

God is for Us

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 November 2015

[0:00] Father, we say thanks for your word today. We have a deep sense of expectation because this is your word.

! We have a sense, Lord, that you would bring comfort to our hearts because this is your word!
Thank you for faith to believe today.

We have a sense, Lord, that you would set our minds aright because this is your word. We have a sense that you would heal our hearts, that you would heal our consciences, that you would heal our minds because this is your word.

Thank you for your word today. Lord, you are able to use vessels, Lord, of all kinds, of all shapes, of all types.

And so we bow, oh Lord, in this moment, in humility before you and in the presence of these people.

[1:19] And we ask, oh Lord, that you would use this vessel today. In the name of Jesus we pray and for your glory.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Perhaps you are or have been at a point in your life where you felt or perhaps feel that so many things are going wrong that God can't possibly be for you.

Perhaps your world has been shaken. Perhaps there's been some tragedy, something that you did not anticipate.

Perhaps there are things that you've been praying for and they just have not happened. And you've asked the question, could God possibly be for me?

Could he be for me? Or is God against me? I believe you live long enough, you're going to ask these questions.

[2:36] And I suspect that you, if you haven't done so already, you're going to ask them multiple times in your lifetime. Is God for me?

Or is he against me? Today we're going to explore eight of the most inspiring verses in what is perhaps the greatest chapter in the Bible.

The essence of these verses is this. God is for us. Stated another way. God is on our side.

Stated even more extensively, it is this. He is all that we need for salvation. Indeed, beyond that, he is our salvation.

He provides the road for our salvation and keeps us square on that road until we get to our destination. God is for us.

[3:45] In a moment, we are going to consider that truth under four headings. The truth being God is for us.

Let us turn in our Bibles to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8.

We will read verses 31 through 39. Paul writes in this wonderful chapter.

in verse 31 what shall we say to these things if God is for us who can be against us 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 thanks verse 33 who shall bring any charge against God's elect who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies 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 is interceding for us who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as it is written for your sake we are being killed all the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor 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 what a beautiful passage

I am persuaded I am sure that none of these things shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus Paul begins this section of his letter to the church with this question in verse 31

what then shall we say to these things what shall we say to these things obviously to adequately respond to that question we must have a sense of what these things are what are the things Paul is referring to there are a number of things that Paul says in the preceding verses that no doubt he is referring to but I wish to direct our attention at the moment to verses 26 through 30 Paul asks the question what then shall we say to these things what things is he referring to let's take a look at a few of those things in verses 26 through 30 likewise he writes the spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know what to pray for as we are but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words and he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of Christ because the spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God and listen to what he says in verse 28 and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose and 29 he writes for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son read that again for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified what then shall we say to these things what shall we say to these glorious things that Paul writes about what shall we say to the fact that all things all things he didn't say that all things are good but he said all things work together they work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose and greater than that he says for those whom the

[9:53] Lord God foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son so that he his son might be the firstborn among many brothers do you see this is exactly where you and I are those of us who are believers we have been chosen we have been elected we have been predestined we have been called we have been justified we have been justified what shall we say then to these things Paul asks the question and he follows that question up with another Paul says if God is for us who can be against us if

God is for us who can be against us and here Paul asks what we would regard as a rhetorical question that is a question asked to make a point Paul asked this question not because he didn't know the answer or expecting that perhaps someone would respond to him it is a rhetorical question one that is asked to make a point not to elicit an answer rhetorical question might be a way of suggesting something here Paul is suggesting something to us if God is for us who can be against us now it's important that we examine very carefully that very basic question which forms the basis of our message Paul is not here writing about uncertainty when Paul says if God is for us who can be against us the use of the word if might suggest to some that Paul is uncertain about whether God is for us or not but that's not what Paul is suggesting here at all Paul could easily have said since God is for us who can be against us since God is for you who can be against you it means that we're no longer enemies with God he is for us but since God is for us since God is for us really who can be against us we know that there are many who will dare to be against us we know that the enemy of our soul would dare to be against us we know that there are people who would dare to be against us but what Paul is really saying to us is that since God is for us who can successfully be against us the point is if

