

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

AUGUST 8 - 12, 2022



LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Pentecost Series
Jun 12 - Aug 14

MONDAY

Read **Romans 8:31-39**

Far too often, people read the Bible with all the enthusiasm they'd have if they were reading last week's news. They feel it sounds outdated, out of touch with real life. Yes, Scriptures were written many years ago in a very patriarchal farming society. However, the Bible is for all cultures and times—even our high-tech, digital environment. The truth of God's Word is the most challenging, the most dramatic, and the most comforting the world has ever known. If it doesn't *blow our socks off*, we're just not paying attention!

Paul's last paragraph in Romans 8 is just the place to find that challenge for your socks. James Montgomery Boice describes it as "the Everest of the letter and thus the highest peak in the highest Himalayan range in Scripture." If we have trusted Christ as Savior, we can rejoice that God has always known us. His love is eternal. His wisdom and power are sure. He will guide and protect us until we one day stand in His glorious presence.

Paul knows by personal experience that we, as believers, are going to face enduring opposition. So how can we, as Christ followers, endure suffering and opposition for the sake of the Gospel? Note Paul's repeated questions: "Who is against us?" (v. 31) "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" (v. 33) "Who is the one who condemns?" (v. 34) and "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (v.35)

He is applying the truths of Romans 8:28-30 to how we can stand firm in the face of trials, opposition and hardship. Paul wants every believer to say along with him, “Since God is for us, NO ONE can be against us.”

Probably none of us has been thrown into prison for our faith, but we may face ridicule from family and friends or discrimination at work. Jesus predicted that His message would cause families to be divided against one another and sometimes even one member betraying another unto death (Matthew 10:21-31; 34-38). So, we need to be prepared to endure opposition so that we can stand firm for the Gospel. To endure opposition, focus on God’s great love as seen in His greatest gift—His Son, our Lord and Savior!

QUESTIONS

When you read the Bible, what are your expectations? Contemplate your answer. How does knowing that God is for you affect your day-to-day life? How will you live out this truth this week?

PRAYERS

For Ethnos Asia Ministries (Based in Thailand)

Laos. Persecution is increasing among tribal peoples. New converts among the Klieng tribe have been forced out of their village and left with no reliable source of food, no belongings, and no shelter. Pray that the Lord will meet their needs and that they will continue to trust Him.

TUESDAY

Read **Romans 8:32**

“He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all— how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”
(Romans 8:32)

John Piper writes, “The most far-reaching promise of God’s future grace is found in Roman 8:32. This is the most precious verse in the Bible to me. Part of the reason is that the promise in it is so all-encompassing that it stands ready to help me at virtually every turn in my life and ministry. There never has been, and never will be, a circumstance in my life where this promise is irrelevant. ...

“[It] contains a foundation and guarantee that is so strong and so solid and so secure that there is absolutely no possibility that the promise could ever be broken. This is what makes it an ever-present strength in times of great turmoil. Whatever else gives way, whatever else disappoints, whatever else fails, this all-encompassing promise of future grace can never fail.”

This is not the prosperity gospel, where God promises to fulfill your “wants” as if He was a genie, “cosmic Santa Claus” or short-order cook. Rather, verse 32 promises that God will give you the grace you need to endure opposition and persecution when you stand for the Gospel. God has done the greatest, most loving, most awesome thing imaginable by sacrificing His own Son.

There are four principles to grasp about Christ's death that enhance our understanding of the Gospel:

1. Christ's death was divinely ordained as the solution to our sin and guilt (Acts 2:23; see also Isaiah 53:4, 6, 10).
2. Christ's death was substitutionary (2 Corinthians 5:21).
3. Christ's death was personal and effectual (John 6:39. Jesus says, "... of all that [the Father] has given Me, I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day" (John 17: 1-2, 9 and Romans 8:29-34) also reinforce the eternal security knowable only in Jesus Christ.
4. Christ's death supremely demonstrates God's love and grace for us sinners (John 3:16 and Galatians 3:13).

