

Sermon Notes for April 16, 2017

Easter Sermon
“The Biblical Basis For The Assurance Of Eternal Life”
Romans 8:31-39

Introduction

A. What Was The MOST IMPORTANT MINISTRY Of Jesus Christ?

1. It was **not** that He came from **heaven** to be born in a manger in Bethlehem.
2. It was **not** that He was born a **sinless** person through the Virgin Mary.
3. It was **not** that He lived a **sinless life** while on this earth
4. It was **not** His **ministry** to other people.
5. It was **not** that He **died on the cross** for our sins.
6. For, if Jesus did all of those things and yet did not come back from the dead, He would have simply been another “well intentioned martyr.”
 - a. thus, the most important ministry of Jesus Christ was His resurrection from the dead
 - b. for, because of His resurrection, Jesus took all of the work that He did on the cross for the sins of man and took “that walk” to present that it to His heavenly father
 - c. and, then, He sat down at the right hand of God to intercede for us.
7. **IT IS MY OPINION THAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN HUMAN HISTORY.**

B. What Is The GREATEST ASSURANCE Of The Christian?

1. **BECAUSE** Jesus Christ died on the cross and **BECAUSE** Jesus Christ rose from the dead and presented His finished work to His heavenly Father. . .
2. **THOSE WHO ARE TRUSTING IN THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY ASSURED OF THEIR EARTHLY SALVATION AND ETERNAL HOME!**
3. **BECAUSE** of the resurrection of Jesus, Christians can be **ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT** of their eternal security
 - a. and yet, for many, many Christians that is not the case
 1. many of the Christians that I have dealt with over the years struggle with the assurance of their salvation
 2. they struggle because they know that they are not the “kind of Christian” that they should be; so, they ask; “How can I be a Christian and live like this?”
 - b. today, we are going to look at one of the greatest texts in all of Scripture
 1. a text that will boldly and thoroughly give us Biblical support of our eternal assurance as believers
 2. so, may we allow God’s Word to thoroughly convince us of the “complete” work of Christ on our behalf

I. Our Sovereign GOD HAD A PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION

A. We Must Start With The Fact That God Is God

1. **GOD** created this world
Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning, **God** created the world.”
2. **GOD** made the rules of the world that **He** created
Genesis 2:15-17 – “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, **“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”**
3. **BECAUSE** God created the world and **BECAUSE** He “made the rules” for those who lived in this world, God also had the responsibility to punish those who did **not** obey His rules
4. and; as we all know, the man that God created, broke those rules

B. We Know That God Sovereignly Saved Man From His Sin

1. Despite man’s disobedience and failure to obey God’s rules, God graciously made “a way” for man to be saved.
2. LOOK AT “**THE PLAN**” THAT GOD HAD TO SAVE MAN FROM HIS SINS!
Vs. 29-30 – “For those **God foreknew He** also **predestined** to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those **He predestined, He** also **called**; those **He called, He** also **justified**; those **He justified, He** also **glorified.**”
 - a. FROM THIS TEXT “**WHO**” it is that saves man!?
 - b. and, notice the order of what **God** did:
 1. **HE foreknew** us
 2. **HE predestined** us
 3. **HE called** us
 4. **HE justified** us
 5. He will **glorify** us
 - c. the idea that man **can** either save himself or **did** save himself is not taught in Scripture
 1. the belief that you just “decided” to get saved one day
 2. no, here is what the Bible teaches:
 - a. before you were born, God **ALREADY** “knew you” and decided that you would, one day, be saved
 - b. and, after you were born, **HE** began that spiritual work of actually calling you to himself
 1. think about your own conversion. What “happened” to “cause you” to come to Christ?
 - a. did you just decide “one day” to get saved?
 - b. did you reason: it would be “good” to be saved

- c. no, there were people and events and struggles and friends that led you to Jesus.
 - d. and, then came that day where you trusted Jesus as your Savior—**NOW, WHAT CAUSED THAT?**
2. that was my story
 - a. God began a work in my life in the 9th grade through a real struggle in my life
 - b. so, for four years, I searched and looked and struggled until God was ready to call me to Himself.
 3. there is a real similarity between physical birth and spiritual birth
 - a. what does a physical baby “do” to be born?
 1. does a baby ever say: “I think I want to become a baby and be born?”
 2. no, a baby has no “decision” to make about being born
 - b. what does a spiritual baby “do” to be born?
 1. you may “think” that you did the work of being saved
 2. but, God is the one who called you to Himself
 3. think about the day you were saved – God “called” you to Himself

C. Listen to Paul’s Response To The Work Of God In Our Salvation

Vs. 31 – “What, then, shall we say in response to this? **If God is for us, who can be against us?**

Vs. 33a. – “**Who** will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”

1. **BECAUSE salvation is a work of God, WHO CAN CHALLENGE THE WORK OF GOD?**
2. if it is God who predestines us, and God who calls us, and God who justifies us and God who will glorify us . . . **WHO DOES THE WORK OF SAVING?**
3. quotes:
 - a. **John MacArthur** – “The obvious implication is that if anyone were able to rob us of salvation **they would have to be greater than God Himself**, because He is both the giver and sustainer of salvation.”