God is on your side God is on your side who can be successfully against you the answer is no one or nothing if you are a believer today God is for you we heard it being testified earlier today that God is for you yes God is for us if God is for you then ultimately it does not matter who is against you you will be saved Paul is here seeking to evoke in us with these words a certainty of our eternal salvation the steadfast love that we heard about in Psalm 103 from everlasting to everlasting Paul wants us to be certain of our eternal salvation since God who is sovereign who is omnipotent is for us who can be against us but how is this truth how is the truth that God is for us how is that truth manifested in our lives what does that look like what does it look like Paul provides four compelling answers by posing four rhetorical questions number one how is manifested what does it look like number one God is our source consider verse 32 Paul says 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 yeah [15:18] Paul asks another rhetorical question how will he not also with him give us all things the language here suggests that there was a price paid by God's son Jesus for Paul says here that God did not spare his son

you see that Paul writes he did not spare!

his own son so there must have been a price a significant price we know that Jesus paid for us it was a significant price God spared absolutely nothing he gave his son for believers God is the one who owns all things and he is for us how then will he not give us all things having given us Jesus Christ having not spared his own son for us even while we were enemies how will he not also with him graciously give us all things see the point that Paul is making is that God did not spare his own son the apple of his eye the one whom he loved he spared not his son for us and having done that Paul asks how will he not with him graciously give us all things in Ephesians 1:11 and 12 we find these words in him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to his counsel yes indeed we are joint heirs with Christ as Romans 8:17 tells us and if children then heirs heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ God will with him graciously give us all things

Paul's rhetorical question here is a logical one he did not spare the one he loved for us so certainly he will with him give us all thanks God is for us God gave the one he loved for us he did not spare him having done that will he not finish what he started that's the point Paul makes he's going to finish what he started God's sacrifice of his son is evidence of his love for us it is evidence of the fact that God is for us his sacrifice him not sparing his son for us his evidence of the fact that God is for us and then in verse 33 Paul asks another question and we see

God's God being for us expressed in the fact that God is our judge listen to what Paul writes who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies listen this is like this is like you going to the courthouse and you are the defendant and somebody brings a charge against you and you go before the judge and the judge the judge is is your mother person who loves you what do you think is going to happen you are going to win that case and Paul says who shall bring any charge against God's elect it is God who justifies Paul asked who will bring a charge against God elect another rhetorical question how encouraging is that question perhaps you are experiencing challenges like the apostle

[20:24] Paul mentions in verse 18 of this chapter he says for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us Paul the apostle Paul the author of much of the New Testament was experiencing all kinds of challenges but Paul recognized that God was for him and indeed God is for us but perhaps your challenges are different from Paul's perhaps your challenges perhaps your challenge might be related to finances or might be relational perhaps there might be a besetting sin but whatever the issue is

Paul asked the question whatever the issue is when you stand before the judge who has elected you who has predestined you Paul asked the question who can bring a charge and the truth is that many can bring charges and we know the enemy of our soul will bring a charge but Paul really asked the question who can bring a successful charge against God's elect no matter what you're going through today we know that our salvation is secure we know as Paul wrote earlier in this chapter that all things work together for our good

Paul responds to this question of who can bring a charge against God's elect this way it is God who justifies so one can bring a charge against God's elect but the ultimate judge is God himself it is God who justifies he is the supreme judge there's no greater authority there's none greater than that so you can bring a charge against God's elect as much as you want Paul's point is God is the one who justifies he is the final authority you know there's no privy counsel here he is the supreme one listen to what John Piper writes John Piper says so hear this all who will believe on Jesus and become united to