God will graciously supply us with all we need for life and godliness. We need only to receive it, making way for the Holy Spirit to do mighty works both in and through us.

QUESTIONS

How would you answer the question: What is the greatest thing God has done for you? How will you apply the truth in this verse to your life today?

PRAYERS

For Ethnos Asia Ministries (Based in Thailand)

Vietnam. Thank the Lord that despite the pandemic, Ethnos Asia was able to print and distribute Bibles to churches in the northern provinces. Many believers received a Bible in their own language for the first time. May they have a hunger for the Word and become effective Christians.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Romans 8:33**

Bold shall I stand in that great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully through these absolved I am,
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.
(Hymn: “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness”)

In his early days, before he had studied the Bible and had learned that God has made the righteousness of Jesus Christ available for those who trust Him, Luther feared for his soul. In the hymn “Great God, What Do I See and Hear” (known as “Luther’s Hymn”), this is the third verse about sinners who have not trusted in Christ:

But sinners, filled with guilty fears,
Behold His wrath prevailing.
For they shall rise and find their tears
And sighs are unavailing:
The day of grace is past and gone;
Trembling they stand before the throne,
All unprepared to meet Him.

This once reflected Luther’s fear, but he discovered that God had made a necessary preparation through the death of Jesus Christ. The grounds of confidence in our salvation can never be based on our works. Rather, Jesus died for sinners, and the righteousness in which believers are enabled to stand in the day of God’s judgement

is His righteousness that is imputed (credited) to us, if we are Christians. That is our security: the work of Jesus Christ and that ALONE. The final verse of “Luther’s Hymn” declares:

Great God, what do I see and hear!
The end of things created!
The Judge of mankind doth appear,
On clouds of glory seated!
Beneath His cross I view the day
When Heav’n and earth shall pass away
And thus prepare to meet Him.

One day you will have to meet God. Who will save you in that day if God Himself is not your Savior? If you are not in Christ, in that day you will find God to be a stern, unyielding, righteous Judge. But this is not that day, but the day of God’s grace. Trust Him. If you do, you will enter a salvation that neither earth nor hell can shake and that God Himself has made secure. Do you know the Savior and His redemption? Do you know any others who may not?

QUESTIONS

What are your thoughts and expectations about eternity with God? What do you look forward to most?

PRAYERS

For Ethnos Asia Ministries (Based in Thailand)

Thailand. Christian leaders have the vision to plant churches in all twenty provinces in Northeast Thailand. They are committing themselves to intercede for the people there. Pray for them to seek the Lord’s wisdom and power to do the work, to use the most effective strategy, and to persevere in the task.

THURSDAY

Read **Romans 8: 35-37; 2 Corinthians 11:16-33**

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.” (Romans 8:37)

Our understanding and interpretation of difficulties determines our response to them. If we believe we deserve God giving us nothing but a smooth, relatively pain-free life, always on the upward path of greater success, we'll be devastated when we experience inevitable troubles. “Hey,” we wonder, “what’s this about? Why me, God?” Unrealistic expectations inevitably lead to resentment, and soon our hearts become cool toward God, our spirits disillusioned by setbacks.

In this oddly triumphant passage, Paul doesn't shrink from the fact that following Christ in a fallen world sometimes includes genuine, meaningful suffering. In fact, his list of troubles (v. 35; 2 Corinthians 11:16-33) covers the spectrum from general distress to the point of a sword. Don't be surprised, Paul reminds us, when you encounter problems; and don't forget God's enduring presence and love amidst such challenges, either.

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate a believer from the personal attention and deep love of Christ. When we're being beaten up (whether with words or “rods”), Christ's compassion only intensifies. When we are wise enough to realize that difficulties do not mean God that doesn't care, we'll trust Him in the middle of our darkest nights, the most threatening days, and the most painful seasons.

