

"IF GOD IS FOR US..."

**I. Introduction**

- A. This great chapter ends with the triumphant assertion that there is nothing in this world that can threaten the security that Christians have in Jesus Christ.
- B. We can only have the degree of confidence that Paul expresses in these verses if our salvation depends entirely on God and not in any sense on us.
- C. In other words, this passage only makes sense if the Calvinist understanding of the predestination mentioned in the previous verses is correct.
- D. If God's decree of predestination was based on anything that he foresaw in us, then our salvation is not secure.
- E. The reason why Paul can so joyfully celebrate the security that we have in Christ is because he holds to the doctrine of unconditional election.

**II. No Lack (31-32)**

- A. Our passage begins with the question, "What then shall we say to these things?"
  - 1. In other words, how are we to respond to all of the things that have been said up to this point in the letter about the blessings that God pours upon us in Christ?
  - 2. How are we to respond to what Paul said in verses 29 and 30 about the golden chain of salvation?
  - 3. Some people respond by raising objections to the biblical doctrine of predestination.

4. But Paul responds by setting forth a glorious syllogism, saying, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"
  5. God is for us.
  6. What an astounding assertion that is!
  7. The Maker of heaven and earth, the Ruler of the entire universe, the all-powerful, most wise, most pure, most perfect God — he is on your side if you trust in Christ.
  8. He is working on your behalf.
  9. He is seeking your ultimate good.
- B. If almighty God is on your side, then nothing in this world can bring you any ultimate harm.
1. Of course it is true that there are many things in this world that are against us.
  2. Paul is not denying that.
  3. He is only saying that none of those things will be able to succeed in their efforts against you.
  4. How could they?
  5. Even if the whole world is against you, as long as God is on your side you are in the majority.
- C. Paul continues by saying that the reason why we can have the confidence that God is for us is because he did not spare his Son but gave him up for us all.
1. Note that the words "for us all" do not refer to all the people in the world but to all of the people Paul is talking about here, all of the elect.

2. The language that is used in verse 32 brings to mind Genesis 22, where Abraham was obedient to God's command to offer up Isaac on Mount Moriah.
  3. While God intervened at the last moment and provided a ram to sacrifice in Isaac's place, God commended Abraham's faith, saying, you "have not withheld your son, your only son."
  4. The story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac is told in such a way that we cannot help but feel something of the agony that Abraham must have experienced as he went through that ordeal.
  5. God issued that hard command to Abraham in order to provide us with a vivid picture of the love that he has for his elect.
  6. God the Father loves God the Son far more than Abraham loved Isaac, yet God did not spare his Son.
  7. He gave him up for the sake of our salvation.
- D. If God's love for us led him to do that, then how could we ever think that he will withhold anything that is required for our ultimate good?
1. If God has given his beloved Son, he will surely give us all things.
  2. He will provide us with all that is necessary for the perfecting of his saving work in our lives.
  3. As far as our salvation is concerned, we never lack anything that we need.

### III. No Charges (33-34)

- A. The fact that God is for us also means that no one can bring any charges against us in God's heavenly courtroom.
1. We are God's elect, the ones whom God foreknew and predestined from all eternity.

2. He will never give a hearing to those who would attack the reputation of his beloved children.
  3. He has already justified us.
  4. He is the supreme and perfect judge.
  5. There is no court of higher appeal.
  6. God's ruling is final.
- B. Of course, Satan tries to bring charges against us.
1. His name means "Accuser."
  2. He delights in calling attention to our sins and failings.
  3. Our own consciences also accuse us.
  4. There can be times when we feel weighed down under the burden of our guilt.
  5. And the world condemns us whenever we refuse to fall in line with what it thinks is right and true.
  6. We do have accusers, but because we belong to Christ the charges that these accusers bring against us are always dismissed.
  7. God's elect are safe from all condemnation.
- C. We are not safe because we do not have any sin or because God turns a blind eye to our sin.
1. We are safe because Christ has fully satisfied the demands of God's justice on our behalf.
  2. As Paul points out in verse 34, Jesus died on the cross in our place.

3. His crucifixion was not just a matter of physical suffering.
  4. It was primarily a matter of spiritual suffering.
  5. Jesus bore the wrath of God as he hung on that cross.
  6. That is why he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
  7. And the fact that Jesus fully paid for our sin on the cross means there are no grounds upon which we can be condemned.
- D. Paul also calls our attention to the fact that Jesus did not remain in the grave after he died on the cross.
1. He was raised on the third day.
  2. This demonstrated the effectiveness of his atoning death.
  3. It showed that he truly conquered death on our behalf.
  4. This is what assures us that death will not be able to keep a hold on us.
  5. In an astonishing and ironic turn of events, death is now the means that God uses to divest us of our mortal bodies so that we can be clothed with immortality.
- E. We find further assurance of our safety from all condemnation in Paul's statement that the risen Christ is now seated at the right hand of God.
1. In his office as our mediator with God, Jesus has now received all authority in heaven and on earth.
  2. Everything is at his disposal so that he can ensure that his saving work is applied to our lives.

