

God Is For Us! ... Romans 8:31-39

(Introduction adapted from "God Is For Us!" by Nickolas Kooi @ SermonCentral.Com)

The message of salvation is the most important thing that we will ever hear in our lives. It is also something that we are called to share as well.

- So how would you summarize the Gospel message in just one sentence?
- What words or phrases might you use?
- What things would you mention?

Think about this for a few seconds. How would you summarize the Gospel message?

(pause)

Got an idea of what you might say? Now let me throw a wrench in it. Shorten what you came up with. Use the least amount of words as possible to convey the Gospel message. What would you say then?

(take another few seconds and try this).

Could you do it? As Paul finishes Romans 8, he summarizes the Gospel message in just four small, simple words.

God is for us!

He chose "**God...is...for...us!**" While these are just four small words, Together they make a loaded phrase. For they are not only the summary of the Gospel, but also the summary of the first eight chapters of Romans. They are also the theme for today's text. **This morning, Paul tells us what the summary "God is for us" means for our lives.**

Paul writes, "*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*" **What are these things?** These things are everything that he was written about in Romans so far.

The righteous will live by faith
God justifies those who come to Him in faith
We have peace with God
We are freed from slavery and empowered to live

- Paul began his letter assuring us, that all who would live righteously before God can actually – and only – do so through faith in Jesus (1:17)

- Because, since all have sinned and have fallen short of God's standards, God has responded by justifying those who approach Him in faith by His grace as a gift through the redemption that was provided by Christ Jesus (3:23)
- So now, having been justified by Christ, we are no longer condemned but have peace with God (5:1)
- And into the lives of all those He justifies, God sends His Spirit to live in us, freeing us from our slavery under sin and empowering us to live for God (8:2)

Like Christ, God will also raise us from the dead
 The indwelling Holy Spirit guides and prays for us
 God the Father works to bring about good for us
 God predestined, called, justified, and will glorify us

- Knowing that we have God's Spirit within us, we can rejoice and live with the assured hope of our salvation even in times of suffering because He who raised Christ from the dead will do the same for us (8:9-11); we who have now become God's children, and joint heirs with Christ (8:15-17).
- And God's Spirit living within us is now working to guide us and praying for us according to God's will for our lives – which is that we become more like Jesus (8:29)
- And God the Father is also working to bring good out of all the circumstances of our life (8:28)
- Because long before we were ever born, God knew us, and predestined us to be His child. And having thus predestined us, in our time He then called us, justified us, and will one day glorify us – making us completely like His son Jesus (8:29-30)

All of these things show and prove that **God is for us.**

If He wasn't, He would not have done any of these things.

Since God is for us, who can be against us?

The answer to that question is no one, nobody, nothing! That is something wonderful to think about.

During quail season in Georgia, an Atlanta journalist met an old farmer hunting with an old pointer at his side. Twice the dog ran rheumatically ahead and pointed. Twice his master fired into the open air. When the journalist saw no birds rise, he asked the farmer for an explanation.

"Shucks," grinned the old man, "I knew there weren't no birds in that grass. Spot's nose ain't what it used to be but him and me have had some wonderful

times together. He's still doing the best he can -- and it'd be mighty mean of me to call him a liar at this stage of the game!"

Do you have anyone on your side? Someone who always backs you and believes in you like that old farmer backed his old dog?

the new Pastor and his family just moved into town. And the Pastor's rather short son Michael, as the new kid in high school and as the preacher's kid, immediately became the target of a group of bullies, the steal your lunch money kind of bullies, the knock you aside in the hallway kind of bullies. One day the he even came home without his shirt, because the bullies had stolen it during gym class. Michael was miserable and the family was miserable; he was afraid every morning he had to go to school

The Pastor, not knowing what to do, confided his problem to some friends in the church and asked them to pray for Michael. But one of those praying friends did even more than that. Her own son, Philip was the star football player at the high school, and rather big physically as well. So when Mom told Philip about Michael's problems, he knew exactly who the bullies were. The next day, he cornered each one of them. Telling them that Michael was his friend, and if they even looked at Michael ever again, he would be personally coming after them. Then that afternoon Philip knocked on his pastor's door to tell the family that from now on, he would be watching after Michael at school and that he had nothing more to fear from the bullies.

Can you imagine how Michael's life changed after that. He was no longer afraid to go to School because he had a very big friend looking out for him. We've got someone even bigger than that! We have God who has declared His complete and abiding love for us, who is working both within us and above us to bring about in our lives what he long ago predestined for us.... That we might live like his children and share in His glory.

And if God is for us, who can be against us?

Paul explains what God has already done for us this way:

<p>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? (Romans 8:32)</p>

Just dwell on this thought for a moment.

(pause).

Our most favorite childhood Bible verse is: *For God so loved the world, **that He gave us His only Son** – that whoever believes in him, should not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). Paul says, that **if God loves us so much that he willingly gave us his most precious procreation, why would He withhold anything else from us.** The answer of course is that there is nothing that God will withhold from us in demonstrating His love for us.

