

Absolute Security

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: 04 January 2026

Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0 : 00] We can turn back to our reading in the book of Romans, chapter 8. Our focus this morning is going to be on the last section, as we have it from verse 31 down to the end of the chapter.

! There are a number of questions through this section, but it begins with a question.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? And then you see the conclusion in verse 38.

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The end of our year, the beginning of our new year, is always a time of reflection. We had that on Thursday as we gathered here as well for a time of worship. Thinking about who we have going ahead of us into this year.

[1 : 20] Do we have that King of Glory as Psalm 24 speaks about going ahead of us into this year? And I'm sure you've had these times of reflection in these past number of days yourselves, just thinking about the reality of the world in which we live, the reality of the gospel which we hear, the reality of eternity, the reality of life.

There's so many different things that can be going through our minds. But when we look around us, we see we live in a world that reviews things as well, but maybe reviews them in a different way to the way that we do.

It's very common at the end of every year to see a review of the previous year. So a review of 2025 would be there on the television, in the newspapers, and even just in general conversations going on around us.

And as you look back over 2025, as you look at various reviews that have taken place, so much of it focuses on bad news, on the things that are going wrong and concerning in this world.

You think of reviews of the year past, how there's been conflicts in different parts of the world. Whether it's the Middle East or Ukraine or India, Pakistan, and we're seeing even going into this new year tensions there between America and Venezuela as well.

[2 : 39] They seem to be always around us. And you see it too in terms of natural disasters that have happened over the last year, devastation caused in so many different parts of the world.

And even as we look at our own nation and our own communities, we see various challenges as we look back over the past year, difficulties and trials that we all have day to day.

You think of some people reporting what we have seen as good news to many, when the last year, 2025, was the warmest in UK history.

You think that's got to be good news, but then it causes concern. It can be seen as bad news because it means there's water shortage. This means that crops fail. It means that prices rise.

All of these things go on. And so we're looking at this review of the world in which we live in all the time. And what it's doing is reminding us of just how insecure we are as a people, how insecure our world is.

[3 : 41] When people look at life, when we look at life, we want to have that security. If you were to ask many people, what do you want for yourself?

What do you want for your family? Safety, peace, security. These are all things that come to the forefront of our thinking. But the question is, how?

How can we have that security? How can we have that peace? How can we find that real hope? Not just for today, but for the future. Not just for a new year ahead of us, but for all our days ahead of us.

Where can I find this security? Well, as we turn to this passage in Romans 8, it's one of the most reassuring passages for many people.

Reassuring, not just in the sense that it's well known, but reassuring because of what it says to us. It speaks to us of a great security that we can find.

[4 : 45] It speaks to believers and saying, look, if you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have this great hope. You have this great security.

It's good news. And even if you're not at this stage trusting, even if you're seeking or even not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, like I said to the children, in some ways that's bad news, but here is good news that speaks into your situation as well.

It is the gospel that we need. It is the word that we need. And the word, there's so much that leaves us amazed in this passage.

So many different things that it says to us. But today I just want to focus on what our security is in that sense of, is it in that Lord Jesus Christ?

Is it good news for you or is it bad news when it says nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Is that good news?

[5 : 45] Is that your security or is that what you're longing for? This passage speaks, yes, looking back, but it also speaks looking forward as well.

And that's the way we live too. We're always maybe looking ahead to things too. We want to have that hope. And we always start a new year with that sense of positivity. Things will be better.

Things will be different in this coming year. And we could ask, what excites you about 2026? What are you looking forward to in 2026? What are you anticipating? There'll be many people who have lots of different things that excite looking ahead too.

But the greatest thing that could excite us and challenge us is, well, do we know this Lord with us going into it? The love of God that we see in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

And in verse 31, you have a real challenging question. If God is for us, who can be against us?

[6 : 51] Imagine God against us in 2026. Imagine God against us.

Imagine God against us. But seeing it in the light of what it says. If God is for us, well, who or what can be against us? There is where we find our security.