Christ he's referring to us those of us who believe and show yourself among the elect hear this God is the one who justifies you God is the one who justifies you not a human judge not a great prophet not an archangel from heaven but God the creator of the world and owner of all things and ruler of the universe and every molecule and person in it God is the one who justifies you who can bring a charge against God's elect aren't you glad today that if you are elected today none can bring a successful charge against you Satan who is the prince of accusation he accuses the believers all the time

Satan he seeks to take away the joy of our salvation have you ever been there have you ever been to a place where you felt that you weren't certain whether you were saved or not and there was no joy in being saved it was humdrum it's a sad state to be in if you are a doubting believer a believer without joy perhaps there are circumstances in your life that have brought you to that point perhaps there are circumstances but this verse helps us to see that all of Satan's efforts are worthless he can slander all he wishes and man can slander because they will all that they wish but we know that there is no condemnation to those who are in

[25:41] Christ Jesus what a place we find ourselves in that God is for us that is the point God is for us we see in verse 34 that Paul asks another rhetorical question and here he helps us to see that God is our advocate this is the question Paul asks who is to condemn who is to condemn and in this case Paul answers in three in three different ways Paul says 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 who can condemn is the question that

Paul asks and answers who can condemn us Paul's first response is that Jesus Christ is the one who died that's a response to the question who can condemn Jesus Christ is the one who died in other words how can we be condemned since Jesus has already died and paid the penalty for our sins we can't be condemned that's his point Paul says he is our advocate Jesus Christ is the one who died listen to what Charles Spurgeon says about this point he writes the whole shower of divine wrath was poured upon Jesus Christ head that the black cloud of vengeance emptied out itself upon the cross and that there is not left in the book of

God a single sin against a believer nor can there possibly be even a particle of punishment ever exacted at the hand of the man that believeth in Jesus for this reason that Jesus has been punished to the full in full tale hath every sin received sentence in his death every sin he hath suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God and now if you and I are enabled this morning to go beneath the bloody tree of Calvary and shelter ourselves there how safe are we how safe are we who is to condemn us

Christ is the one who died Christ is the one who died but who can condemn us so one might seek to condemn us in various ways but we can always answer the question Christ died for me someone seeks to condemn you can always respond that way what sin torments your soul what sin torments your soul Christ died for you Christ died for you Charles Spurgeon writes further when I think of my sin it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate but when I think of Christ's death it seems impossible that any sin should ever be great enough to need such an atonement as that there is in the death of

Christ enough and more than enough there is not only a sea in which to drown our sins but the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered who can condemn us who can condemn us Christ died for us Paul goes on to say more than that Paul says who can condemn us Christ died for us yes but more than that more than that Christ was raised from the dead more than his death death yes more than his death Paul here is saying that we cannot be condemned not only because Christ died for us but more than that he was raised from the dead

[31:05] Christ Christ's death was punishment for our sins but his resurrection was public acknowledgement that the debt was paid in full the cross was his punishment but his resurrection was evidence of its sufficiency more than that he was raised from the dead and then Paul makes a final point in this section he says he Christ our advocate is at the right hand of God and he is interceding for us who can condemn us who can condemn us when our advocate is at the right hand of God interceding for us who can condemn us he is in a position of authority and power and he intercedes for us

God is for us then in verse 35 who shall separate that's the the question that's the rhetorical question that he asks who shall separate us from the love of Christ here Paul makes a very fundamental supposition that Christ loves us he says who shall separate us from the love of Christ Christ Paul makes the point that that's not up for debate and we heard about it in we heard it read in Psalm 103 his steadfast love is everlasting to everlasting He loves us with an everlasting

love!

