what we really need to make it to glory is constant free forgiveness, right? Because the only potential thing that could interrupt us on the way to glory would be sin, and inherent in that wonderful use of the verb here, "With Him freely give us all things," we could say just in a generic sense, all things embrace His forgiveness, but by using that specific word which is often translated freely forgive, we find it even closer to the issue. If I'm going to make it to glory, what I need is constant forgiveness, right?

You say, "Well, what right do you have to that?" This right, I have a right to that constant forgiveness because my sins have already been paid for. There isn't any person that can remove us from God's plan of salvation and God Himself won't do it either.

Now that leaves Satan and possibly Christ. You'll have to wait till next time to see how Paul deals with that in such a powerful, powerful way.

Father, we thank You again tonight for this wonderful passage of Scripture, it just exudes rich truth and we thank You, Father, for this sense of accumulating and building that we've experienced going through Romans 8, we can just feel the strength as the doctrines become solidly imbedded in our understanding and we feel the joy and the exhilaration and the exuberance of our hearts wanting to praise You in response to this great, great salvation that You've given us. Father, we have a hope that is steadfast and sure, that is anchored in You and we rejoice in that. Father, I pray for those who might be in our fellowship tonight who do not know our Christ, do not know the Savior. Oh how I pray that You will work a mighty work of salvation in their hearts. We commit ourselves again, Lord, to You with thanksgiving because the truth is such a blessing. May we be faithful to live it out, in Your Son's name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).