

God's Everlasting Love

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[0 : 00] Romans chapter 8. Verse 18. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope.

That the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoption of sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

[1 : 16] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

For those who are called according to his purpose. 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 brothers.

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?

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 things?

[2 : 26] 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 indeed 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. Knowing 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.

Amen. And may God bless this reading of his holy word to us. Psalm 54 from Sing Psalms. Psalm 54 from Sing Psalms.

[3 : 33] That's on page 70. The tune is Evan. Save me, O God, by your great name. With power deliver me.

Hear, O my God, the words I speak, and listen to my plea. For strangers are attacking me. The ruthless seek my life. For they have no regard for God, and all will stir up strife.

Consider this. God is my help. The Lord upholds my way. In faithfulness destroy my foes. Their slander, Lord, repay. And so on.

Sing the whole psalm. Psalm 54. Tune is Evan. Save me, O God, by your great name. Amen. For someone from Sing citing!

Heaven's true amazing, who around earth will power deliver me. nineteenth support through sch, and cy Female hae.

[4 : 32] In all my hope the words I speak, and listen to my fear.

For strangers are not a king, the ruthless seek my life.
For they have no regard for God, and always stir up strife.
Consider this God is my help, the Lord upholds my way.
In faithfulness destroyed my foes, their slander, Lord, remain.
[5 : 50] I'll bring the sacrifice to you, and we will offer you.

Because your name, O Lord, is good, your presence I will see.
For you, O Lord, have rescued me from my distress and woe.
Thy eyes have looked in victory, upon my cruel at all.

Let us turn again to the chapter we read in Romans, Romans chapter 8, and let us read verses 31 and 32. What then shall we say to these things?

[7 : 13] 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 things?

One of the great problems we often have as Christians is a problem that we have with assurance. Can I really know that I am a Christian? There are lots of good people, lots of beautiful Christians, and they really struggle with the whole concept of assurance.

But the Lord wants us to know. And when we go to the Bible, we see that the Bible is full of declarations of assurance. When we sing Psalm 23, we find the psalmist saying, The Lord is my shepherd.

We sing in Psalm 40, I waited for the Lord my God. John, writing in his epistle, he says, I write these things unto you, that you may know that you have the Son of God.

That he's writing these things in order that they will be persuaded. Again, he writes, I'm writing so that you will know that he dwells in you and that you dwell in him.

[8 : 34] So it's very obvious when we come to the word of God, that our God wants us to know that we belong to him. He doesn't want us to be in the dark and just filled with every kind of negative thought and doubt and fear and saying, well, am I a Christian or am I not?

And the thing having said that, I know that there are many wonderful Christians, people who I would hold in the highest regard and Christians who would certainly put me to shame by their consistent walk.

And yet they will never come out and make this declaration, Oh, the Lord is my God. They won't go any further than saying, well, I hope so. Or it's not for me to say.

I've heard beautiful Christians whose lives have borne testimony to the transforming work of God's grace. And it is so obvious by their life and by their conversation that the work of grace is a powerful real work.

And you'll say to them, oh, well, it's very obvious that you love the Lord. Oh, I hope I do. And you'll say, but the Lord has saved you.

[9 : 56] Oh, well, it's not for me to say. I hope so. I would hope. And that's as far as they will go. Because they feel it's presumption to go further.

That it's somehow presumptuous to say, oh, yes, the Lord is my God. I am truly, I'm a Christian. I've been saved by grace.

And sometimes it is possible even to think that there's some kind of virtue in this kind of doubting. There is no virtue in doubting.

Now, that doesn't mean, of course, but that there are times when God's people have real and genuine concerns. And sometimes Christians who have been following for a long time, people who are members for a long time, office bearers, ministers, can go through periods where they're brought to, they say to themselves, am I really a Christian?

And we can do that because of the nature of sin, because of our heart. Because there are times we get an insight into who we are and we think, oh, has the Lord really done a work in my heart?

[11 : 09] Just you get a glimpse of your corruption or the sin in your heart and the sinning in your heart and in your life. But what we've got to remember is it's an ongoing work.

We haven't arrived. And sometimes we're judging as to how one day we will be. At the moment, we're on a journey and God is at work within us.

So we've always got to remember that. We're not the full package. Far from it. But we've also got to remember with regard to our salvation that it is God who keeps us, God who saves us.

