

No Charges

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back again to the chapter we read in Romans 8, and in that final section, which is, I suppose, one of the most familiar of all Paul's writings, but in verse 33, Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

I suppose the problem of assurance is one of the things that troubles the Christian most of all.

Am I saved or am I not? And I think one of the great problems that we face is that so often we look inside.

We just look at ourselves, and we look at how we are, and how we're thinking, and our attitude to things, and the place that we have or give to the world. There are just so many questions that we begin to formulate within our minds, and we sometimes say to ourselves, am I really a Christian?

Well, one of the things that the Bible does is the Bible seeks to assure us, seeks to assure all believers that they are actually believers.

[1 : 20] God doesn't want us as a heavenly Father to be questioning all the time as to whether he loves us or not. And this is one of the great themes of Paul's writings, and particularly here in this particular chapter.

Now, in the previous verse, or in verse 31, the question is asked, what shall we say to these things? And we find, if God is for us, who can be against us?

And that's an amazing thought, because here is the living and true God, the God of heaven and earth, the creator God, the God of majesty and glory, the God of all power, the God who brought this universe into being.

And when we even stop and reflect on what this universe is and what science has helped us to understand of it, as it's even space is explored more and more, and we come to understand even just a little of the mysteries of the depths of the ocean and of the formation of just what this world is, it brings us often just to stop in awe and to reflect upon how great God is.

And this is a God who brought into being by the word of his power. And the question is being asked, if God is for us, who can be against us?

[2 : 51] And that is so true, because there is no other force. In fact, you could gather all the forces of this world collectively, and they couldn't come anywhere near the power and the majesty and the glory of God.

So Paul is here saying, if God is for us, who can be against us? But then he argues from this by showing that God, if he's trying to prove to us what God did for us, because he argues from, we've looked at this before, verse 32, so I'm not going to spend any time on that, but he's arguing from the greater to the lesser, from the greatest to the lesser.

Because what he is saying is, if God, he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all.

Now that's an extraordinary thing. Here's God the Father, who loved his son with an infinite holy love. His son was his eternal delight.

And yet, he didn't spare him. He didn't hold him back. But he gave him up for us. As a believer today, that is what God did for you.

[4 : 16] He gave his son up to, we know all what happened to him. He gave him up to betrayal, false accusations, to beatings, and to eventual death.

And that shows us what he has already done for us. And that's Paul's argument of, if the Father did that with the darling of his bosom, as he has often been described as the one whose great delight was in, if he did that for you and for me, how will he not also freely give us all things?

And so it's quite an extraordinary thing. But then the apostle asks a question. And he says, Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

Now again, that's quite a searching question, that. But first of all, let us look at what the Christian has termed here, God's elect.

And Paul, of course, as we're saying, there's a great theme of assurance. And this word elect is something that really, really, really encourages us.

[5 : 37] See, back in verse 29, the apostle says, For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined. Now, in the Old Testament, the foreknowing of God isn't so much talking about his omniscience, of his where he knows absolutely everything.

God knows everything from start to finish. He knows every conceivable thing about everybody. That's what we term his omniscience. He's all-wise, all-knowing.

But in the Old Testament, this foreknowledge tended to speak more of his choosing beforehand, of where God is setting his love upon a person.

And, you know, that's one of the wonderful things is that we are here today, if you're here as a believer, you are here because God set his love upon you.

God chose you. God elected you. And I find these thoughts or these statements awesome, but also inspirational.

[6 : 46] And it's an amazing thought that this God who's of infinite wisdom, who is all-wise, as we say, who knows absolutely everything. Remember what it tells us in the Word, that a thousand years are as yesterday when it has passed with him.

A thousand years. If you go back a thousand years, you'll be, I suppose, back into the days of the Battle of Hastings and 1066, or roughly around about that kind of period, and think of all that has happened since.

If you're asked to talk about your yesterday, even if your memory is getting, like my own, getting pretty bad, you can still remember quite a lot about yesterday, about the comings and goings and this and that, the sights, the sounds of it.