When we trust God during difficulties, we don't just grit our teeth and hang on until the pain stops. More than ever before, we are to trust in His wisdom to guide us, His presence to comfort us, His love to empower us, and His strength to support us. Instead of barely making it, we become "*more than conquerors*." Our interpretation of the problem, though, is the key that unlocks our response.

Are you living like a "conqueror"? Not in a forceful, demanding, aggressive way, but as one knowing that Jesus has defeated sin and death along with their consequences. Sometimes I find myself projecting more as one "conquered" than a believer trusting fully in the Conqueror. But I do well when seeking Him in such times, enabling the Spirit to remind me that the victory was won on Calvary's cross nearly 2,000 years ago. Claim the victory by embracing the Victor as your Savior!

QUESTIONS

When you experience difficulties, how do you interpret the situation? How realistic are your expectations? What would it look like for you to be "more than a conqueror" in difficult times in your life?

PRAYERS

For Ethnos Asia Ministries (Based in Thailand)

Bangladesh. Ethnos Asia sponsors Deborah Seminars to empower women for effective ministry in their churches and communities. Four local women are now in charge of Deborah training in Bangladesh. They held seminars in three villages in 2021, attended by 129 women from 14 churches. In turn, these women will conduct training for women in other churches.

FRIDAY

Read **Romans 8:38-39**

“I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

Nagging doubts and anxieties can rob us of peace. Some of us are sensitive and reflective, more susceptible to a questioning ember flaming into an inferno of doubt. We wonder, “Did I do the right thing? Did I do enough? Do the problems I am facing show that God is angry with me? Has God turned His back on me? Will I ever feel confident again?”

Romans 8 is one of the most encouraging chapters in all of Scripture. It begins with the promise of “no condemnation” (v. 1) by God, and it ends with the promise of “no separation” (v. 39) from God. He holds us tightly and lovingly in His hands, and He never lets go. Jesus says the same to us in John 10:28-29: “I give [My sheep] eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand ... [and] no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” Reinforcing this point, Paul provides a list of physical, spiritual, and temporal boundaries that cannot block God’s transcendent love for us. No matter what we face, no matter where we go, no matter what powers are lined up against us, no created thing can come between us and the all-encompassing, never-ending love of God.

One of the most wonderful feelings in the world is profound relief from doubts and anxieties—the “rest” that Jesus promises when we follow Him (Matthew 11:28). This rest is not sleepy inactivity nor smug detachment, but the comfort we can know only in the Comforter. We can trust in the greatness and grace of God. If we live long enough, even the most stout-hearted believer will have doubts. Everywhere today we are bombarded with news that can prompt and promote anxieties. However, Paul’s summary reminds us that when everything else around us crumbles we can stand firm, knowing that the love of God never fails.

Whom can you share these verses with as they face enduring opposition, doubts about God, or increasing anxiety? To whom will you bring Christ’s comfort today?

QUESTIONS

When were you (or are you) tempted to doubt God’s love for you?
What does His promise mean to you?

PRAYERS

For Ethnos Asia Ministries (Based in Thailand)

Afghanistan. As Afghanistan fell back into the hands of the Taliban in August 2021, the Afghan church came under fire. Most believers are Muslim converts, predominantly aged 40 and under. It’s a fast-growing church, current estimates range from 2,000 to 12,000 believers. Pray for courage and protection for them.

Sources

- James Montgomery Boice, *Romans (Volume 2): The Reign of Grace: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 952.
- John Piper, “God’s Best Promise” Devotional Series on Romans: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/gods-best-promise>.
- Hymn: “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness.” Author, Ludwig von Zinzendorf, 1739; John Wesley, translator; St. Crispin, tune.
- Hymn: “Great God, What Do I See and Hear?” (Known as “Luther’s Hymn.”) Author, possibly Bartholomaeus Ringwaldt, 1556.

