



PRACTICING THE RESURRECTION | PERILOUS WORLD, POWERFUL LOVE (36)

June 1, 2025

Romans 8:31-39

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Discussion Question

- When do you feel most confident?

PLEASE OPEN IN PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

We're in a sermon series on Romans 8 inspired by N.T. Wright's book "Into the Heart of Romans," and we have arrived at the end of the chapter. Remember that numerous theologians have explained that Romans 8 is primarily about assurance — Paul encouraging the Roman believers to persevere in their suffering. In today's passage of verses 31 to 39, we find the culmination of Paul's long argument beginning in chapter 5. Wright explains, "The conclusion of the argument of the chapter, and of chapters 5-8 as a whole, is obviously that God is for us, verse 31b; and, verse 39, nothing can separate us from his love in Messiah Jesus." The Apostle had framed Romans 8 with bold statements of assurance: opening with "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" in verse 1, and here ending with "(nothing) will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" in verse 39. He is now concluding by reiterating one final time that we can be absolutely secure in God's love for us and in his plans and purposes through us. We're in a sermon series called *Practicing the Resurrection*, and this week we'll look at the topic of "Perilous World, Powerful Love."

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 8:31-39

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He 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? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who 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. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

*"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- From the passage, share with the group some keywords/themes that stood out to you.

Digging Deeper:

Paul ends this chapter (or rather his argument; chapter divisions were added later) with five questions: 1) “If God is for us, who can be against us?” in verse 31; 2) “He who did not spare his own Son...how will he not also give us all things?” in verse 32; 3) “Who will bring any charge?” in verse 33; 4) “Who is he that condemns?” in verse 34; and 5) “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” in verse 35. John Stott, in his commentary, explains the significance of these rhetorical questions. The powerful truths of promise behind these questions make them unanswerable: 1) no one can be against us; 2) God will give us all things; 3) no one can bring charges; 4) no one can condemn; and 5) no one can separate us from the love of Christ. Although the theme of “love” seems to appear rather abruptly in verse 35, N.T. Wright explains that Paul is tying together the whole section of Romans 5–8 with the arc of love: “Love—God’s love for us and our answering and spirit-inspired love for him—has been the subtext, the deep-level theme, all through.”

2. Looking at Jesus

At Central we believe that all of Scripture points to Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the theological center of the Bible. Every passage not only points to Jesus, but the grand narrative of the Bible also finds its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

- Read verse 32. Paul says that God will “graciously give us all things.” Sometimes it’s hard to believe that God is a gracious giver when our prayers go unanswered. Does God graciously give us all things?

Digging Deeper:

The Bible repeatedly describes God as the generous provider, from *Yahweh Yireh*, “the LORD will provide,” in Genesis 22:14 to the giver of “every good and perfect gift” in James 1:17. Jesus also taught the disciples to prayerfully ask things from God and they will receive them. “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him” (Matthew 7:11). On the other hand, the Scriptures warn believers that God may not grant our requests if we doubt (Mark 11:24; James 1:6-7) or have wrong motives (James 4:3).

God as our loving Father knows what is good for us and what isn’t. The writer Cynthia Heimel wrote, “When God wants to play a really rotten practical joke on you, he grants your deepest wishes.” The context of verse 32 must be understood similarly to verse 28, “God works all things together for good.” Paul isn’t saying that God is a genie who will grant us our wishes; rather, God is working everything together for what he knows to be best for us, and he’s providing us everything we need to be conformed into the image of his Son. Therefore, if we ask anything according to God’s good, salvific will, he hears us (1 John 5:14). If we ask for wisdom, we shall have it (James 1:5). If we ask for peace, we shall have it (Philippians 4:6-7). The Apostle Peter writes, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own

glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

3. Looking at our Hearts

- As Christians, we still experience fear, anxiety, suffering, and all painful emotions. Have you ever had the experience of receiving comfort from the assurance that God is for you?

Digging Deeper:

Paul acknowledges that as believers we still struggle with doubt, sin, and suffering. However, Tim Keller writes on the series of rhetorical questions in verses 31–35, “The purpose of the questions is to almost beat us out of our disbelief that we are saved totally by grace and therefore completely safe to face life without fear.” Numerous commentators have exhorted Christians to re-read and re-meditate on today’s passage whenever they are experiencing difficulties in life. If God is for us, if God graciously gives us all things, if no one can bring a charge against us, if no one can condemn us, and if nothing can separate us from God’s love, then we have absolutely nothing to fear. God himself encouraged Joshua to be strong and courageous knowing that God is with him wherever he goes (Joshua 1:9). Like David in his Psalm 27, we can proclaim, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

4. Looking at our World

- How does unwavering faith in God’s love for us shape the way we live our daily lives?

Digging Deeper:

This prompt is intended for open-ended discussion.

SHARING Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

KINGDOM PRAYER Pray that we would see ourselves called by God.
Include other prayer requests.

SENDING God’s word is a lamp to our feet. Christ’s teachings are a light to our path.
May God’s word take root in our lives. May Christ’s love nourish and sustain us. Amen.