And so Paul in this section has a lot of questions being asked. We're going to look at two of these questions in particular. But then at the end, he has a confident statement about where security is found and what this security means.

And we're going to look at it first under the first question. And we have this in verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

God's chosen people. Who will bring any charge against God's chosen people? God's elect.

[8 : 20] So many people live in this world with a false sense of security. Feeling untouchable to the things that are eternal.

Feeling so we can just carry on as we are and nothing's going to make a difference to us. We're going to have this security in life. We're going to have all that we need. We've got everything that we need in this world.

But without Christ, it's nothing. And again and again we're reminded of how quickly this changes. There's a book called *At Dawn We Slept*.

And it recounts the events of the attack on Pearl Harbor on the 7th of December 1941 during the Second World War. I'm sure many of you will have heard of Pearl Harbor.

You'll have seen the movie. It recounts an event that people never saw coming. And what this book, part of this book says, recounting those events was, a Japanese attack on Hawaii is regarded as the most unlikely thing in the world.

[9 : 29] With one chance in a million of being successful. Besides having more powerful defenses than any other post under the American flag, it is protected by distance.

This was how they viewed the situation in Hawaii. An attack unlikely. Highly unlikely. The most unlikely thing in the world.

And that's why the book's called *At Dawn We Slept*. Because people were in their beds, sleeping, quite comfortable and at peace when these events unfolded. And many thousands lost their lives.

False security. They didn't see an attack coming. And yet that's how so many people live in this world. Sleeping peacefully, thinking nothing's going to touch me.

Eternity doesn't matter. And yet so quickly things can change. So where do we find security? Well, it is in God alone.

[10 : 32] If God is for us, who can be against us? And Paul here in these verses, he's wanting us to be realizing a real sense of God's love for his people.

God's everlasting love. So much of it goes beyond our understanding and our comprehension at times. But he wants us to know it.

And as we go into this new year, it's to know this more and more that we should desire. To know this grace, to be assured of it. Because we can struggle.

We struggle with assurance. We struggle with being aware just fully of God's love. And you can fear God rejecting you.

That God won't be for us or for you or for me. That he will condemn us. And yet what we see here is, as he asks this question, who shall bring any charge against God elect?

[11 : 38] It is God who justifies. Who is it to condemn? Who is it to condemn us if God is for us? Nobody can. Because it is God who justifies.

And he's saying, the question in verse 31, what shall we say to these things? It is in light of being justified with God. You see it in verse 30.

Those whom he predestined, he called. Those whom he called, he justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. There is great confidence in these words.

So what do we say to these things? Well, who can bring a charge against God elect? Nobody. Because it is God who justifies. Who can condemn?

Not when we're in Christ Jesus. So what we have to ask in the midst of all our insecurity, all our uncertainties is, What does Scripture say?

- [12 : 40] What does the Bible say? If we feel insecure and uncertain, what does Scripture say? Well, it says, He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us.
- Isn't that wonderful? That we have been given a Savior in Christ Jesus. So who is it that can condemn? When you go back to verse 1 of chapter 8.
- We didn't read it, but these words, I'm sure many of you know them. Verse 1 of chapter 8. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- How can this be? How can we have this security? Well, it's because Christ Jesus has paid the price.
- Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who is raised. Who is at the right hand of God and who is interceding for us. He is our security.
- [13 : 46] If we put our trust in him, there is no condemnation. One commentator uses this illustration. He uses the illustration of a mountain climber.
- And the mountain climber who is tied to his guide by a rope. And the mountain climber being insecure, being unfamiliar with his surroundings, is trying to climb this mountain and very often falling off.
- But he's being held all the time by the rope that's tied to his guide. So he doesn't fall. And what he says is, this is the way we are with Christ.
- Christ who is our guide. Christ who we are in and secure in. Though we are slipping, though we are stumbling, we are secure to him through his love for us.
- The one who died for us. The one who rose again. The one who is at the right hand of God. The one who is interceding for you, even as you pray. The one who is on your side.
- [14 : 52] So we have this security there in Christ Jesus. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- So who shall bring any charge against God's elect? Who can condemn them? There is no condemnation when we are in Christ Jesus.
- The second thing we see is in verse 35 to verse 37. Verse 35 begins with a question there as well. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
- There are so many situations in life where we can think, well, the world is in chaos. The world is falling apart. It's as if the devil is winning the battle.
- Everything seems to be going against the Christian faith. It can be easy to feel alone, defeated in situations where hope, security, and these things seems far away.
- [15 : 56] But there is hope for us. And there is real hope for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Well, we see, as we were reflecting on New Year's Day, life is so often like a journey.
- We make our way through life. And even as we think of going into this year ahead, we see that it will be a journey that we go on in many different trials and tribulations that come our way.
- And verse 35 outlines that for us. Tribulations, distress, persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword. There are all these things going on in the lives of the people in Paul's day as they are in our own day.
- All these worries, all these fears. And the scripture, when we think, what does the word of God say? Well, it says this is the reality of the world in which we live.
- Jesus has told us so. In John 16, verse 33, Jesus spoke and said, In this world you will have trouble. So the scripture tells us we will have trouble.
- [17 : 06] But in John there, Jesus goes on to say, But take heart. I have overcome the world. He doesn't say you will overcome the world.

