

Romans 8:28-39
(Psalm 130:1-8; Matthew 11:25-30)
“If God Is for Us”

Introduction

In the verses immediately preceding our text, Paul writes of the creation groaning with longing for the mission of God to be accomplished, history to be consummated, and all things to be made new. Paul tells us that God’s children join in that groaning for redemption to be completed and that God himself groans for the day that he makes all things new. But what grounds do we have for believing that life will turn out well for God’s children and that we will ever fulfill the mission entrusted to us and finally reach every people group with the good news of the gospel?

Paul now reminds us of the basis of our confidence in facing whatever life may bring, knowing that God will do what he has promised, and that our unfaithfulness cannot finally thwart God’s faithfulness. This note of confidence rings clearly in these verses: “We know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ... If God is for us, who can be against us? ... In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (8:28,31,37).

Make no mistake: Paul wrote these words to the early church in the full knowledge that many of them would face persecution and distress. And we may wonder how could Paul, who had persecuted the church before his conversion, who knew the heart-rending cries of men being stoned to death, of women torn from their children and led away to prison, how could he make such a claim that “all things work together for good” and that “we are more than conquerors”?

How can we, in the face of the ongoing suffering of God’s people, of parents standing by the graves of children, of men mocked and ridiculed before their families, of women beaten and raped, and of the quiet, respectable ways that life breaks our hearts, how can we possibly speak these words and believe them, especially in the painful times when we need them most? And how can we, in the face of an often scoffing, unreceptive world, claim such promises for the mission of the church? How are we not to despair at the thought of how powerless the church of Jesus Christ so often seems in the face of earthly power?

I would invite you this morning to consider three questions: First, is this tremendous promise for everyone? In other words, is this just a bit of worldly wisdom that may be offered to all, or is it context-specific? Second, what possible rational basis does anyone have for believing that all things will turn out in the end to have worked together for their good and for God’s glory? And finally, if it is true, what shall we say in response to whatever comes against us? This eighth chapter of Romans has the potential to completely reshape our approach to the greatest and hardest issues of life and death.

Body

1. Is this tremendous promise for everyone?

- It is for those who love God (8:28).
- It is for those who are increasingly becoming like Jesus (8:29).

2. What possible rational basis does anyone have for believing this tremendous promise that *all* things will work together for our good and for God's glory?

- God will always finish what he has begun (8:29,30).
- God has already made a huge and costly investment in our salvation (8:32).

3. What shall we say in response to these things?

- If God is for us, who can be against us? (8:31).
- In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (8:37).

Conclusion

In these final verses, we have perhaps the most powerful grounds stated in all of the Scripture for God's children to have assurance of salvation:

What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. . . . 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.

Is that your assurance today? If not, cry out to the Lord to come fill you with his Spirit so that you can turn away from everything you once trusted in to give your life security and meaning, and turn to Jesus, in whom alone we are made God's children and are assured that nothing in life or the death will be able to separate us from his love.

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