And if somebody said, tell me all that happened to you yesterday, you'd be able to tell quite a lot, because it is still relatively fresh in your memory. But for many of our yesterdays throughout our life, it's now a blur.

Most of it we can't remember. But for the Lord, like a thousand years, is like a yesterday with us. In fact, that's only giving us a little, it's trying to help us to understand a little, because he remembers every detail of every moment.

[8 : 13] So you see that God isn't dwelling in the time of how we are. He is in eternity. But he, it's this incredible expanse where he knows the end from the beginning.

And again, we can't understand all these things. But this all-knowing, all-wise God has set his love upon us.

And I find that just so wonderful. Because here is where we get our assurance. Because if you're like me, maybe there are times when you think, and you say to yourself, yes, I'm a Christian, but did I start right?

Have you ever, have you ever asked that question? Have you ever asked that question of yourself? Did I, did I start right? Was it, was it because of something that happened in my life? And was it just some kind of wee experience that I had?

Did I just decide on a whim to begin to follow the Lord? Maybe, maybe my foot isn't properly upon the rock that is Christ.

[9 : 26] And lots of us can have all these kind of questions, can come before us from time to time. But the fact the Bible shows us that it's the other way around.

We are now following the Lord because he first loved us. He was the initiator. He was the initiator before ever you were.

But he saw you from all eternity and knew all about you and knows the duration of your days. He knew the date of your birth and he also knows the date of your death.

All things are known to him. Quite extraordinary. But he set his love upon you. That's why you're following.

Not because of your own initiative or just the fact that you decided one day and say, well, you know, I'm going to try Christianity. I've tried lots of other things. Or maybe it was some just a maybe almost like a whim.

[10 : 26] You've got all kinds of thoughts going through your mind. But we're following him. We follow him because he first loved us. He chose us. Now some people say, don't start talking about election because that's going to absolutely throw people.

Do you mean to say that the way to be saved is only if we're elected? Well, the Bible writers weren't afraid to use the word elect or election because the great Apostle Peter he talks and he writes and he preaches about election and yet thousands were saved under his preaching.

Here is the Apostle Paul who is talking to us about election and about the believer being elect and when Paul was asked in the jail in Philippi what must I do to be saved?

He didn't turn around to the Philippian jailer and say, well, you know, if you're elect you're going to be okay but if you're not elect well, you've had it. No. Paul very simply tells him the gospel.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. That's it. So this is part of what the Bible emphasizes and Jesus as much as anybody emphasized the importance of our own responsibility.

[11 : 50] Ask, seek, all these things ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.

So often we find the command given to us. We are to search. In fact, the one thing with regard to our salvation and the use of election, do you know what it says?

Make your calling and election sure. It's your responsibility. You make sure you knock on heaven's door. You keep asking. You keep pleading.

And the promise is that if you seek you will find. If you ask you will receive. Jesus himself said, all that the father hath given me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Not one person that ever comes to me will I turn away. So, this word election or being elect is one of great assurance because I'm sure you can, as I say, you can look in and see all the faults and failings within your life.

[13 : 01] But when you come to God's word it tells us that we are following the Lord because he was the one who began that work within us. And so the question here is who shall bring or who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

Now we've got to almost imagine that we're in a courtroom here because this is all this word being just and justified and the whole idea of justice comes from the law court.

And we're aware that in this world we have an accuser who is constantly accusing us. It's one of the things we're told in Revelation that the time will come for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before God day and night.

Lots of things don't understand that are happening but it would appear that one of the things that Satan does is he accuses us before God.

That there is some way that Satan is able to bring all our faults and our failings and who we are and all the wrong of our life and bring it before God.

[14 : 21] God because we find the conversation between Satan and God in the book of Job which is quite a remarkable thing. And Satan is bringing accusations against Job.

