

Impossibilities for the Believer – Part 1
Romans 8:31-34
October 22, 2020

Review

Chs 5-8 The gospel and the sure hope it gives

8:18-39 Assurance of hope

18-25 Suffering with Christ in the present age is nothing in comparison to the future glorious revealing of the sons of God, that will be accompanied by the liberation of the creation from its bondage to corruption. Like the creation we groan in the pains of childbirth, as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies. We were given this hope when we were saved, and we wait for it with perseverance.

26-27 The Spirit helps us, who do not know what to pray for, by interceding for us according to the will of God.

28 God causes all things to work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

29-30 Those whom God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He most certainly will glorify.

31-39 The Christian's triumph song

31 “What then shall we say to these things?”

1. These words lead us to reflect back on all that has been said so far in Romans of the good news of what God has done, and has determined to do, in our salvation.

2. Brings up five great truths in 8:31-39 that flow out of all that has been taught about salvation, in order that we would exult in God's salvation
 - The impossibility of any person or circumstance causing a believer to lose his salvation

1. The impossibility of anyone being against us (31)

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Question: What has been taught earlier in Romans that tells us as believers that God is for us?

Does not mean the Christian has no opponents (17)

Means that with God for us, no enemy can keep us from receiving all the blessings God has purposed to give us

Leon Morris: “He means that with God ‘for us’ it makes not the slightest particle of difference who is against us.”¹

James Boice: “It is as if Paul is challenging us to place all the possible enemies we can think of on one-half of an old-fashioned balance scale, as if we were weighing peanuts. Then, when we have all the peanuts assembled on the scale, he throws an anvil onto the other side of the balance. That side comes crashing down, and the peanuts are scattered.”²

This calls us to put our confidence fully in God, and not in anything we do.

2. The impossibility that God would not give us all things (32)

Arguing from the greater to the lesser

“did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all”

1. Gave him up to death
2. God gave what is infinite in value
3. Sacrificed His own Son in our place
4. For all whom He chose before the foundation of the world (29, 33)
5. Reminiscent of Abraham
 - **Gen. 22:16** “...By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,”
6. The supreme act of love
7. The supreme evidence that God is for us

¹ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 335.

² Boice, *Romans*, 2:953.

“how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

1. Give freely and unbegrudgingly
2. He has graciously given us His Son, and so will certainly graciously give us also “all things” He has purposed to give us in salvation.
3. God has done the greater thing, and therefore can be trusted to do the lesser thing of giving us all things pertaining to the completion our salvation.

Reflects the doctrine of particular atonement

Contradicts the false teaching of purgatory

3. The impossibility of anyone bringing a charge against us (33)

Question: For what reasons might Paul be raising the questions in verses 33 & 34?

“Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?”

1. Chosen before the foundation of the world
2. Does not mean...
 - no one will accuse God’s elect
 - the accusations made against believers will always be false
3. The language in verses 33 & 34 comes from the law court
4. Means no one can bring a charge that will jeopardize the believer’s right standing before God

“It is God who justifies.”

1. The believer’s right standing with God was declared by almighty God as a gift of His grace
2. No one can overturn what God has declared
3. God’s declarations are perfect and not subject to revision

Those whom God has chosen and justified by grace can face the day of judgment with absolute confidence

4. The impossibility of anyone condemning us (34)

“Who is to condemn?”

1. Condemn us unto judgment in eternity
2. Our heart might condemn us
 - **1 John 3:20** “for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.”
3. It is Christ that matters

“Christ Jesus is the one who died”

1. Christ Jesus has been appointed as the future judge
 - **John 5:22-23** “For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son...” (also 5:27)
 - **Acts 10:42** “And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.”
 - **Acts 17:31** “...he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”
2. At the cross, the Judge paid the penalty demanded by the Law. The Judge was condemned unto death in our place, and suffered God’s judgment in our place.
 - **Rom. 3:24–25** “and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith...”

“—more than that, who was raised—”

1. **4:25** “who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”
2. Raised by the Father as a victorious declaration that Christ’s atoning work was complete and has been accepted

“who is at the right hand of God”

1. A position of authority over all things
 - **1 Pet. 3:21–22** “...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”
 - **Eph. 1:20–22** “that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,”

2. The Savior who died for us and was raised for us has all authority! No created being can thwart His redeeming work!

“who indeed is interceding for us.”

1. **Is. 53:12** “Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.”
2. **Heb. 7:23–25** “The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”
 - His intercession will continue without interruption until the salvation of all the elect is completed with their glorification
3. **Heb. 9:11–12** “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**, thus securing an eternal redemption.”
4. **1 John 2:1** “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
5. Christ, as our high priest, is pleading His shed blood, on which our right standing with God is based, unto the glory of the Father.

This means no one can condemn God’s elect unto judgment! His elect are safe and secure in His sovereign grace!

Conclusion

Next week:

5. The impossibility of anyone separating the believer from the love of Christ (35-39)

John MacArthur: “To deny the security of the believer is to misunderstand the heart of God, to misunderstand the gift of Christ, to misunderstand the meaning of the cross, to misunderstand the biblical meaning of salvation.”³ (509).

³ MacArthur, *Romans*, 509.