But the salvation is, we were looking at that last week, that salvation involves keeping. If the being kept was down to our shelves, then we would have real reason for doubts and fears. In fact, I know if our keeping was down to our shelves, there is no way that I would ever make heaven. And I know there's no way that you would ever make heaven if our keeping was down to our shelves.

[12 : 14] But it's not. That salvation that God works for us in Jesus Christ involves our being kept as well. We are saved and kept.

It's all one package, as it were. We are being brought in and kept and saved. It's all together. And so the Bible is very clear in bringing us the comfort that we need.

Because there's real comfort. It's distressing for a believer to go through their lives hoping. They won't go further than that. Hoping that they're Christians.

We want more than that. We want to know. That's why the Bible is full of these assurances. And again, when you think of it in human terms, we really put us...

What does the Lord think of us when we speak in that way? Where we say, ah, well, it's not for me to say. When the Lord has done a great work within our life.

[13 : 19] And then to say, ah, well, it's not really for me to say. The Bible highlights or illustrates the work of salvation in the way of like a husband and a wife.

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so the Lord says that he rejoices over us. I have betrothed thee unto me forever. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for, and so on.

So there's this illustrative way. Now, for instance, if someone was to ask my... Ask Dolly, is that your husband there, Kenny?

And you should say, well, it's not for me to say. Or I hope so. I would be hurt. But that's exactly what we do with regard to Jesus Christ.

When we think of the love with the way that he... Everything that he has done for us. And yet, we'll say, well, it's not for me to say.

[14 : 26] Remember, it's serious business. And that's why I say there is no virtue whatever. And sort of speaking in that way. But that doesn't alter the fact that sometimes we still have our doubts and our fears.

Because we're sinners. And there are so many things that are against us. Now, our confession of faith, of course, is very wise. Because our confession of faith highlights very clearly to us that assurance of salvation and salvation are two different things.

In other words, a person can be truly saved and yet lack the assurance of that salvation. The assurance of faith.

And our confession says, This assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that true believers may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before they are partakers of it.

And I'm sure that that's been true for many people. People who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. And they've struggled for quite a while. Until they come to that place and point where they are assured of their salvation.

[15 : 41] But anyway, the apostle here is dealing with some of the difficulties that the Christian can face. And this is what, and when we say the apostle is dealing with it, we've always got to remember that ultimately it's God who's dealing with it because everything that is written to us is by the direction and given by the Holy Spirit.

And when Paul says then, What then shall we say to these things? We have to ask ourselves, Well, what are these things? Well, at one level, it's all the way back to chapter 1 and verse 16, when Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

And then in verse 17 he says, For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, and it is written, The righteous shall live by faith.

And from then on, the apostle works through different sections, and it's really all about justification by faith.

It is the most amazing exposition, as you want, if you'd like, about the believer in faith, and all that that entails.

[16 : 56] But then again, we could say, What then shall we say to these things? It follows on from what has just gone before, that great verse of assurance in 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 then all that follows on. And so the apostle then says, What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Let's put it the other way around. Who can be against us, if God is for us? Now, some people think that when they become Christians, that that's the end of every struggle, and problem, and difficulty, and life is going to become just brilliant.

Now, at one level, we know that there are blessings in the Christian life, that the unbeliever knows nothing of. And there are many blessings in this world, and we wouldn't change it for the world. But if we think for one moment, that the moment you become a Christian, that that's the end of any trouble, or conflict, or difficulty, then we're in for a shock. Because Jesus himself said, In this world, you will have tribulation.

[18:06] Not you might have, or it's a possibility, you will. In this world, you will have tribulation, he says, but be of good cheer, he says. I've overcome the world. You're victor. You're going to win in the end.

But that doesn't mean that there won't be. So, we've always got to remember that. That although our salvation has been guaranteed, that doesn't mean that we won't have problems in this world. Because at the end of the day, we weren't saved to live forever in this world. This world is not our home. In fact, nothing of it really belongs to us.

Because even this world itself is going to be destroyed. The creation, we're not the only ones groaning. The creation is groaning. And you say to yourself, how is it growing?

Well, we see it in so many different ways. We see how the, mentioned that a week last Saturday, how the very gardens, the soil is working against us. It's under the curse. Everything is.