So we see from the word of God that there is this way in which there is I cannot understand in what way it happens but in the spirit world that there are these accusations being leveled against the believer before God.

And of course we know this is one of the great things that not one accusation that is ever leveled against us will actually stick. Now that's extraordinary because you know as you look at your own life and as I look at my life and when you see this who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

You'd say to yourself loads of people can bring charges against me. Not just Satan but loads of people because you just look at your life and you look at all the things that you've done wrong and all the things that you've thought that are wrong your attitudes to people you just go through your whole life and there's just so much that is wrong.

In fact we only have a little glimpse of all that to us just how wrong we actually are it would unhinge your reason it would unhinge your minds.

[15 : 55] So there are so many accusations that can be leveled against us but the wonderful thing is that not one charge that is brought against us will stick not one it's not incredible not one ever will stick how is that because God is the one who justifies and how does he do that well this is what's quite remarkable God deals with us according to his law remember God is a law giver and God gave us his law to live by we rebelled at the very beginning and we've rebelled ever since and so we are breaking the law every single day day night day night the law has been broken and God deals with us according to the law but what did he do because he is just he sent his son the

Lord Jesus Christ into this world to stand as our representative and to take upon himself what we deserved all all all the curse of the law was placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ so God can continue to be just because he has to deal with us according to the law Jesus Christ upheld the law gave perfect obedience to the law all the time but became was made under the law for us and carried the sentence that should have been put upon us upon himself and so that is how we are now justified that is how we are clear and it's an amazing expression it is God who justifies going back to the law court this is exactly how it is by the law says you're guilty you're guilty all the way through and you know what your sentence should be your sentence should be banishment from the presence of

God forever your sentence should be cast into hell that's what the Bible tells us but here's the law court and God says no you're free to go you're a free man see justification doesn't affect our nature as it were it affects our standing with God how do I stand with God how is my standing with God well in Jesus Christ because of what Jesus Christ has done my standing is clear and that's why God says you're just now it's not because of anything I have done but it's all because of what Jesus has done and that's the amazing thing and so it is God who justifies and when he justifies of course he pardons us all our sin you know that it's one of the amazing things that happened when the moment that we are born again the moment we regenerate it we are justified we are just in the presence of

God and he has lifted from us our sin he's pardoned there's a lot of beautiful descriptions in the Bible of what God does with our sin he blots it out that's one of the descriptions it's like you take a sponge and the way long ago they used to write and the way to remove what was written was with a sponge and that's the idea that it's washed away so there's not even a trace God says I have cast your sins behind my back when you put something behind your back it is in order that you don't see it again I have cast your sins into the depths of the sea if you wanted to get rid of something you would go probably into the deepest part and let it down so that it still divers still searching trying to find this and that sometimes wreckage of this and wreckage of that the oceans are so deep so mysterious well it's like

God is saying I'm getting rid of I'm putting your sin into the depths of the sea so that your sins and your iniquities is I will remember no more it's not an amazing statement from God I will remember we've said this in the Bible it is in order to take action against or about so when he says I will remember your sins no more he's saying I will take no action against your sins anymore why because I have already taken action against my son Jesus bore all your sin and God is so just that he will not punish someone twice you have been set free but in this justification of being justified it isn't simply that your sin has been pardoned that you're free to go but an amazing extra transaction takes place you as

[21 : 33] God looks upon you you're standing this is remember regarding your standing before God you are now as righteous as Jesus now again you might be saying to yourself oh I don't feel that no you don't because you're a sinner and we're still sinners and at one level in this world we'll never be as righteous as Jesus with regard to our inward being although there will come a day when we will be when Jesus as the redeemer as our redeemer and we are in his presence we're told we shall see him as he is and we will be like him isn't that incredible but that's not yet there's a work going on at the moment where the Lord is he's working within us that's going into the whole realms of sanctification but here is we've been made righteous this transaction took place where the sin has been removed and the righteousness of

Christ there's that word imputed has been put to our account and as God looks on the sinner he looks at you and me through the finished work of Jesus it's beautiful and that's how he looks at us today now again this is where Satan will come and he brings up he loves to drag up all our past not so much our past before being a Christian but our past since becoming a Christian he drags it all up and he'll say look at this that's going to bring you down see what you did you're finished this is why we have to come back to God's word and we have to say to him this is what God's word says who will bring any charge against God's elect need to God's believe not

God's will stick because it's God who justifies and that's why this section in Romans is just so rich in giving us the assurance that we need as we go through life But of course the all important thing that we have to ask ourselves is this.