- b. **James Boice** – What would have to happen for you to lose your salvation, once you have been foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified by God? **For that to happen, God would have to throw the entire plan of salvation into reverse. Jesus would have to rise from His throne, go backward through the ascension (now a dissension), enter the tomb again, be placed upon the cross, and then come down from it. For you to perish, the atonement would have had never to have happened. Only then could you be lost.**

II. Our Sovereign GOD OFFERED A PERSON FOR OUR SALVATION

A. Christians Have Another Reason NOT To Doubt Their Salvation

1. It wasn't "enough" for God to simply tell us that He had a plan for our salvation.
2. He had to literally fulfill that plan for our salvation

B. God's Sovereign Plan Would Be That He Would Sacrifice His Own Son

Vs. 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?"

1. Now, if you still doubt God's plan for your salvation, please notice that God "expressed" His plan for us BY SENDING HIS OWN SON TO DIE ON THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS!
 - a. I have never lost a child by death, but I CANNOT IMAGINE A WORSE THING TO HAPPEN TO A PARENT.
 - b. my son, David; Reye's Syndrome
2. God sent His "only Son" to this earth to die for us, in our place
 - a. **AND GOD SENT HIS ONLY SON TO THIS EARTH, EVEN KNOWING WHAT A HORRIFIC DEATH HIS ONLY SON WOULD EXPERIENCE!**
Psalm 22:16-19 – "Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have **pierced my hands and my feet**. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."
 - b. **Isaiah 53:4-5** – "Surely He took up our infirmities and **carried our sorrows**, yet we considered Him **stricken by God, smitten by Him**, and afflicted. But He was **pierced** for our transgressions, He was **crushed** for our iniquities; the **punishment** that brought us peace was upon Him, and **by His wounds** we are healed."
 1. the horrible death of Jesus was prophesied years before and God knew **EXACTLY** what would happen on the cross to His only Son.
 2. PLEASE don't miss **Isaiah 53:10a** – "Yet it was the **LORD's will to crush** Him and cause Him to suffer,"
 - a. in fact, the prophet Isaiah says that God, the Father, **PURPOSEFULLY** sent His son to this earth **TO BE CRUSHED ON THE CROSS!**

- b. can any parent identify at the grief that came to the Father to “crush” His only son – WHO HAD DONE NOTHING WRONG TO BE CRUSHED!
- 3. and, to make matters worse, the Son asked the Father **NOT TO BE CRUSHED!**
Matthew 26:39 – “Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, “**My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.** Yet not as I will, but as you will.”
 - a. **AND, THE FATHER REFUSED HIS SON’S REQUEST TO BE SPARED!**
 - b. with the Father FULLY KNOWING WHAT HE WAS ABOUT TO PUT HIS OWN SON THROUGH!
- 4. so, if you want **more proof** of the Father’s plan to save sinners, look no further than the “sending” of His own son to the cross to die for your sins.

C. Listen To Paul’s Response To The Death Of God’s Son For Our Salvation
Vs. 33a – “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God, God who justifies.”

- 1. **WHO CAN CHALLENGE GOD ABOUT THE DEATH OF HIS SON?**
 - a. who can say that this Father did not “**do**” enough to save us?
 - b. who can say that Jesus’ death was “**not enough**”
 - c. who can say that Jesus’ death was not **SUFFICIENT?**
- 2. **THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO CAN JUSTIFY US!**
 - a. and that is Jesus who died to pay for our sins
 - b. when you doubt your salvation, you are really doubting that Jesus’ death was “**ENOUGH**” to pay for our sins
 - 1. the **beating** was not enough
 - 2. the **humiliation** was not enough
 - 3. the **crucifixion** was not enough
 - 4. the **death** was not enough

III. Our Sovereign GOD PROVIDED THE SOLUTIONS FOR OUR SALVATION

A. God Had An Eternal Plan To Save Sinners

- 1. Yes, God **did** have a plan to save sinners
- 2. But, before anyone could be saved, Jesus Christ would have to literally and physically die on the cross to pay for man’s sins

B. Three Requirements Had To Be Fulfilled Before Man Could Be Saved

- 1. The **FIRST** requirement of God to deal with the sins of man was the **death of His Son on the cross on our behalf.**
 - a. for, it was on the cross that Jesus Christ died in our place
 - b. it was on the cross that God placed His wrath upon His own Son and “crushed” Him for our sins.
 - c. and, thus, the payment for our sins was perfectly made through the physical death of His perfect, sinless son.

