

More Than Conquerers - Part 1

Scripture: Romans 8:31-39

Introduction

Do you feel like a conqueror? No one wants to be defeated. We do not want to succumb to sickness, or to temptation, or to the persistent attacks from others. We want to win. We want to overcome our adversities. But sometimes we feel defeated. Some of you may be feeling the weight of defeat knocking at your door right now. I think of my dad who loved ball games and oftentimes pulled for the underdog. He wanted to see the one who had been defeated or was predicted to lose to become the winner. We like to see comebacks. Romans chapter eight is about encouraging God's people even when life seems to be overwhelming. It is meant to remind us of the hope we have in Jesus Christ and the promises God has given us especially when we feel defeated.

Last week, we looked at what some call the "golden chain" of God's work in our lives. I like calling it the "golden chain" as I think it reminds us of the riches of divine grace that God has lavished upon us. The "golden chain" begins with God's perfect knowledge of us, from which He decided long ago that His people were destined to be like His Son Jesus Christ. This chain continued with God's calling His people to faith in Jesus Christ and then declaring them righteous. Their righteousness is not based on anything they have done, but is based on their faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. The chain ends with God glorifying His people with resurrected bodies like Christ. If we are predestined, called, and justified by Christ, we will most surely be glorified with Him. All of this is God's work to make His adopted children to be like His only begotten Son.

This sounds like it is far from defeat. It sounds like victory, because it is. God is working out all things for good. He is working out things in His people's lives to make them like His Son, Jesus Christ, so that one day they will be glorified and enjoy His presence forever. This promise is for those who receive God's grace and who trust in Jesus Christ. It is for those who love God and who are called according to His purpose. If God has worked to make you become like His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, then surely He loves you very much and nothing in this world will ever separate you from His love and His work in you. That is victory. Paul makes three statements that I will focus in this message: 1) God is for us, 2) He gives us His best, and 3) He rescues us completely.

God is For His Children

Do you sometimes think that people are out to get you? It may be a pesky neighbor, a mean co-worker, or an overbearing boss. Sometimes, we may even think that God is against us. Maybe times are tough, something is going wrong, or things are not going well for you. You may have prayed and prayed and prayed some more and still do not see any relief. Therefore, you might think that God is against you. The good news is that God is for His children. He is not against them. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that. After declaring that God is working for the good of His Kingdom and His people, Paul asked a series of questions meant to reassure us of God's love for us.

Romans 8:31 ³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Here is the point: If you know Jesus Christ, God is for you. We have gone through a massive list of things in this letter over the past few months that prove that God is for us. Though we deserve God's wrath, He has extended grace and mercy to us. Though we were His enemies and against Him, He has reached down to us to bring us into fellowship with Him. Though this world is replete with trials, temptations, and sufferings of various kinds, God has not forsaken His people, even though we often forsake Him. After declaring the good news of Jesus Christ in this letter and the extraordinary steps by which God has sought us and has been on our side, Paul asked this question, "If God is for us (and He most certainly is!), who can be against us?" Who?

Surely, each of us can name several people who are against us. The person who is hostile to Christians is against you. The terrorists over in Iraq who are murdering innocent people are against you. Satan, our greatest adversary is most certainly against you. There are people against you, me and the Church. There are even people in a church that are against us, bless their hearts! Paul was not suggesting that no one is against you, for Paul knew many people who were even against him. He nearly lost his life on several occasions. What I think Paul was saying here is that if you know Christ, then God is for you, and what does it really matter that others are against you? If they are against you, then you are in good company, for the world was also against Jesus.

This is also not some hypothetical scenario where God *might* be for His people. Paul was saying that God is really for His people. He really cares for them and He is working for their good. Remember the promise we have: *He is working all things for good for those who are in Christ.* (v. 28) The question you should ask yourself is this: Are you against God? Are you on His side? As Paul wrote previously in this passage, the promises of God revealed to us in this chapter are for those who love God and who are called according to His purpose. The promises mentioned in this chapter are for those who have received God's grace and have believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If that is you, then yes, God is for you. Those who are against you will ultimately fail.

God Gives His Children the Best

How many of you like to give good gifts to children? I imagine just about all of you who are parents do. Parents typically want what is best for their children and if it is within their power, they will try to give them the best they can. That is true with God. God wants what is best for His children. The thing is, what is best for us is not necessarily what we think is best. We sometimes are like the child trying to climb the countertop to reach the cookie jar not realizing how dangerous or unhealthy it is, not to mention how it is being disobedient to our loving parents. In verse thirty-two, Paul wrote about the greatest good God has done and the greatest gift He has given His children.