[19:09] You see the tsunamis, and the earthquakes, and the volcanoes, and hurricanes. Nature is at war. The whole creation is groaning. So that we're waiting for this redemption, and the creation is.

There's going to be new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. My word, we have a lot to look forward to, in Jesus Christ. So we are being saved.

The Bible says, we are actually being saved, from this present evil world. And that's why it's so mad, to live our lives, as if this world is all that there is.

And to try and get everything we can, out of this world, as if this world is, our only existence. And there are people, who spend all their energy, and all their talents, and all their efforts, just trying to, get what they can, out of this world.

That's so stupid, because at the end of the day, we have to give back everything. The world is only giving us, whatever it gives on loan. Because we can take nothing, of this world with us.

[20:16] Not one, solitary thing. We even have to leave our body behind. Everything. Part of us, apart from our soul. Body will be reunited one day, but that's in the future.

When we leave this world, we leave with our soul alone. Nothing else. And either our soul, is united to Jesus, or it's not. And if it's united to Jesus, if our soul is united to Jesus, then we have everything.

And we have a glorious, inheritance and future. If we're not united to Jesus, we have nothing. And that's why it's so important, to find Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour.

And so, the apostle then, knows that there are forces, and powers, that are at work, against him. Of course, there's nobody knew that, more than the apostle Paul.

Paul is somebody, who was on both sides, of the fence. Paul knew what it was, not only to be not a Christian, but to be bitterly opposed, to Christ, and the Christian faith.

[21:22] Paul knew there were forces, and powers, against the Christian. He himself, had been, a force, and a power, against the Christian. We're told in Acts, that he was actually, his very breath, was death, towards the Christian.

He was breathing out, there's a, it's an amazing, the language I mean, it says in a navy, breathing out slaughterings. That, that was his breath. Slaughter, to the Christian.

Death, to the Christian. Hated them. Hated the very name of Christ. And he put all his energies, and all his, considerable, intellect, and force, into the destruction, of the Christian faith.

So, if any person knew, that there were forces, against the Christian, it's the apostle Paul, because now, he's on the other side, of the fence. Paul knows, that there are all these forces, all these powers, working, against the Christian.

Who can be against us? Well, we know, that the world is against us. Sometimes the world is against us, in persecution, other times, enticing us, alluring us, sucking us in, drawing us.

[22 : 31] Our own, natural heart, is against, the Christian faith. You have an enemy, within you, that's really trying to, trip you up, all the time.

There's all these things, the selfishness, the covetousness, the lusts of, in every shape, and form, they're there, and they're, they're at war, against, our faith.

The devil, he's, he's never far away, always trying, to, mess things up. So, there are all these forces, and all these powers, that are at work.

So, the apostle is saying, who can be against us? Well, there's all these things, multiply them, and hundred, thousand times, lots of things against, but then he says, who can be against us, if God is for us?

Now, then again, we have to stop, and think, well, if God is for us, and we think of, who God is, the God, who brought this world, into being, by the word, of his power, the God, who, is, so mighty, and powerful, who, who holds, the very world, in the palm of his hand, he is for us.

[23 : 44] That's an amazing thought. So, that is, his hand, is out, towards us, towards us, in favor. Now, that doesn't mean, that we're going to be protected, at a human level, in everything, but it means, that we will never perish, we will never be lost.

And his face, is towards us, in favor, and in love. But the apostle's argument, is this, he says, who can be against us, if God is for us?

And then he says, I'll show you, how God is for us. And what the apostle, is doing here, is arguing, from the greater, to the lesser. And God is, the apostle is saying, right, I'm going to prove to you, how much God is for you.

And this is what he says, in verse 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?

That's what, that's what God did. He did not, spare, his own son. Here is his son, the darling, of his bosom, the son, who was with him, and has been with him, from all eternity, in the deepest, most perfect, eternal, bond of love.

[25 : 09] And yet, the father, does not spare the son. You and I, would do anything, for those that we love. We would, we would give our lives, for our own family.

And yet, God, so loved the world, that he gave his, only begotten son. He did, not spare.

He, not only, didn't intervene, the father, allowed, everything, to happen, to his son. Because, right up until, the time, that Jesus, was taken, there was a restraint, held, against the enemies, of Christ. They were desperate, to get him. Their whole, for, for, a matter of months, everything, was being, they were, there's the one thing, they were doing, all the time, how can we get him?