He doesn't say you will get through this in your own strength. All these tribulations, distresses, persecutions, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword.

It's not a case of you will get through, but he has overcome. He has dealt with it. And so, this is a trying journey.

This is a difficult journey. But it's also a triumphant journey when we are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are more than conquerors, he goes on to say.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors. Not through our strength, but through him.

[18 : 06] Through him who loved us. Through him who loved us. Do we have that confidence?

Do we have that security? Do we have that assurance? All these questions that we might have about what's going on around us, as we review a year, as we look ahead to a new one.

All the worries, all the anxieties that we have. But all of these things, tribulations, distress, persecution, so on. What shall separate us?

Or who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Will any of these things? Well, Paul says no. None of these things.

When we are trusting in him. Because in all these things, we are more than conquerors. In this world, you will have many troubles.

[19 : 12] But take heart, I have overcome the world. So we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Good news or bad news?

What side are you on? Think of being at the ferry. There's two different kinds of people you often see waiting at the ferry.

You have those who are booked, waiting to go on. You have those who are on standby, wondering if they'll get on.

And when you look at them, they are dealing with the situation quite differently. Booked to go on? Relaxed. Sitting quite at ease, quite peacefully, waiting just to go on board.

Reading a paper. Chatting away. Those on standby. Those on standby. Those on standby. Looking more worried. More anxious. Counting the cars ahead of them.

[20 : 19] Wondering, will they get on? Will they be there? Phoning or texting people saying, we're on standby. We're not sure if we're going to get on. Maybe trying to make alternative arrangements.

What side are you on? Somebody asked the question. If you knew that in 15 minutes you would have to stand in judgment before the Holy God and learn your eternal destiny, what would your reaction be?

What side are you on? Are you in the lane that's booked, trusting in the Lord, quite at ease?

Your trust is in him who has made you more than a conqueror. Who has overcome the world for you. Or are you in the lane that's standby, wondering, will I get on?

Will I get in? Will he welcome me? Or will he say, depart from me, I knew you not. What side are you on? Is this good news or bad news?

[21 : 37] Well, to have it as good news is to know Christ. To know that we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Nothing if we are trusting in him. So there are these questions. And there's lots of them. We could look at other questions that Paul has here as well.

But these two give us enough to make us think, well, what are we doing? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

What side are we on? Well, Paul reminds us of the side that we need to be on with his statement in verse 38 and 39.

And this is our great security. 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.

[22 : 51] The questions end.

This is our God. This is our God who has remembered us. Who is assuring us that nothing will be able to separate us from his love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do we react in the same way today? Do these words astound you? Do these words remind you of what you have in Christ or what you need in Christ?

Are you assured by them? Or do you doubt them? Again, what side are you on? David Hume, who was a philosopher back in the 18th century and very much against the Christian faith.

