

All Charges Dropped

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[0:00] Romans 8 and looking at verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

! It is God who justifies.! It is important for us to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Particularly if we have been following the Lord for a long time, it is important for us often to just stop and to reflect and to remember what it is that God the Father did and what it is that God the Son did for us and what God the Holy Spirit continues to do for us and Christ interceding for us.

And this chapter is one of these chapters that brings before us in a very, very clear way. It is a chapter, and particularly this latter part, it is a tremendous encouragement of assurance because it is something that quite often we can grapple with, our assurance, being assured of our faith.

Sometimes we are so assured, we are absolutely sure that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, no doubt whatever. And for some Christians, they spend a lot of their lives like that.

[1:31] But many don't. Many struggle at different times with a whole sense of assurance. And at the heart of all that the Apostle is reminding of us here is that God is for us.

That God is not against us. That as a believer, God is for us. And that is an incredible statement in itself. If God be for us, who can be against us?

So that means God is for us. The creator of this world, the one who brought all things into being by the word of his power, he is for you. You are precious to him, far more precious than you or I ever realize.

He will never forget you. He will never fall out with you. He'll never disown you. He'll never not be there for you.

He's committed to you completely. And every day we should remember that, because there are times in our experience when we say, like Jacob said, remember, he said, all these things are against me.

[2:41] And yet, Jacob was to discover by the end of his life, far than being against him, they were actually all working together for his good and for God's people's good.

But sometimes when we're going through the difficult times and things aren't working out and God's providence is mysterious and we're struggling, we kind of echo Jacob's sentiments and say, all these things are against us or against me.

Well, it certainly wasn't. As the Lord says in Jeremiah, I know the plans that I have for you, plans for peace are not of evil to give you a future and a hope. Now, Paul is arguing here and saying, he's displaying how much God is for us and he's saying, if God has done the greatest thing possible for us, it is inconceivable but that he will do the lesser things as well.

And the greatest thing that he did was in giving his son. Giving his son to a life that ended up in pain, in torture, in abuse, in crucifixion, in abandonment, in the full experiencing of the wrath of God and death itself.

That's what the father gave the son up to. That's what God gave his son up to for you and for me. And that's what the son gave himself up to for you and for me.

[4:11] So, if God has done this for us, the greatest thing possible, then, obviously, that's the argument here, he will do the lesser things as well.

That was Jesus' own argument, remember, when he was talking about how God cares for us. He even cares for the lilies, for the birds in the air. He cares even for the lilies. And if God cares about the grass that grows on the ground, how much more will he but care for you as well?

And so, Paul then goes on to ask this question, who shall bring, that's what he's saying, who shall bring any charge against God's elect? The election of God is one of the most wonderful statements,

truths, that we have in the word of God.

And it's hard for us, we cannot, to even begin to imagine, but before ever we were, God has set his love upon us.

Now, I know our minds can't process that. It is beyond human comprehension because we're dealing from where we are here in time into eternity.

[5:25] And it is beyond our understanding. But faith believes it. You have no problem with your faith in accepting that and believing that from all eternity, God has set his love upon you.

And he knows everything about us, all our yesterdays and every yesterday of our life. Because as the scripture tells us, that a thousand years are but as yesterday and as a watch in the night.

So God knows everything about us in intimate detail. But going way back into the councils of eternity, we find that God set his love upon us.

And I find this one of the most comforting truths that we can ever find in scripture. Because you see, part of our problem is that we often wonder, did I start right?

I'm here tonight as a Christian, you're saying, but did I start right? And if I didn't start right, maybe I have been mistaken all the way along.

[6:34] Because you look at your life and you see all the inconsistencies, you see the failures, you're aware of who you are and what you are and so often we say, well maybe, maybe, maybe it was simply because of a very difficult providence that I was going through and I said to the Lord, Lord, you've got to help me here and you've asked the Lord to come in to your life.

But then you're saying as the time goes on, maybe I didn't ask Christ to come in, maybe I didn't, maybe I didn't make a decision, maybe, and sometimes we can torment ourselves with all these kind of thoughts, maybe, maybe I didn't start right.

Have you ever asked yourself that and you're thinking, here I am all these years later and what if I, what if, what if it's not real faith? Well, here's the beauty of it.

It didn't start with you. It started with the Lord. And the Lord is in charge of the providences and all the different things in our lives. And every person here has a different experience of how you came to start following the Lord.

And following is a lovely biblical expression of what a Christian is, to follow the Lord. Jesus says that often, to follow me. Follow me. And that's what we do as Christians, we follow the Lord.

