

Romans 8:33-34 (NKJV)

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Our text this morning could be called a **message to preach to the devil**. We all know what it is like to doubt our salvation. We know what it is like to **fail our Lord** miserably. We then begin to wonder.... **Am I really a believer?** Have I gone too far this time? Have I sinned a sin that will cost my salvation? Is God now going to pour out his wrath upon me?

Then the accuser or one of his cronies enters into this inner conversation. He suggests to us that **we do not deserve salvation**. He reminds us that God is truly a **God of wrath** and we **knew full well** that God hated what we fully intended to do. He will tell us that **we could not possibly be a Christian** if we were to act in such a fashion. He will tell us that a sin **that hideous** could not be covered by the blood of Christ. He will say that **we might as well give up. We can never live the Christian life**. We are just a **major disappointment to God** and He will abandon us for sure.

Paul gives us the perfect argument in today's text to reply to our accuser. He lays it out in reasoning that is irrefutable. So we would all do very well to listen closely to the words of Paul this morning. He will give us fuel to have victory in our next spiritual battle of this kind.

As I read verses 33 and 34 they appear to me to be too tied together to separate. The verses are really making one point. **Charges** that would bring condemnation **cannot stick. Charges** that would bring condemnation **cannot be successful**. And they cannot be successful **due to the strongest possible evidence and logic**.

These two verses are framed in a legal argument. We can place ourselves in a courtroom and imagine the proceedings. It is from this standpoint that we will best understand Paul's argument.

The word for charge is always used in scripture in its legal sense. It is an official **legal accusation of wrongdoing** brought to the court **based on some event**.

Condemnation is the legal severe sentence brought about after a guilty verdict. That is what is at stake in this proceeding.

We place ourselves in the seat of the accused. Christ is the judge. Christ is also the defense attorney. The prosecuting attorney is the devil. We have many accusers. We have the Devil who we are told in Revelations is the accuser of the brethren. He hates us and he desires to exploit every sin we commit. Sin is

always opportunity for the devil. It is his **currency**. He loves sin in the life of a believer because **it gives him room to work**. But his work is not with **the judge**. We will quickly see in this text that the devil will gain no ground there. His real work is directed toward us, to cause us to be **impotent, powerless and pitiful**. He wants to rob us of **assurance, of confidence and of zeal**. He wants to rap ourselves around ourselves and get us spinning in a spiral of self-absorption. The longer he can get us to doubt that **what Christ did counted for us**, the longer he can keep us focused **on ourselves**. And the longer we are focused on ourselves the longer he keeps us distracted from our mission. And not only that, he will tie up other resources in the church ministering to the sinner and those affected by the sin.

But it is not **just the devil** who accuses. Sometimes **our own consciences** accuse us. Our consciences tell us that we are fully guilty of sinning, both knowingly and unknowingly. We tell ourselves that sin deserves God's full penalty. And we know that we are guilty and we chose to be that way. Surely we deserve God's condemnation.

Sometimes others accuse us. They know our sin and they seek to treat us in a way that offers no restoration. They may want to make an example of us because they believe there is **no hope of reconciliation for us**, given the **gravity or type** of sins we have committed.

In the face of these accusations, we need to think about this the way Christ sees all of this. We need to adapt **our views** to the **view from heaven**. And we need to change our logic **to conform to the legal argument** presented here in our text.

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

So in verse 33 we are asked who shall bring a **charge** against God's elect? It is God who justifies. The text could just as easily be translated, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect, God the one justifying? I think the question brings a more powerful presentation of the point Paul is making. He is essentially saying "Who is able to make a charge stick on one of the elect when it is God Himself that justifies the believer?"