3. More than that, Jesus is continually interceding for us on the basis of his finished work.
4. Jesus' intercession is always effectual.
5. This is what prevented the apostle Peter from falling away after his threefold denial of Christ.
6. Just before his arrest, Jesus told Peter, "behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail." (Lk. 22:31-32)
7. Peter denied Christ three times, but his faith did not fail.
8. He was restored.
9. And the reason why he was restored was because of Jesus' intercession for him.
10. Jesus intercedes for us in the very same way.
11. We have an advocate with the Father, an advocate who pleads his perfect righteousness on our behalf.
12. Who can bring any charge against us?

#### IV. No Separation (35-39)

- A. The fact that God is for us also means that nothing in this world can separate us from the love of Christ.
  1. Notice that Paul does not merely say that nothing can separate us from Christ but that nothing can separate us from the *love of Christ*.
  2. This is a truth that we need to ponder more often.
  3. We have a tendency to view life's troubles as tokens of God's anger and displeasure.

4. We are inclined to evaluate God's attitude toward us by looking at our present circumstances.
  5. The thing that we have to remember is that God's love for his elect does not wax and wane but is always constant.
  6. Nothing can cause God to suspend his love for you.
  7. Nothing can put his love for you in any doubt.
  8. Even when you sin, though your heavenly Father is displeased with your sin and may very well discipline you for it, he never stops loving you.
  9. Consider these thoughts from Charles Hodge: "The great difficulty with many Christians is that they cannot persuade themselves that Christ (or God) loves them; and the reason why they cannot feel confident of the love of God, is, that they know they do not deserve his love, on the contrary, that they are in the highest degree unlovely. How can the infinitely pure God love those who are defiled with sin, who are proud, selfish, discontented, ungrateful, disobedient? This, indeed, is hard to believe. But it is the very thing we are required to believe, not only as the condition of peace and hope, but as the condition of salvation. If our hope of God's mercy and love is founded on our own goodness or attractiveness, it is a false hope." [290-291]
  10. The fact that God set his love upon you because of his own purpose — and not because of anything in you that pleased him — is what gives you the assurance that his love for you will never grow cold.
- B. Paul goes on to list some of the things that we might see as threats that could potentially separate us from the love of Christ: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword.
1. This is followed by a quote from Psalm 44, where it says, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (v. 22)

2. In citing that psalm, Paul is admitting that Christians are not exempt from suffering.
  3. He is pointing out that this was just as true in the Old Testament era as it is now.
  4. God's people experience all sorts of troubles in this life.
  5. We face the same problems and difficulties that everyone else in the world experiences.
  6. Yet none of these things is able to separate us from the love of Christ.
  7. On the contrary, in all these things we are more than conquerors.
  8. Though we experience these things, God does not let them overcome us.
  9. We overcome them because we have Christ as our champion.
  10. As Jesus said to his disciples in John 16, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (v. 33)
  11. Because God is for us, he turns everything to our ultimate good.
- C. Paul underscores this point in the last two verses of the chapter by expressing his confidence that nothing can call into question our relationship with God in Christ.
1. Death cannot separate us from Christ.
  2. As Jesus told Martha before he raised her brother Lazarus, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." (Jn. 11:25-26)
  3. Life cannot separate us from Christ either.



4. Sometimes life can seem like a threat to our relationship with God.
  5. What if our time in this world is too difficult or too prolonged?
  6. Well, you don't need to worry about that.
  7. God has numbered the days of your life, and he will not let you outlive his preserving grace.
  8. He promises to be with you not only when you go through death, but also when you walk through the valleys in this life where death's dark shadow is cast.
- D. Paul also says that there is no spiritual or earthly power that can drive a wedge between you and your Savior.
1. Neither can any present or future struggle or circumstance or event separate you from the love of Christ.
  2. Neither can the loftiest attainments or the lowest depths of adversity.
  3. There is nothing in the entire created order that can threaten your union with your blessed Savior.
  4. If there is anything in this world that threatens you or sets itself against you, you can know for certain that the restraining power of God will always keep it from overwhelming you.
  5. You are more than a conqueror because you belong to the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the One who has conquered and has thus guaranteed that God's saving purpose for you will be brought to completion.