Romans 8:32 ³² *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

The very best gift we have received did not come in the form of a nicely wrapped package under a tree. It did not come from a department store or from a catalogue. The very best gift the world has ever received came from a manger in the little town of Bethlehem. That was not the best part, though. The manger in Bethlehem would not mean anything were it not for the cross of Calvary. A little baby grew up into a man and was one day punished for the sin of mankind. He was crucified to a tree, killed, and then buried in a borrowed tomb. This was done so that you and I could have forgiveness for our sin and no longer be under the wrath of God. That is God's gift to you.

Think of it this way. We have all broken God's Law and we have been God's enemies. We were all under the judgement of God. As a result, God had you in His sights. Being Judge, Jury and Executioner, He had targeted you for His wrath and judgment. You were under God's wrath and He was about to execute you for your sin. However, Jesus saw your plight, and having mercy on you, jumped in front of you and took the bullet on your behalf. You should have been killed by God's wrath, but Jesus saved your life, by sacrificing His life for you. He died for you. This is what God did for you because He loved the world so much. He sacrificed His one and only Son to save you.

There was another man who was about to sacrifice his son. God once asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, the very son God had promised Abraham years before. God did this to test Abraham's faith, and though Abraham would have done it, God was not willing to let Abraham kill his only son. God spared Isaac's life. God, however, did not spare His own Son's life, but gave Him up for us all. What He was not willing for Abraham to do, He was willing to do Himself so that we could have life and be pardoned of our sin. If God has given us the greatest gift in the world, His only begotten Son, will He not also give us lesser things that are for our good and our godliness?

God Rescues His Children Completely

As a result of Christ's sacrifice and our faith in Him, we are eternally secure. We have the best guarantee anyone could ever have. No one or nothing can jeopardize our relationship with God once we are in Christ. Paul affirmed this in the rest of the chapter. Look at verses thirty-three and thirty-four.

Romans 8:33–34 ³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* ³⁴ *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

The first question Paul raised was, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?" (v. 33) Some may ask, "Who are God's elect?" Basically, these are the people listed in verses twenty-eight through thirty. These are the ones who love God and are called according to His purpose. These are the ones who are called, justified, glorified and are in Christ. If you have received God's grace and have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then you are one of God's elect. Paul also asked the question, who can bring a charge against them. The answer is only God can bring a charge against anyone, and once someone is in Christ, there is no charge against that person.

Think of a courtroom where you are the criminal on trial. God is the Judge. Jesus is your defense attorney. You have been brought before the Judge to answer for your crimes. God the Judge is about to pronounce His sentence upon you that you rightly deserve, but Jesus makes His case on your behalf. Jesus tells the Judge that He has paid your debt on the cross of Calvary. Your transgression is forgiven. When you repent of your sin and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, your sins are forgiven and your debt is paid. God, the righteous Judge, declares you “not guilty”. You are a free person and are able to walk out of that courtroom with no guilt or penalty. As a result, no one can change God’s ruling. No one can bring a charge against you, for God has declared you righteous. You are righteous not because of anything you have done, but because of what Jesus has done for you.

People will try to condemn you. Satan will try to condemn you. He is our adversary who accuses the children of God. Even you may at times try to condemn yourself. The truth is that no one is able to condemn those who are in Christ Jesus. When you trust in Jesus, you are not only forgiven and then adopted into God’s family, you receive an Advocate. Jesus has interceded for you, He has paid your debt and taken your place on the cross, and He is at the right hand of the Father still interceding for you. Christians may rejoice with the certainty that they will never be condemned. Jesus was the One Who died for you so that you would have forgiveness of sin. Jesus was the One Who God raised from the dead so that you would have hope in being raised like He was. Jesus is the One Who is interceding for you. What can possibly change that?

Conclusion

In closing, do you feel like a winner? Do you feel like a conqueror? If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you should. You are more than a conqueror, if you know Christ. God does not promise an easy life. He does not promise a life free of trouble. In fact, the main purpose of Romans chapter eight is to assure us of God’s love for us and our hope in Christ even when we endure suffering. You may not feel like a conqueror, but if you know Christ, you are a conqueror, for greater is He Who is in you than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4) Can you say as the psalmist once said:

Psalm 118:5–6 ⁵ *Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.* ⁶ *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*

What can man do to you? Do you have that assurance? If you do not, then what is holding you back. Do you trust in Jesus Christ. Have you come to Him? If not, come to the King Who first came to you and died for you. Come to Him so that you can be an overcomer, and more than that, a conqueror. Do not live your life another second without the full assurance that your sins are forgiven and that your future is good. God gave His very best on Calvary. Have you given Him your best? Have you given Him your life? God wants nothing less than your life. He wants you all for Himself? In return, He will give you abundant life. Will you come to Him? This is good news. Thanks be to God. Amen!