There is a story recounted of him once meeting a friend who was hurrying along the streets in London. And he stopped him and asked him, where are you going? In such a rush.

[24 : 14] And the friend replied, I'm going to hear George Whitefield preach. And David Hume said to his friend, but surely you don't believe what Whitefield preaches to you. And his friend replied, no I don't.

But he does. And because of the way he believed George Whitefield, this man was going to hear to see if it could possibly be true. Do we have that confidence?

Do we show that assurance? Do we believe what we hear in the word of God? Is this our great assurance? Is this our great security?

Paul's conclusion here is a personal remark, but it's also a remark that every believer should have. We can all take confidence, for I am sure that neither death nor life, nor any of these things.

Are you sure today? Is this your assurance? Is this your security? There's so many things listed here. There's things for today.

[25 : 21] There's things for eternity. There's things for time and things for the future. There's so many things. It's a long list of powers and rulers. Anything in all creation that comes against us.

But his greatest assurance is in Christ. None of these things will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Life brings so many challenges. Life brings so many temptations that come our way. C.H. Spurgeon once said, I am not so much afraid of dying as I am of sinning.

That is ten times worse than death. Life. Life cannot separate us from the love of God. Well, so many people let it.

Because, like you see in the parable of the Sower, the word that gets scattered and falls among the thorny ground. The worries and riches and pleasures of this life come up and choke it.

[26 : 30] Life has so many demands on us. Try and choke us. But Paul says, Trust in the Lord.

And life will not separate you from him. And death. Our greatest enemy in some ways. Our greatest fear for many.

When that time comes, what does it mean? Well, what does the word of God say? Not even death shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What security there are in these words. What confidence there are in these words.
Because we see it in Christ.

The one who came. Who died on the cross. But more than that, the one who is raised.
And is at the right hand of God. And who is indeed interceding for us.

[27 : 37] If God is for us. Who can be against us? Imagine going into this year. With God against you.

It will be a fearful thing. So why not go into the year. With God for you. And assured.

And secure. Because if God is for us. Who can be against us? And when we know that.
We know nothing.

Will separate us from the love of God. In Christ Jesus our Lord. May we find ourselves.
Secure in him.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God. We thank you. For your word. And when we have our doubts.

[28 : 34] When we have our fears. Help us to ask. What does your word say? For when we look to your word. We find there such. Confident assurance. If God is for us.

Who can be against us? And in this world. When we have so many difficulties. And trials.
When so many things. Seek to separate us. From the love of God. May we be able to find.

That there is nothing able to. Nothing can separate us. From the love of God. That is in
Christ Jesus our Lord. Lord. And so we ask. That we would be. More than conquerors.

Through him who loved us. Hear our prayers. Pardon our sin. As we ask all. In Jesus
name. Amen. We are going to conclude.

By singing to God's praise. In Psalm 46a. The sing Psalms version. Psalm 46a. We will
sing from verse 8 to 11.

[29 : 38] Page 60 of the psalm books. Come see the works. The Lord has done. The judgments.
He commands. The desolations. He has brought to pass.

In many lands. In every land. Throughout the earth. He makes all conflicts cease. He
shatters bow. And spear. And shield. And brings. His reign of peace. Be still.

And know that I am God. On earth. Exalted high. And all the nations. Of the world. My
name. Will glorify. Then we have that. Great assurance. In the last verse.

The Lord almighty. Is with us. To strengthen and sustain. For Jacob's God. Our strong
defense. And fortress. Will remain. We will sing. These verses.

At Tuna Stroudwater. We stand to sing. To God's praise. Amen. To God's praise. The
Lord has done, the judgment he commands, the desolations he has brought to pass in
many lands.

[31 : 02] In every land throughout the earth, he makes all concrete seas.

He shatters hope and fear and shield and brings his reign of peace.

Be still and know that I am God on every soul did I, and all the nations of the world, my
name will glorify.

The Lord Almighty is with us to strengthen and sustain.

For Jacob's God, our strong defense and mortals will remain.

[32 : 53] After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction. Let me
grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with
you all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.