- d. but, please realize this: Jesus' death on the cross was "**not enough**" to totally satisfy God's wrath
- 2. The **SECOND** requirement of God to deal with the sins of man was the resurrection of His Son from the dead.
 - Vs. 34b** – "Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--**more than that, who was raised to life**—"
 - a. **DID YOU GET THAT?** Verse 34 says that it was "good" that Jesus died on the cross, but, "**more than that,**" it was "**better**" that He rose from the dead.
 - b. the greek words "**more than that**" suggests:
 - 1. to a greater degree
 - 2. by far
 - 3. even better
 - c. so, verse 34 "could actually read,"
 - IT WAS "GOOD" THAT JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS FOR MAN'S SINS BUT, IT WAS "EVEN BETTER" THAT JESUS CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD!**
 - 2. BECAUSE THERE WAS "MORE WORK FOR JESUS TO DO" AFTER HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS
 - a. therefore, Jesus' death was **NOT** the final step in meeting all of God's requirements to deal with man's sins
 - b. for, Jesus had to come back from the dead
 - d. **THIS IS WHY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS SUCH A BIG DEAL!**
 - 1. once again, if Jesus Christ died on the cross and did **NOT** come back from the dead, **HE REMAINED A DEAD MAN.**
 - 2. but, if Jesus died on the cross and came back from the dead, He would "finish the walk that He came to do."
- 3. and, yet there was a **THIRD** requirement; for the work of Jesus to be complete.
 - Vs 34c** – "Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--**more than that, who was raised to life is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**"
 - a. now, please realize this, if Jesus "**ONLY**" died on the cross, and "**ONLY**" came back from the dead, it would not have been "enough" to save sinners.
 - b. for, Jesus **HAD** to finally ascend to heaven and "take" His resurrected body and sit on the right hand of God to intercede for us
 - c. please note that Jesus "work of salvation" is "still" **NOT** over for us for, if He does not continue to intercede for us while we are still on this earth, we have no protection before God's throne.

IV. Our Sovereign GOD WILL NOT ALLOW ANYTHING TO DENY OUR SALVATION

A. Paul's Proof Is Persuasive

1. Do you see from this text that the Apostle Paul is saying over and over to prove to the Christian that he can be secure in his eternal security.
 - a. **Vs. 31** – “**What**, then, shall we say in response to this? “
 - b. **Vs. 33** – “**Who** will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”
 - c. **Vs. 34** – “**Who** is He that condemns?”
2. In today's text, Paul actually gives reason after reason being confident that we are saved and will continue to be saved.

B. Paul's Proof Is Personal

1. Paul's proof is “**intimate**”

Vs. 35 – “Who shall separate us from the **love of Christ**?”

 - a. please notice that Paul does **not** say; who will separate us from the:
 1. power of God
 2. sovereignty of God
 3. will of God
 - b. no, Paul says; “Who will separate us from the **love of God.**”
 1. this word in the greek is **agape**.
 - a. the only greek word that speaks of God's UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!
 - b. this is a love that we don't have to earn
 - c. this is a love that loves us IN SPITE OF OURSELVES!
 2. and, this love is a love THAT WILL NEVER LET US GO!
 - a. to truly love one “unconditionally” means that a person will never do anything that will cause you not to love them.
 - b. parents have a “small” understanding of this as we deal with our children
 1. although our children upset us, disappoint us or let us down, WE WILL NEVER STOP LOVING OUR CHILDREN
 2. multiply God's love for us by a million times— then, you may have a small understanding of how much God loves His children.
2. Paul's **reach** is **adamant**
 - a. we will never lose our salvation over “**seen fears**”

Vs. 35 – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall **trouble** or **hardship** or **persecution** or **famine** or **nakedness** or **danger** or **sword**?”

