

## The Blueprint: Building a Framework that's Grounded in the Gospel!

### Week 6: Eternally Guaranteed

I. We're concluding a series of messages today through the heart of Romans. We began several weeks ago looking at Romans 5 and we'll conclude today with Romans 8:31-39. If you missed any go back and take a listen on the podcast or watch the services online. We've covered some doozies over the last weeks such as justification (declared not guilty in Christ), sanctification (ongoing transformation in Christ), and glorification (sinless and perfect state in God's presence in Christ).

II. The question for us to wrestle with today is:

[Slide]: Do these apply to me?

A. How do I know these apply to me? God doesn't want this to be a guess. God's not in the business of playing games with the people he loves. In Christ we've been:

[Slide]: Eternally Guaranteed!

1. My car warranty/guarantee had expired. Is that how God deals with those of us in Christ? Those who have accepted the gift of salvation by trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord.

[Slide]: Absolutely Not!

2. Our culture at large may have succumbed to the "Cancel Culture" which says that if you are disappointed or disagree with something or someone just cancel it out of your life, but God the Father has not! Our justification in Christ has established a covenant relationship through Christ between God the Father and redeemed humanity that cannot be altered. That's what a covenant means. In Christ, God has made a commitment to you and I that isn't contingent on our worthiness or unworthiness. The basis of our covenant relationship is on God's promise to us and God is not a liar! Let's see what his word has to say.

Romans 8:31-39 (CSB) [Slide]: 31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but offered him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? 33 Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. 35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: Because of you we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. The writer of Romans is the Apostle Paul, and he begins this section of Romans by stating "what are we to say about these things?" A good question to consider would be, "what things are you talking about Paul?" I take Romans 5-8 to be a chiasm, which is a style of writing in which the author uses a parallel structure to expand out or test the validity of the idea. In chapter 5, Paul stated that if we have been justified, we have been given guarantee of our future glory. Over the next chapters, Paul puts the gospel through the squeeze machine to see if it stands up to the test. Now on the other side, Paul is mirroring what he said in 5:1-11 to remind us that God doesn't cancel what he's declared righteous! How do we know our justification, sanctification, and glorification will be eternally guaranteed? The God that spoke the universe into existence, that God:

[Slide]: Is for us!

1. If God is for us, who can be against us? Paul isn't sticking his head in the sand and being naïve. He is not falsely portraying that we won't have anyone against us. Enemies abound in the spiritual and physical realm. But!!! If God is for us, who can be against us?

(1 continued) He's declared a covenant relationship over those in Christ and he's guaranteed our future hope of glory. Paul is reminding us to keep a proper perspective. If God be for us, who can be against us? No matter who comes against you, and if we're pushing into boundaries with the gospel, we can be sure of opposition, they will not be able to thwart the guarantee God has declared over our lives. Even Satan himself!

2. How do we know God is for us? He did not even spare his own Son but offered him up for us all! So much of this is beyond comprehension, but for all eternity past, present, and future, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit co-exist in perfect unity and fellowship with one another. God didn't create out of need; He created out of love. God is love. Out of this love the Father offered up his Son, Jesus Christ, and the Son willingly submitted to the Father even to the point of death on the cross. As a father of 3 kids myself, I can't fathom what it would have been like for God to give up the Son Jesus Christ. The love I have for my kids is a fraction in comparison with the perfect love expressed amongst the Godhead and the greater the love, the greater the despair at its loss. How unfathomable the love of God that he would go through the agony of willingly offering up the life of his Son!

3. If God the Father went to that extent to reconcile sinful humanity, what could he possibly hold out on us? He's given us his very self! If we've ever talked to someone who refurbishes stuff or someone who invests in things, we've probably heard the phrase, "I've got so much invested in it now, there's no going back." A person has put so much capital in something that they've reached a point they are going to see it through. Think about what God has invested in our salvation? He offered up his Son taking the biggest blow Satan could throw at him even to the point of death! How could we ever think God would bail on us or hold out?

C. It's difficult to fully express the gift of verses 31-34, but what these verses give to us is a small glimpse at the gospel from God's perspective and why our salvation is eternally guaranteed. We naturally focus on our human perspective, but the inspired, inerrant word of God does give us a glimpse into salvation from God's view! Here's where this really gets amazing! The portrayal here is of the final judgement when we stand before God. The terms Paul uses are all judicial terms and he speaks of "accusation" in the future tense. On the day of God's judgement there will be no accusation (no matter the source) that will cancel the justifying work of Christ Jesus! And there in lies precisely the point! No accusation will be able to hold weight because our justification isn't based on us. Nothing we've done or haven't done holds justifying power. It's all God!