[8:03] And you began to follow the Lord because the Lord had set his love upon you. He had always set his love, but there was a particular point in your life when he said he began to work in your heart and in your life.

And it might be through lots of different experiences. And the reason that you're still following tonight is because you are following the Lord because of his love.

And you can't turn back, you can't go away, you've experienced, there's been lots of things that have happened in your life which could, from a natural point of view, would cause shipwreck and cause you to go back, but you haven't because you're rooted to him and you're grounded in him because of his love.

And it's his love to you that is at the start of it all. You notice when in verse 35 the apostle says, who shall separate us not from, who shall separate us our love for Christ, but no, it's his.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? If it was looking simply at our love, then you'd put, but whatever love we have is as a result of his love to us.

[9:24] And that is an incredible comfort because it gets rid of all the problems that we have about, maybe I didn't start right or what. It's because of his love that worked in your heart and produced a love for him and the things of God that you tonight are following him.

And so this is where the great encouragement is because Jesus had said, all that the Father gives me, everyone, all that the Father gives me will come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

So we have the two sides of it there. We have the Father's giving of the people to Christ and in time they come to Christ and Christ will turn none of them away.

Now some people say, you've got to be careful about mentioning election because people will say they'll hide behind and we know that some people do hide behind the doctrine of election and they say, well if I'm going to be saved, I'll be saved anyway and if I'm not going to be saved, well there's nothing I can do about it.

Well scripture certainly is not silent on the doctrine of election and we find that the great apostles who preached the doctrine of election saw thousands coming to faith under their preaching.

[10:48] You'll see how much Peter talks about election and yet Peter was a very one, thousands were converted as he preached. And of course when we preach we have to give both sides because we have our responsibility as well.

And we're told that what we are to do, we're never told to just sit and fold our arms and wait for God to work. We're told to search and to seek and we're told we're given great promises to knock, to ask, to search, to seek, to pray.

And if we do so sincerely and with all our heart God will honour that and respond to that. So the question is asked here, who shall bring any charge against God's elector, against the believer? Now in order to understand this we have to put ourselves into the courtroom because we're talking legal terms here. Here's the court in session. And the call is made.

And here you are in the box. And the call is made, can anybody bring any charge against this person? There you are as a believer.

[11:58] So as we say, it's a legal term. We're talking legally in God's sight. And we know that there are many who can bring charges. We know that Satan brings charges all the time.

If we could see behind the scenes and see how many charges Satan is bringing about us before God. We're told that in Revelation. For the accuser of the brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night.

Now we know it's an awful thing to stand accused. And the devil is an expert at accusing us. And he brings up before us so much. He'll bring your past.

And he'll bring, particularly since you became a Christian. You may not bother too much about your life before you were a Christian. I'll bother with that as well. But particularly since you became a Christian. You'll say call yourself a Christian.

You remember what you said. You remember what you did. Remember these times. Remember. Remember. And all these things can really, really bring you down. But you know the wonderful thing is that not one accusation that is brought against the Christian will stick.

[13:13] Who shall bring any charge? Well, as you say, the world can. There are five things in operation. There's sin.

There's Satan. There's the law of God. There's death. And there's hell. And these five things bring us into condemnation. These five things are what are going to destroy us.

because we're regarding the law of God. Not that the law of God is evil. It is anything but it is perfect. But we are all required to adhere every single day in thought, word, and deed to God's law. To live it perfectly. And if we fail at any point, we are guilty of failing in everything. And that means nobody, nobody can fulfill God's law.

We are all under condemnation. We are all naturally under the wrath of God. We are all standing accused. But of course this is what the Lord Jesus has done.

[14:20] Because Jesus came. Jesus came and he fulfilled the law. And Jesus is the one who experienced all the wrath and all the condemnation of God.

And the thing is this, at the moment that we're born again, we are justified. Remember, justification is a legal act.

We don't become more justified than the very first moment we become justified. It means that as God looks on us, when we come to accept Christ, God looks on us as somebody whose sins have been forgiven and pardoned.

That's part of what he does. says, your sins and your iniquities, I will remember no more. It's like the slate is wiped clean. There's none there.

Oh, there's all the accusations and God says, no, they've all been wiped clean by my son. But God goes even further than that.

[15:27] He now accepts us as righteous because of what Christ has done. And you see, it's an amazing transaction that takes place because God, who is absolutely just, and in order to retain his justice, he cannot overlook sin or bypass it or ignore it in any shape or form.

It has to be punished. punished. And because Christ was punished in our place, it is impossible for God to punish us now.

Christ has been punished. Because of his justice and who he is, it's once and for all upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And that means that we are as justified as we will ever be.