 1. trouble
 2. hardship
 3. persecution

4. famine
 5. nakedness
 6. danger
 7. sword
- b. We will never lose our salvation over **“unseen fears”**
- Vs. 38-39** – “For I am convinced that neither **death** nor **life**, neither **angels nor demons**, neither the **present** nor the **future**, nor any **powers**, neither **height** nor **depth**, **nor anything else in all creation**, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
1. death
 2. life
 3. angels nor demons
 4. the present nor the future
 5. any powers
 6. **nor anything else in all creation**
- c. It was as if the Apostle Paul was trying to think of everything and anything that a believer could “think” could cause him to lose his salvation.
- d. Now, let me say this . . .the one thing that most of us believe could “cause” the loss of our salvation is . . . ourselves
1. for, we know ourselves and we know that we fall short of be Godly
 2. so, do you think that **you** will be able to do only what God can do?
 3. do you think that **you** could do something “so bad” that God would cast you aside?
 4. why do you think that Paul added **“NOR ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION” – THAT INCLUDES YOU.**
3. Paul’s **reason** is **overwhelming**
- Vs. 37** – “No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.”
- a. to make his point even clearer and more powerful, Paul uses a two-part greek word to give the believer absolute confidence in the work of Christ on our behalf.
 1. **huper**
 - a. exceedingly
 - b. to gain a surprising victory
 - c. superiority; more than
 - d. from where we get the hyper
 2. **nikao**
 - a. conqueror
 - b. to carry the victory
 3. **hupernikao**
 - a. to hyper conquer
 - b. to over conquer
 - c. to overwhelming conquer

- b. so, according to the Apostle Paul:
 - 1. we are more than conquerors, super-conquerors, overwhelming conquerors
 - 2. illustrations
 - a. In last year's Women's NCAA basketball tournament, the Mississippi State Lady Bulldogs lost to Uconn 98-39; by 60 points
 - b. In 1969, the University of Houston football team beat Mississippi State 74-0. Houston went for two after their last score
 - c. this is what Paul means by using the term "more than conquerors"
 - 3. to know Christ is not just to "win" your eternal security
 - 4. it is to destroy; crush, dominate and obliterate any doubt that Jesus will save you and that you will remain saved.

Conclusion:

- 1. Here is what Paul is saying to the Christian about their confidence in their salvation:
 - a. Before the foundation of the world, God foresaw you and made a plan, one day, to save us.
 - b. To satisfy that plan, He sent His only Son to this earth to take His place on the cross and fully pay for our sins
 - c. Then, God raised His Son from the dead so that His Son could ascend to His Father and present His resurrected body to the Father as the "proof" that He had paid for the sins of man.
 - d. **AND, THERE IS NOTHING THAT ANYONE OR ANYTHING CAN DO TO CHANGE THAT!**
 - e. **IT IS A FACT AND IT IS UNCHANGABLE!**
- 2. Now, as passionate as I am to declare that the believers' trust in Jesus is secure, I have no such security for those who are **NOT** trusting in Jesus.
 - a. for, unless you have made a step of faith to receive and trust in Jesus, you have no hope at all
 - b. whereas, the Christian has an unbeatable faith and trust,
- 3. **Philipp Melanchthon** was one of Martin Luther's, the Reformer's, greatest friend.
 - a. Melanchthon was at Luther's side as Luther led the reformation against those who opposed Luther's teaching of justification by faith.
 - b. Luther loved Melanchthon and Melanchthon loved Luther
 - 1. **Martin Luther** - "I am rough, boisterous, stormy, and altogether warlike, fighting against innumerable monsters and devils. I am born for the removing of stumps and stones, cutting away thistles and thorns, and clearing the wild forests. But master Philippus comes along softly and gently, sowing and watering with joy, according to the gifts which God has abundantly bestowed upon him."

2. **Melanchthon** – “I would rather die than be separated from this man.”
- c. After Luther’s death, Melanchthon preached at Luther’s funeral
- d. And, after Melanchthon’s our death, he was laid to rest right by Luther’s body in the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany
- e. As Melanchthon was sensing his own death;
 1. He was lying in his bed, dying, and a Pastor read to him from **Romans 8:31** – “**If God is for us, who can be against us.**”
“Read those words again, said Melanchthon;. So, the Pastor read **Romans 8:31** again, “**If God is for us, who can be against us.**”
“Melanchthon murmured in a kind of ecstasy; “**That’s it! That’s it!**”
 2. During his ministry, Melanchthon had often quoted this text when he was spiritually struggling.”
 3. During his lectures and correspondence, Melanchthon quoted **Romans 8:31** more than any other Scripture
 4. In fact, if you visit Philipp Melanchthon’s study today in Wittenberg, Germany, you will see the text of Romans 8:31 framed on his wall.

4. **WHO?**