1. Paul continues to unpack this courtroom setting and present our eternal guarantee by reminding us that Christ died paying the penalty for sin but that's just half the story. Jesus was raised and is now sitting at the "right hand of God," interceding for us! Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Humanity hasn't brought anything into the equation here in Paul's portrayal of the gospel! The image here isn't of human beings clinging on to God, but God clinging to those in Christ. While the setting of accusation is future judgement, which those in Christ have already now been declared not guilty, both "justifies" and "intercedes" are gnomic present verb tenses and why that's important is Paul uses very precise language to make it clear God's justifying work and Christ's interceding work are irrevocable, timeless realities. A gnomic present tense is different from a regular present tense in this sense: a regular tense verb refers to someone "doing" an activity; a gnomic present tense verb refers to someone who simply "does." Unlike fallen humanity, God always keeps his word! We've been eternally guaranteed!

2. Paul starts with the end in mind by taking us to the future courtroom setting of our judgement. I can't imagine what that will fully entail but standing before God is something we'll all do one day. Not only us, but our family, friends, and neighbors. We've got to stay focused on "pushing through boundaries to share God's story from Norfolk to the Nations." We don't have time for petty arguments over personal preferences. Our mission has to be the focus. There's too much at stake.

(2 continued) Because at the judgement, there are only two options.

One: Jesus Christ who is seated in the place of authority and power (right hand of God) will intercede on behalf of us.

Two: Or people will make the decision to represent themselves (pro se) and at that point there is no going back.

In that moment when we become fully aware of the depth of our sin in comparison to a holy God, we'll want to be represented by Jesus Christ and we can be! Acknowledge our sin and trust Jesus as our Savior and Lord!

D. In verse 35, Paul pivots from the courtroom scene of judgement to show how our declaration of innocence on that day covers all circumstances of life in the interim. Again, the focus isn't on our love and commitment to Christ. That's vitally important, but not as important as Jesus Christ's love and commitment to us! It pulsates throughout any circumstance we may find ourselves in, even death! Paul lays out a list of circumstances he's personally been through with the exception up to this point of the sword. Paul experienced all these afflictions and proclaims to us that through it all the love of Christ holds true! Prophetically, Paul would even experience the strength of the love of Christ through his eventual martyrdom by sword in the very city he was writing this letter to! The love of Christ doesn't negate hardship and suffering, the love of Christ steps into the pain and suffering and carries us through!

E. The final conclusion that seals the deal on our eternal guarantee is that no created thing, from Satan himself to the smallest atom, is powerful enough to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus! Anything that life throws our way, we're more than conquerors! Just a few things about this though. We don't conquer something sitting on the sidelines. When life's battles rage, we tend to think something has gone awry, but that's not what Paul seems to be presenting here. Paul has taken these several chapters of Romans to squeeze out and press into the gospel and his conclusion:

[Slide]: The Gospel Stands!

1. Our whole world might be falling apart around us, but in Christ, God has encompassed us with his love and declared to us that we ARE more than conquerors not because of anything we've done but THROUGH him who loved us! This is where we find our foundation and framework for life!

a. Where are we struggling today? Where are we being tempted to build a foundation other than on the gospel of Jesus Christ? I want us to walk away from our time through Romans with two reminders:

(1) [Slide]: Look Ahead!

When we have doubts or fears, and we all do, pull out Romans 8:31-39 and think about that day when we'll stand before God and Jesus will declare us as his own. Not because we've done anything, but because he's laid claim to our life! In Christ, we don't have to stand condemned because Christ stood condemned for us and won the victory! You may be thinking about that day right now and unsure about your personal eternal guarantee. Maybe you've never trusted Christ and I want to invite you right now. There's no formula here, in your heart and mind confess that you're a sinner before God and acknowledge your trust in Jesus Christ. You can be assured today that on the day of judgement no one will bring an accusation that will stand against you.

(2) [Slide]: Lean In!

For all of us, lean in! The Christian life isn't absent the battle. We're more than conquerors through him who loved us! And the battle isn't about winning an argument or primarily with people around us who don't agree with us. The battle as Paul lays it out in verse 38 is our battle against Satan, sin, and the broken systems of this world. We are new creation people leaning into the love of God in Christ Jesus in an evil, sin-saturated world.

2. Amidst it all, the gospel holds true! We've been eternally guaranteed! Let's build a foundation and a framework on the inseparable love of God given to us in Christ Jesus!