Do I know today myself what it is to have God as the one who has justified me? Am I free in God's sight today?

Am I somebody who has been set free? Has the Lord in this divine courtroom as it were pronounced over me free to go?

[24 : 25] You know there is going to come a day when we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. And it is a solemn thought. It is an inescapable fact. But every single one of us will one day have to be there.

But as it is put beautifully in our short catechism summing up the scripture. On that day it says of the believer that they will be openly acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment.

Isn't that beautiful? Openly. Before everyone. Acknowledged as mine. That is where the Lord will say he, she, my portion.

And they are acquitted. In other words you enter. It is not walk free as such. It is we are told we will enter into the joy of the Lord. The question for you today though is do you know that freedom?

Do you know that liberty? Do you know that peace of conscience that comes through having your sins forgiven? Do you know that peace of conscience? Do you know that peace of conscience? Because if not, you are all on your own.

[25 : 31] And this world as we know, although there are many great blessings in this world, it is a dangerous place. And it is a world that is growing more and more uncertain.

And a world that we know is at enmity with God. But you know if all we have is this world, then death becomes an awful place.

Because we have nothing, there is no comfort, there is no assurance. And so death is something, you know for the believer, for the unbeliever going through death, they have to go through it all on their own.

But for the believer, they are never on their own. Not for one moment. In death you have to leave loved ones behind.

They can't stop you going. And there comes this point where there is the separation. And even your body, it is going to die.

[26 : 34] Physically, that is it. But your soul goes on. And in Jesus Christ, Jesus has a hold of you. And he takes you to be with himself.

Where I go, that is what he tells us. That he will come again and receive us to himself. Well, what about you today? It is a challenge.

Are you going to just say, well, I am going to have to see about this sometime. Or are you going to face up to it just now and say, you know this, I need the Lord.

This makes so much sense. It must be wonderful to know that I can know that my sins are forgiven. That I can know that the Father in heaven is my Father.

That I can be safe and assured. Well, today, the Lord is offering you this. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we give thanks for the great assurance that your word gives.

[27 : 39] Help us to appreciate and marvel at the glory and the wonder of your grace. We pray that we may hear what you say to us. And that you will bless us, body, mind, and soul.

Bless our families and all whom we love. Watch over us, Lord, and do us good. Bless a cup of tea and coffee in the hall afterwards. And take away from our sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm 73. Psalm 73 and at verse 23. Psalm 73 and at verse 23.

This is a Scottish psalter, sorry. 23 to 26. Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee.

Thou dost me hold by my right hand and still upholdest me. Thou with thy counsel while I live wilt me conduct and guide. And to thy glory afterward receive me to abide.

[28 : 46] Whom have I in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone? And in the earth whom I desire, besides thee there is none. My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.

For of my heart God is a strength and portion forever. 23 to 26, Psalm 73. Nevertheless, continue. O Lord, I am with thee.

Never the less continuing. O Lord, I am with thee.

The Lord, I am with thee. Thou must be hope by my right hand and still ■■■ ông Lord Lord Lord.

O Lord, let me Thou with Thy counsel While I live With me conduct and guide And to Thy glory Afterward Receive me to the light Who abide in the heavens high But Thee, O Lord, alone And in the earth

[30 : 48] Whom I desire Beside me there is none My precious heart Doth faint and fear But God doth fill me never For all my heart God is the strength And portion Forever Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore Amen Amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen