NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD’S LOVE!

1. No accusers
2. No persecutors
3. No powers of any kinds

I remember talking to a Vietnam vet once. He told me: **Pastor, I don't think I can ever go to heaven.** The Bible is clear: Thou shalt not kill, and I've killed people. I don't think there is anyway God can forgive me. He really felt guilty for some of the things he did during the war. He felt like God could never love someone like him.

So what did I tell him? The truth. I told him when God says: Thou shalt not kill, he is clearly forbidding murder, and not the killing a soldier does in defense of his country. The Scriptures are clear on that point. I also told him: **Even if you were guilty of murder, know that Jesus died on the cross for every sin you have ever committed. He paid for them all in full. Nothing can ever change that fact. Trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of all your sins and be at peace.** Nothing you or anyone else does will ever keep God from desiring your salvation.

There are times in our lives when we are also tempted to wonder whether or not God loves us. For some of us, it is the heavy weight of guilt for sins that we feel are unforgivable. For others of us it is some problem, pain, disaster or crime that has us wondering: **If God loves me, why would he allow me to go through something like this?**

With St Paul as our guide, let's consider God's promise to the believer: **NOTHING CAN EVER SEPARATE US FROM GOD’S LOVE:** no accusers, no persecutors, no powers of any kind.

In the latter part of Romans 8, the apostle Paul deals with the problem of Christian suffering. He points out that, even though suffering is inevitable on this earth, it still does not compare with the glory that will be revealed in us. God will help us endure - working in all things for our eternal good.

That leads Paul to ask: **If God is for us, who can be against us?** There are many who are against us: the devil and his angels, the entire wicked world and even our sinful flesh. But even though these many enemies stand against us, what harm can they really do if the almighty God is on our side?

But how do we know that God is really on our side? Paul tells us: **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?** God sending Jesus to be our Savior is proof beyond any shadow of a doubt that God loves us and that we can trust him.

This is why Paul asks: **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?** In other words, who can accuse us?

The devil most certainly accuses us - as does the world and our sinful flesh. They constantly remind us of our sins for which God could never love us. and the world? Oh, it loves to parade our faults in front of everybody. But the truth is, no matter how much the devil, world and our own sinful flesh bombard us with the feelings of being unforgivable, they have no say in the matter whatsoever.

Our text continues: **It is God who justifies.** The devil, world and our flesh can rant and rave all they want. They can accuse us of all sorts of horrible thoughts, words and deeds; but none of it matters in the end, since it is God himself who declares us righteous – not guilty - for Christ’s sake.

And if God himself declares us righteous - which he does through faith in his son - then **who will condemn us?** There is only one Judge who can send a soul to hell and that Judge is Jesus. On the last day he will show this authority by condemning the devil, his evil angels and every unbeliever to eternal death. Yes, Jesus is the only one with the authority to condemn us.
But will he?

You see: 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.

Consider this: the one who has actual authority to accuse and condemn is the same person who stopped at nothing to die for our sins. He rose from the dead - showing that every one of our sins - past, present and future - have been paid in full. Whenever the devil accuses you before God the Father, Jesus intercedes on your behalf, pointing to his sacrifice as the reason God needs to forgive you, as the Scriptures say: If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

No matter how sinful you are, when you turn to Jesus in repentance and faith, you can be absolutely certain that your sins are fully forgiven. You are at peace with God and loved by him. The Scriptures promise it. Never doubt it.

So, Who will separate us from the love of God? No accuser can. Our sins are forgiven in Christ - nothing can change this fact. Only our own impenitence and unbelief can prevent us from receiving the salvation God freely offers us. But even these cannot keep God from loving you in Christ Jesus and freely offering you his forgiveness.

Well, if the almighty God loves us so dearly, that means we should have a relatively trouble free life, right? Wrong. You see, God never promises us such a life on this earth. He actually warns: In the world you will have trouble.

And that is why Paul writes: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

We face all sorts of problems in life that really test our faith. Why did God take away my spouse or child? Doesn't he know that I need him? Why did God take my health away? I can't be as productive as I once was. Why did God allow me to be a victim of this horrible crime? Why was I in the car accident? Why wasn't he watching over me? The list can go on and on regarding the afflictions God allows. If God loves us, then why?

Paul continues: As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

When I read this verse, I can't help but think of those Christian who are being brutally persecuted by ISIS in Mideast. They are literally being killed all day long - as heartlessly and systematically as sheep in a slaughter house. For Christ's sake they are suffering cruel injustices and horrible crimes - all the while their persecutors parade around, claiming great victories for their Allah.

But look at the remarkable thing Paul says next: No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

No matter how many Christian bodies ISIS dances over, they are not the victors. The killed Christians are. How so? Because the Bible says: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

No matter what we experience in life, we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus. How so? Because as Christians, we realize that this world is temporary. Our true home is with God in heaven. And no matter what the world takes from us: our health, our relationships, our dignity or even our life, the one thing it cannot take from us is the love God has for us in Christ Jesus. No matter what we suffer, believers remain God's dearly loved children - holy and precious in his sight.

God promises to work in all things for our eternal good. There may be times when we do not feel or perceive it, but it is nevertheless true. Christ will keep his promise and deliver us to his eternal kingdom. Hold on to him in faith, and on the Last Day, you will see exactly how victorious we actually are.

Jesus once said: In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome
the world. Even in suffering we find that God has not removed his love from us. Even in suffering, we are assured that we are victorious - all because of the sacrifice he made for us on the cross.

Paul continues: 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.

Paul was convinced of God's love for us and we should be too. God wants us to know that we are safe with him. So what could separate us from his love? Death cannot, because at death we go immediately to be with our Lord. Life cannot because in this life God has brought us to faith. Even living a long life will not separate us from God, as long as we remain in faith. Sometimes the very elderly or very sick wonder why God simply does not let them die. It seems that sometimes the fear may be that God forgot them. But God says no!

In Scripture, the word for angel always refers to the good angels and who would never separate us from God. God assures us they could not, even if they tried. Demons and the devil cannot. Nothing in the present or in the future, no matter how ugly or distressing things are now or may be, can separate us from the love of God. Nothing in the heavens or the earth below can separate us. God sums it all up saying that there is absolutely nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Since God says this, we know it is true. But then why do we suffer all sorts of trials and troubles? We suffer because God, in his loving wisdom, allows it. We do not know why, but we trust that it is for our good. That is what he has told us. You see, the love God has for us is not human love that simply likes giving good things. The love God has for us in Christ Jesus is a divine love that will work in all things to deliver us to heaven - even if it hurts a little along the way.

God loves us. Proof of this fact is found in Jesus' cross and empty tomb. He loves us so much that he does not give us everything we want, but what we need. He loves us so much that he might even allow suffering and hardship to come our way for some reason we cannot even begin to understand. But know this: nothing in all creation can separate us from the love God has for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. We can separate ourselves from our salvation by not believing in Jesus. But nothing either we or anyone else does can make God stop loving us.

My dear friends, if you feel oppressive guilt over your sins or cry out under affliction, pain, or sorrow; look at the cross and empty tomb to find the assurance of God’s love for you. Remember the Bible has promise that nothing, in all creation, can ever separate you from the love God has for you in Christ Jesus your Lord. Amen!

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