If, this Christmas, I gave Betty the most expensive diamond necklace that I could never afford – which I am not doing – the most precious thing I have ever given her. And upon presenting her this gift, I lovingly open the box and clasp the necklace around her throat. Then as she admires this most astounding gift I have given her, I casually slide the box back in my pocket remarking, *“I’m glad you like the necklace my dear, which proves my deep and abiding love for you, but I am keeping the box for myself.* I think she would look at me rather strangely. Don’t you? Having given her my most precious gift, I have shown her that I would also willingly – out of my love for her - give her anything else she could possibly need; even the box to hold it in.

This is what God has done for us. He has already given his own precious son to save us, certainly He will give us everything needed to bring us home into His family.

That is what God has already done for us.

And this is what God will continue to do for us.

Who will bring any charge against God’s elect?

It is God who justifies.

Who can condemn us ?

It is Christ Jesus, who is interceding for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Nothing !

To these three rhetorical questions, the only answer is: "nobody, no one, never, not ever."

No one can accuse us or condemn us because **God is for us!** He is the one, who through His son, redeemed us from death and sin, and justified us before Himself. Paul switches to a court room image here to emphasize His point.

Imagine you are on trial, and God, the judge, sits behind his desk gavel in hand as a prosecutor walks up to you, points his finger at you, and begins to bring up charges against you. He says,

- This person has been caught red handed breaking Your laws God.
- They have not always trusted You.
- They misuse your name.
- Their hearts have lusted over others.
- They are not content with what You have given them.
- The list can on and on and on. I have many witnesses who can testify that this person has done all these sins and even worse.

What is your verdict, O God?"

God pounds His gavel and declares over the thud, "Not guilty! All these debts have been completely paid. You are free to go."

Because of Jesus, and our baptism into His death and resurrection, His work, His righteousness, His merits, have all been credited to our account – in payment for our sin. So God can now righteously declare us not guilty but also righteous, not condemned but now justified and at peace with Himself, of all those sins that we have committed. This is not pretend.

- Those sins that we are too ashamed to speak about.
- Those sins that we stumble and struggle with.
- Those sins that have messed up relationships and opportunities in our lives.
- Those sins that we hate that we do.

All of these are not counted against us. No one, and I mean, no one, can ever condemn or accuse God's people because Jesus has already paid the penalty for us. We even have our resurrected and ascended Lord standing there right beside the Father pleading and interceding for us. If we are found "in Christ," nothing can change God's verdict.

God is for us! So no one can accuse or condemn us. But that is not all that this phrase means for our lives. The fact that God is for us means that we also cannot be separated from His love!

Not hardship, or distress,
or persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or peril,
or sword!

NOTHING!

In sports, when you have a young and upcoming team, an old veteran player is often signed who has won it all and seen it all. This veteran player helps the young team and players get through the slumps, the highs, the lows, and all of the pressures that come during a season. They are a reassuring presence and a source of encouragement. Paul serves as the old veteran player here with what he writes. He has endured the highs, and he certainly has endured the lows. So if Paul tells us that we cannot be separated from God's love, He speaks from experience! All of these things have happened to him!

All of these things happened to Paul throughout His life, but these things never separated him from God's love in Jesus. They could not and are not able to. The same was and is true for the Roman Christians who first heard this letter. The same applies to us some 2,000 years later. God is for us!

In fact, Paul says that we prevail, we triumph, we conquer even in the midst of all these bad circumstances because of Jesus. This victory is accomplished for us by Jesus' death and resurrection, and it is given to us through Him. So even when our enemies succeed in doing us some harm, their evil intent will be transformed into our ultimate victory because nothing will ever separate us from God's love.

nothing else in all creation,
will be able to separate us
from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(8:38-39)

But Paul is not done on this point just yet. **Because God is for us**

- there are no accusers who can condemn us.
- There are no tribulations that can defeat us
- And There are no other powers in the universe that can undo us.

When Paul begins listing out these parings in verses 38-39

- neither death, nor life,

- nor angels, nor rulers,
- nor things present, nor things to come,
- nor powers,
- nor height, nor depth,

He is saying nothing in this physical world, nothing in this spiritual world, in fact nothing in the entire course of all time as we know it – either – can separate us from God's love. Whether it be cancer, divorce, depression, death, the minute things of life, loneliness, losing a job, a natural disaster, people, poverty, hunger, or thirst; nothing will be able to lessen God's love for us.

Yes there will be times that will try, but they will not prevail. Bad circumstances that will make life challenging, but they will never sever us from God's love. God is for us! Nothing will ever separate us from His immense love.

This phrase "**God is for us**" is a short phrase but it is a loaded one. Who knew such a short phrase meant that we can never be separated from His love, or be condemned because of our sin? Who knew it meant that God works all things for our ultimate good? Who knew it was the perfect summary of the Gospel and of this sermon?

AMEN.