How can we get rid of him? How can we put him to death? Meeting after meeting, after meeting, how can we do it? They couldn't do it, until they appointed time. And it was then, that God, gave him up.

[26 : 17] The father, gave the son up. So that, the, you know, there are some people, who look on the cross, as the worst tragedy, and the greatest miscarriage, of justice ever.

Yes and no. Yes, at one level, it was. It was the most, appalling, miscarriage, of justice ever. It was the most, despicable act, that this world, has ever seen.

And yet, that, is at the, we take, if we take the forces of darkness, and evil men into it, that's their side of it. But it's also, by God's appointment.

In that God, has handed, his son over, to these forces, to these powers. They couldn't do a thing, unless, it was by divine permission.

And as Jesus, hung on the cross, it wasn't his weakness, that kept him there. or the strength of his nails, or the strength of the nails. It was the strength of his love, to his father, and the strength of his love, to his people.

[27 : 25] That's what kept Jesus on the cross. All the time, he was giving himself. All the time, the father was giving himself. And he spared, spared, nothing.

At no point, did the father say, I, I cannot, do any more, to my son. I cannot allow, any, anything else, to happen. No. He spared him, not at any level.

He poured on him, the punishment, of our sin. Jesus Christ, experienced, the pains of hell. The full wrath of God, was poured upon him.

He spared him, nothing. And he did that, for us. It's quite extraordinary, it's the most amazing thing. And that's what we were remembering, last week, when we met, for the Lord's Supper. Something that we should always, be there in our thinking. And so we've always got to remember this. He gave him up for us all. Who are they all? Well, again, it's the all of verse 28, and we, those that, that love God.

[28 : 36] And so this is the apostle's argument, and he's saying, right, you, you are wondering, what, does God really, does God really care?

These things that are against me, and we have all these different arguments, and the apostle goes through them in this chapter. He looks at, for instance, in verse 33, those who bring charges against the Christian, there's plenty of them, condemns the Christian, in verse 34.

Then he goes into the whole area of separation, in verse 35. Awful words. But he deals with them all, because God is for us.

And he demonstrates how much he is for us, by having not only given a son, but didn't spare him. He gave, the whole lot was poured out upon him.

And so the apostle says, how will he not also with him graciously, give us all things? Everything, that is essential, everything that we need, that is important for us, to take us to glory, it will be given.

[29 : 55] And so we've got to remember that, it's all being done. We can't add to it. We can't do it. And may I say, as we come to conclude, if you're here today, without Jesus Christ, you know, these are the most beautiful promises.

Do you know, as things stand right now, you know, you can't claim them. But you can claim them right now, if you take Jesus. Because, you think about it, Jesus came into this world, for one reason.

It was to save sinners. Alright? Who are you? Who am I? We're sinners. We're lots of other things, but that's one thing, that's common to us all.

We're all sinners. And Jesus is saying, look, that's who I've come for. I've come to seek and to save, those that are lost. And again, that's our condition by nature, we're lost.

So he's come, and he comes to us in his word. And that's the beauty of coming together, to God's house. Because we come under the word. We put ourselves, into the special place, where Jesus has promised to be.

[31 : 07] These are special moments. Wherever God's people meet together, it's special. Because Jesus has promised to be there. And that's why, it's like a golden opportunity, to meet with Jesus.

Because right now, he's here, and he is here as savior. He's not here as judge at the moment. He's here as savior. To save. He's able to save you today.

And I would ask you, go to him and say, Lord, please, today, save me. If you ask him to do that, he will. And all these promises, become huge.

Let's pray. Oh Lord, our God, we ask that, we might know the reality, of your word. That this word might, go deep into our heart. That we might, have that persuasion, that we belong to the Lord.

And if there's anybody here, who doesn't, oh Lord, please, open their heart. Give them a prayer. Give them to seek you, even now. We pray to be with us, and take us to our home safely.

[32 : 09] Do us good, and cleanse us from our every sin. In Jesus name, we ask it. Amen. Our concluding psalm, is Psalm 118, from the Scottish Psalter.

And we're going to sing, from verse 5, to verse 9. And the tune is Martyrdom. Psalm 118, from verse 5.