

Nothing Shall Separate Us

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[0 : 00] Turn again to the chapter, we read Romans chapter 8, and we read at verse 35, Romans 8, verse 35.

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 have been 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.

Now, if you were a soldier, and you were spending all your time in enemy territory, not just that you were on a campaign, or that you were there for a month, or whatever, but supposing you were to spend years and years living in enemy territory, that would become something that would tie you to the very, as it were, I would imagine, to the very end of your being.

There would be days where you could handle it, days where you would feel relatively secure and safe, but there would be other days where you would feel, I just don't know how much longer I can go on like this, just the sense of uncertainty, the sense of the unknown, the sense of danger, the sense of fear around and about, all these sort of things you would begin to find very crippling.

[1 : 57] David, you remember, was a man who lived like that for years. You remember when David was being chased by Saul, and there were times when David's faith soared, where he was so persuaded that God was going to fulfill his purposes for him, he was so persuaded that it was all going to turn out well, and that he would one day be king, and that God would deal with Saul in his own way, and that everything would be all right.

But there were other times when David lived on the edge. There were times he was absolutely persuaded he was going to sink. And there were especially times just after great moments of faith, where David's faith plummeted, and you find him saying things like, surely one day I'm going to die or perish by the hand of Saul.

And it's the same for the Christian, because the Christian is somebody who is living every day in enemy territory. We can never be free or clear from the enemies that are out to destroy and to cripple us.

Now we know that there are enemies out and about, but there are enemies within, and that's why it's impossible to get away from the enemies.

There's an enemy within our own heart that is as fuchs and as rebellious and as much an enmity to God as anywhere else.

[3 : 31] We don't need to, yes, of course, the devil rages and wages war against us, the world does, but so does our own human nature. And so there are times that the Christian will feel just like that soldier who spends years and years in enemy territory, will feel just like David did, and will be saying, you know, I'm afraid, I'm really afraid that one day I'm going to seriously blow it.

I'm afraid that one day it's all going to go pear-shaped. I'm afraid one day, somehow or other, I am going to so fall and fail that that will be the end.

That when it reaches the end of my life, that somehow or other, I'm going to make shipwreck, and I'm not going to reach heaven's shore. And so these are fears that sometimes are very, very real in the life and the experience of the Christian.

And it's these kind of fears that the Apostle Paul is dealing with in this very chapter. And he asks several questions. For instance, earlier on, he's asking, what shall we say?

Who? He says, what shall we say then to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Isn't that a wonderful thing? Who can be against us? If God is for us, who ultimately can be against us?

[5 : 02] That's a wonderful thought. That if God is for you, then that nobody, even although they may try to be, and even although they may be, they will not be ultimately successful.

Again, he asks, who shall lay anything or bring any charge against God's elect? Now again, there are lots of people who could bring charges against God's people.

Satan can bring charges against God's people. You yourself can bring charges against yourself. But the wonderful thing is that there is nothing that will ultimately stick in the high court of heaven because Jesus Christ is the one who has taken upon himself all the charges that have been laid against God's people.

All these things have been lifted of God's people and placed to the charge of Jesus, placed to Jesus' account. And that's why it says, who shall lay anything or bring any charge against God's elect?

Who can condemn? No one. Because Christ is the one who has justified. And then it comes and asks, who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[6 : 19] And that is such a real fear for us, isn't it? Now, separation is a horrible word because in the word separation, we have this sense of being taken apart, torn apart from that which is part of us.

That's why death is such an awful thing. Death within a family how it tears apart, severs the great bonds and unions. But it's always part, unfortunately, of life.

Even on a wedding day we're reminded of that. It's not something any bride and groom are actually thinking of, but within the actual vows. It's talking about until death do you part.

Until that time when death will actually sever this union of marriage. That is what makes our own personal death difficult is that there is going to be a separation even here between our body and our soul.

The moment we die, a separation takes place where the body and soul separate. So, separation is not something that we particularly like to think about.

[7 : 33] But it is part and partial of life. And that's what Paul is addressing here, this very idea of separation. And it's about the Christian who shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Now, of course, as we know, our fear as we look at it is we look at our own love for the Lord. and sometimes that love is intense.

And sometimes we're so persuaded of that love and we say to ourselves, you know, my heart is full of love for the Lord. But there are other days when we look at ourselves and we look in and we have to confess.

And we say, you know this, I don't know what kind of love I have for my Lord at all. I don't feel today that my love for the Lord is great.

In fact, I don't know if there's any love there at all. And there might be times when the believer, that's how they feel. Now, that's not what we're to go on. Because it is who shall separate us from the love of Christ.

[8 : 45] You see, that love begins in Christ and with Christ. And it's whatever love we have for the Lord, it is a love that began with the Lord.