The question is who shall separate us? is the question that Paul asks God is for us who shall separate us from the love of Christ who shall separate us from the love of Christ yes you're going through difficulties but listen to what Paul says in response to that question it's interesting when Paul asks who shall separate us from the love of Christ he deals with a bunch of what's he says who shall separate us from the love of Christ and then he says shall tribulation I believe Paul is just really asking two rhetorical questions if you will similar but distinct Paul says here who shall separate us from the love of Christ then he lists some things he says shall tribulation and this is where some of us might be he says shall tribulation separate us from the love of Christ Paul says is the fact that we are distressed is the fact that we might be persecuted or famine that is poor unemployed fact that we might be naked or in danger or in fear for our lives are those evidences that we have been separated from the love of Christ Paul asked the question what is your circumstance today Paul said I consider that the sufferings of these present time are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us what is your circumstance today you know we have a tendency to equate our condition with the love of Christ but Paul and when we are down we say

[35:44] God doesn't love us perhaps you're going through something right now and you've come to the near conclusion that God can't possibly love me why did he allow such and such a thing to happen to me why are all of these bad things happening to me Paul says shall these things separate us from the love of Christ I believe that's the way he asked the question shall these things separate us from the love of Christ perhaps you are uncertain as to the correct answer to the question that was asked well look at what Paul says in verse 36 as it is written for your sake we are being killed all the day long we regarded as sheep to be slaughtered

Paul did not have an easy ride either moreover consider verse 37 look at verse 37 look at what he says here no in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us Paul says we're not just conquerors we don't just win he says we are more than conquerors through him who loved us Paul reminds us in this chapter Romans chapter 8 and I encourage you to study it and to pay real attention to it Paul reminds us that all things work together for our good they work together for our good Paul says he doesn't say that all things are good and you know I was thinking about that driving here today because I know if you're like me there are some things that you go through from time to time and you say that can't possibly be good and you know

I considered a chef who might be cooking and sometimes you know you won't just take a spoon of salt and put it in your mouth but when you mix the salt with all of the other stuff all of the other ingredients it all comes together it comes together and you know sometimes we don't understand what what God exactly is doing but Paul reminds us that all things work together for our good and we are more than conquerors shall anything separate us from the love of Christ is there anything that you are going through any experience that you have that is evidence that God doesn't love you anymore Paul says no no no there is nothing Paul concludes chapter 8 with these words for I am sure you know

I like the way King James writes it King James says I am persuaded I am persuaded that neither death nor life neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of Christ God in Christ our Lord Paul says listen takes us all the way back to verse 29 for those whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified glorified and Paul tells us Paul tells us that nothing there is nothing I am persuaded that death nor life nothing in death that death can't separate you nothing in this life can separate us from the love that is in Christ Jesus I am persuaded that angels are rulers nothing that is supernatural nothing nothing that is to come nothing that is present or to come no power anywhere nothing in heaven nothing in earth and if that were not enough he said anything else in all creation because this is not an exhaustive list he said I don't care what it is God takes a hold of you that's an eternal hold when he loves you he loves you forever that's the point

[40:59] Paul is making and there is nothing there is no one or no circumstance no condition that can ever snatch you from God's hand so

perhaps perhaps perhaps today you are in a season of doubt or trials or temptation or lack or sickness or persecution or distress and you're wondering whether God has forsaken you perhaps you don't have a job perhaps a close relative sick or died today you we can be certain that he is for us yes God is for us this truth the truth that God is for us should compel us to live with gratitude our lives should be lived with gratitude and how do we live with gratitude we lived we live with holiness we live lives that are pleasing to

God we live a life of gratitude but how else should we this truth should compel us to live it should compel us to live in hope not in despair we should live in hope and not in despair in faith faith should have a smile on your face and the world should know that you are joyful despite the apparent circumstances in your life should live with joy and not under condemnation oh to live under condemnation is a terrible way to live as a believer it's a terrible way to live you should live humbly and not arrogantly knowing that it is the

Lord who does these things for you it is the Lord who is our provider it is the Lord who is our judge it is the Lord who is our advocate it is the Lord who is our sustainer it is he whose love will never let us go no matter what the circumstances are God is for us who can be against us let us pray