Now, justification doesn't mean that all of a sudden we become perfect. Sinless creatures, not at all. Justification is not what affects, we know that there are two great terms that we remember it from our catechism days.

And remember how there's justification and adoption and sanctification. And if you remember, justification was an act and adoption is an act and sanctification was a work. And in a sense sanctification is both an act and a work because there is a once and for all sanctification because to sanctify simply means to set apart.

[16:54] And that's what God has done. The moment you're born again, you're set apart to him. You belong to him. Don't belong to anybody else. You belong to him. So in one sense you're sanctified right away.

but there's this ongoing work and sanctification is changing us bit by bit so that we become more and more resembling the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's not what justification does. That's what sanctification does. So always remember that no claim, no charge will ever stand.

The world makes plenty charges against the Christian because as the world looks at the Christian, we make the mistake, I can remember it myself, of thinking whenever you see a Christian doing or saying something that you think, that's not right, or doing something that's not, you say, call themselves a Christian.

Hypocrite. I remember it. Because back then, I thought that a Christian became perfect. But a Christian isn't.

[18:02] There's not one Christian who's perfect in this world. We're full of sin. Our hearts are just a cogmire of deceit, the hardest deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Not till glory will we be made perfect in holiness. So the world's charges against the Christian don't stand. Because even as we live out our days in this world, all our faults, all our sins, all our blemishes, they have been pardoned and forgiven in Christ.

And that's the wonderful thing. What a liberty, what a freedom it gives a Christian. Once we discover this, that is all of grace.

we didn't do anything. We just received. And I think sometimes when you're trying to share the gospel with somebody, one of the hardest things for them to grasp is that salvation is a gift.

That you don't earn it. There's nothing you can do to earn it. All you can do is just come falling on your knees and say, Lord, you've got to help me. I can't do this myself.

[19:15] It's the greatest discovery. Because that's the place where the Lord will come and deal with you and bring you that salvation, that light, that life that you need.

So we find who shall bring any charge against God's elect? Nobody. Because God justifies. And that follows on very simply who is to condemn.

Well, it says, if you were to say, you could put this question, will Christ Jesus condemn? Well, Christ Jesus can't condemn. Jesus is the one that we're going to have to appear before the judgment.

Remember, judgment seat of Christ. We stand before him. Is he going to condemn us having died for us? Of course not.

He can never condemn anybody that he has died for. In fact, at the opening of the chapter, it tells us there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

[20:20] So that's why tonight I want us just to simply look back on what it is to be a Christian. Because sometimes we forget. Sometimes we just drift along and we take it for granted.

And it's important for us to remind ourselves just what the Lord has done. and to remember that you're following the Lord because he set his love upon you.

That's where it began. And that is the greatest encouragement to us. And try and get rid of all these things. Did I start right? Because you know sometimes you go through all that in your mind.

And I've done it myself. I remember sometimes going back and I'd come to the Lord and say Lord if I have never come right I'm coming to you tonight. There's nobody else I want in my life but you Lord.

But you're already there. This is Satan again. Satan is tempting us and the sin of our heart and all these things. We love him tonight because he first loved us.

[21:29] That's it. Let's pray. Lord our God we give thanks for the wonderful news that the gospel brings. We give thanks that it's light and life and we pray that we may rest upon the finished work of Christ.

And we give thanks that you turn no one away that comes to you. Irrespective of our past it's for sinners that Christ came. Christ didn't come for the righteous.

He came for sinners. This man eats with publicans and sinners was how the Pharisees they were trying to condemn him and how thankful that he sat with the publicans and sinners.

This man received sinners. They mocked him with these words but how thankful that Jesus Christ received sinners because that's what we all are.

And so help us tonight and help us here. As we heard we pray Lord to direct us in light of the congregational meeting which will take place soon.

[22:30] and we ask Lord to guide Calamurdo in the decision that he has to make and we pray that you will guide him that it will be heavenly wisdom that will be given because that's the only direction that we can know.

We pray to bless this world that we are part of and Lord what a world of upheaval. There's so much pain and heartache all over. It's devastating when we see of all the carnage all the deaths when we think of all that's happening in the Middle East and all that's happening in Iran and all that's happening in Ukraine and in all just so many areas of this world and we pray for your people.

Your people are suffering unbelievably and we ask Lord for their protection for their help and we pray Lord that you will intervene. Lord bring peace to reign.

Sometimes we don't know how that is possible. But all things are possible with you. And so we pray Lord for your intervention. Bless us all then we pray and grant us your grace.

Take us all to our home safely we pray for giving us our sin in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.