It is a reflection, as it were, of His love to us. Because we can only love Him if He has first loved us. And so, the wonderful thing is that it puts the whole picture back, not onto our shelves really, but onto the Lord. And who shall separate us from that love?

The love of Christ, which He has for His people. A love which sent Him to Calvary. A love which made Him ready to die and to suffer all that the cross meant for Him.

It is because of that great love. And so, as we look into our hearts, we are often afraid, but we've got to look often beyond our own hearts.

[9 : 47] and we are so afraid that we will get it wrong, that we will make a shipwreck. What if Satan comes and pulls me away?

Because sometimes, you know, you look around and I'm sure all of us can remember people who started out on the Christian faith.

People who began to follow the Lord. Maybe began around the same time as yourself. And yet, today, you have to say to yourself, I wonder, where are they?

Some of them, like Peter, are still following, but following afar off. There was a while that, so Peter followed the Lord. He never stopped following the Lord. Yet, there were some people who didn't think really he was following at all, but he was.

He was still following, but he was following far off. But the Word of God sadly makes it clear to us that there will be some, and they will, as it were, disappear without trace.

[10:52] That they begin, but they don't follow on, because ultimately there was no root within them. That's what the Word of God indicates to us.

And so, we always have this fear. And I believe it is something that the Christian has. What if, what if, because you see, we're walking by faith, not by sight.

If we were walking in our world, that was all of sight, it would be different. If we were to have, now we do have a personal message from heaven, and this is it, the Word of God, but it's by faith we accept it.

But supposing Jesus Christ were to come back into this world, and to live with us in all his glory, and that he was to be every day giving us personal messages of assurance, he was writing things out for us where we could see, then we'd be walking by sight.

But we walk by faith. And that is why sometimes it is difficult, because sometimes when we are suffocated by the world, and the enemy of our souls rages and rampages, at our times our faith can be shaken.

[12:03] And times like Peter, we can begin to sink as he walked in the water. water. And so the apostle is saying, right, you might be worried. Let's think.

Let's think what could. Let's think of all the awful things that you might be going through in your mind and think, maybe this will separate me from the love of Christ.

And so that's what the apostle does. He begins to look at certain things. Things that frighten us and things that terrify us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or the sword?

These are awful things. People being persecuted. And we're talking here about persecution for the faith. That's happening in many parts. Happening even in our own country, but certainly happening in many parts of this world.

[13:05] People are being butchered because of their faith. It's quite frightening some of the things that are going on in this world. Even right now, where fearful crimes are being perpetrated against people for no other reason than that they love the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, it's an awful thought. There are all these things, the persecution, the famine, the nakedness, peril, sword, all these things, danger, sword. Now, you look at these things and you say to yourself, what if that was to come into my life?

What if famine came into Great Britain? And you say to yourself, could it? Yes, it could. Very easily. We're living in a world where there's an uncertainty, financially, economically, socially, all these things.

The world could change radically, dramatically. And accompanying famine, all the awful other things that do accompany it. And you say to yourself, what if these things came into my life?

What if persecution came in? Would I stand strong? Would I be prepared to die for my faith? Would I? And all these kind of questions go through your mind.

[14:27] Well, let's remember who wrote this. It was the Apostle Paul. And here's this man, and when you review the Apostle's life, all these things were part and partial of Paul's life.

Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and ultimately the sword. Paul went through all these things. Paul knew what it was to be shipwrecked.

He knew what it was to have no clothes, to have no food. He knew what it was to be stoned. He knew what it was to be hated. He was beaten up so often because he loved the Lord Jesus Christ.

He knew about all these things personally. He's not writing about somebody else. He's not writing about theories. He's writing from personal experience. Yes, this is by inspiration of God.

But Paul could identify and he could give us amen to it. And he says, I know, it's true. I've been persecuted. And that doesn't separate from the love of Christ. I've gone through all kinds of danger.

[15:29] That doesn't separate from the love of Christ. I've gone long enough without food and without drink. That doesn't separate from the love of Christ. In fact, these things have heightened and intensified.

And so there are, as we see, this list. And then it goes on and says, And for your sake, we have been killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep for the slaughter. And again, from the dawn of history, that's how it has been for the Christian church. It's a mystery, isn't it? Persecution and slaughter have accompanied the Christian faith right from the day of Abel. The second person born into this world was put to death because of his love for the Lord. It's not an extraordinary statistic. That's why Abel was killed. Because God accepted his sacrifice. And Cain, in a fit of jealousy and rage, because God had accepted, Abel killed him. [16:40] And right on down to this present day, hundreds, thousands, we believe millions, have been put to death for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's an extraordinary thing. Is there anything that has been more persecuted? Any people that have been more persecuted down throughout the history? You look even at God's people, the Jews. You look at the history of the Jew, and it's quite extraordinary. you follow the likes of Pharaoh in Egypt, and you follow through all the different subsequent reigns, and peoples, and kingdoms, and you see this persecution.

And then, of course, in New Testament times, the incredible persecution of the Christian faith. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. And you know how helpless a sheep is. It's one of the most defenseless of all animals. And yet, the amazing thing is that the shepherd of the sheep became like one of the sheep. [17:52] That's the amazing thing. The shepherd who is usually there to defend the sheep, that's what the shepherd does. The shepherd feeds, the shepherd takes care of, the shepherd defends, the shepherd is different to the sheep, but the shepherd became, we could say, a sheep, or like a sheep.

He became one of us, and he also was slaughtered. But he was slaughtered in order to win life for the sheep.

And so the apostle is highlighting these great and wonderful truths. And then he goes on to say, knowing all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. That word, more than conquerors really is, that we are super conquerors, going on into this wonderful victory through him that loved us. And then, as we said earlier, of course, that love is the love that begins with the Lord.

It is him who has loved us. And we need to remember that, because maybe today you're saying, ah, but it's all very well talking about this love of Christ for me.

[19:09] But since I've become a Christian, look at my life. I've let the Lord down so often. Maybe he'll change his love. I read about people and I see about people and maybe you're saying it yourself, I've experienced in my own lifetime where I have fallen out of love.

What if the Lord is going to fall out of love with me? What if he's going to change his mind? Well, think about it for one moment.

If, how could the Lord stop loving you now when you're his child, when he loved you so much earlier on that he went to the cross and died for you?

When you were an enemy? When you were a stranger? When you were somebody who didn't want him? if the Lord did that for you, when you were an enemy of him, how much more is he going to continue to love you?

When you now are in his family? When you now are his child? And in a sense that is something of the apostle's own argument. And then Paul goes on and he says, for I am sure, and he finishes off with 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.

[20:51] Now when Paul says, I am persuaded, or I am sure, when he says that, some people say, ah, but that's Paul talking. that's not about me, that's Paul talking.

This is a personal thing for Paul, and it's all very well reading about that, but what about me? No, it's not Paul talking personally. Though he says, I am sure, he goes on to say, it's not, if he was talking personally, he would finish off by this, not anything else in all creation will be able to separate me from the love of God.

That's what Paul would say, if he was talking personally just about himself, that's how he would finish, shall be able to separate me from the love of God. So you see, he's not talking personally, or

just about himself.

He's talking, yes, about himself and about all other believers. Separate us, is what he says. And we've got to remember that when we look at this, this is for us all.

And so Paul then explores, having looked at these awful things in this world, things like persecution and danger and famines and nakedness and the sword, all these things, he then moves into other dimensions of life, of death.

[22 : 16] He moves into the realms of the supernatural, into height, he covers everything that's out there in the whole universe. Here we are in little planet Earth.

what all's out there? Well, it doesn't matter, says the apostle. It doesn't matter what beings, it doesn't matter what angelic beings, it doesn't matter what powers from darkness, from the depth, might be there.

None of these things, nothing, anywhere, in all the universe, whether it is a physical power, whether it is a spiritual power, whether it is in the realms of light or in darkness, Paul says, and remember, this is not just his own conclusion, it is a conclusion that is because Paul is writing under inspiration, I am persuaded, I am sure, he says, personally assured, and God is giving him these words to say, this is how it definitely is, that there is nothing anywhere that will separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Let us remember, this is the only place where the love of God is truly discovered, it is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. My dear friend, if you are here today, as we begin another year, and you are still without the Lord Jesus Christ, as your own Saviour, you know, the solemn thing is, that you cannot, as things stand at this moment, take these wonderful verses to your shelf, because it's only in Christ that you can.

We are talking here about Christ's love to his own children. But the thing is, you can do something about it, right here, right now, and you go to the Lord and you say to him, Lord, I need this security, I need this protection, I need this love, I need, Lord, to belong to you, because as you journey through this world, and as we were saying to the young people today, we don't know what the future holds, none of us do, but we know who holds the future.

[24 : 42] May you say, Lord, I want to put my life, I want to put my all into the Lord who holds the future. Will you take my life today?

Will you ask him to do that? To become your king, to become your lord, to become the ruler of your life? And if you do, my dear friend, if you seek him truly with all your heart, you will find him.

And then these glorious verses will be you, this will be your experience, and then you'll be able to say, who will separate me from the love of Christ?

And you can go through all these things and say, no, nothing, nobody, anywhere, ever, can separate me from the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a wonderful thing it is to be able to go forward into the unknown, trusting in this Lord and this God. Let us pray. God is a God *résolve* Ro is a God