Barnhouse says that Justification is the act of God whereby he declares an ungodly man to be perfect while he is still yet ungodly. Martyn Lloyd Jones says that Justification is a judicial declaration to the effect that God has not only

forgiven us, but that He now regards us as just **and righteous** and holy, as if we had never sinned at all. God justifies in a legal manner- according to the law. So you can see here that the argument is made **in the strongest of fashions**. Who can make a charge stick to someone **God has declared to be righteous**. Declaring us **forgiven** takes care of the negative strikes against us. But declaring us **righteous...** that ascribes to us the full weight of the positive. We are not only **not guilty of sin** but we are seen to be **as righteous as Christ**.

Now- how in the world is anyone going to make a charge stick on a person like that?

And remember, this pronouncement has not been some slipshod workmanship. This work was done by God Himself. It is He **that ascribes that righteousness**. He didn't make a **mistake**. There was no fool who gave righteousness to someone who should not have had it. It is the work of God so **it is perfect and right and just**.

If you want a futile job, take the devil's job here. Take the job of throwing accusations at the elect of God.

I have always seen mowing grass as being futile. No matter how many times you do it, you will have to do it again. And it really serves no useful purpose.

Fortunately for our neighbors, my wife regards it differently. But the futility of mowing grass is **nothing** compared to the futility of **throwing accusations against a believer**. Every accusation will be met with the same pronouncement and no attempt will ever succeed.

One obvious application here is that we should avoid such activity **like the plague**. Every effort we have toward **someone who proclaims Christ** is to appeal for **restoration**. If you read what both Paul and Christ had to say about church discipline, you will find that the motivation is always restoration. It may not always be **effective**, but it should always be **tried**. Now there may be some people that will frustrate us. No matter how hard we try we cannot get assurance that this person is a believer. The **evidences** may be few and far between. But we cannot simply allow them to go their own way. We cannot sit back and **passively watch**. The instructions we have from our Lord are clear. We must **initiate contact** and **push for reconciliation**. Think about those even in our church who you regard to have drifted from Christ. What are **YOU** doing about it? This isn't someone else's job. These directions were not just given to elders. They were given to every follower of Christ.

Now, notice in verse 33 how it says **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?**

Look how it describes Christians. It does not call them “those who have decided for Christ.” It calls them **God’s elect**. If you proclaim to be a believer, is this how you think about yourself. We cannot **think of ourselves** as people who are doing our best to live our Christian lives. We cannot **think of ourselves** as people who have little chance of overcoming the obstacles in our way due to our own failings and weakness. When we think that way all of our focus is on **ourselves**. That is not how God refers to us. He says no accusation will stick **because of our status**. And our status is not based on **what we did**, but on **what God did**. We are the **elect**. Basically that puts it all in perspective. Our victory is not assured based on some kind of **internal exertion of our wills**. It is based on the fact that the God who elects us **enables us**. If we see ourselves from only **our** perspective, we will only see the obstacle. We will be like the Israelites who saw Goliath and thought he is too big and too tough for us to fight. We don’t stand a chance. We are weaker than him. He will kill us. **That kind of supposed realistic thinking did nothing to overcome the enemy**. It was David who had **the proper** perspective. He knew it was the will of God that Goliath die and he was willing to be the person through whom God would work. We all have Goliaths in our lives. They are those obstacles that we fear are too big for us to overcome. We are convinced they are **stronger than our ability to overcome**. But the problem is we don’t see ourselves **as God sees us**. Our salvation is not about **what we do** but about what God has set in motion. As such we have all the resources of God at our disposal. **We have got to quit seeing our lives** from the perspective of **our will** and **our resources** and we need to start seeing them from the perspective of **God’s will** and **His resources**. Groundless fears will fade when we walk by faith in the God that has Foreknown, Predestined, Called, Justified and Glorified us.

And we cannot base all our confidence in our **spiritual experiences**. One of the oldest tricks of the devil is to give you a mountain top experience that you allow to convince you that you are right with God. Then you experience a valley and the devil is right there whispering in your ear- see, you are not a believer. If you were, you would **feel like one**. Don’t allow yourself to fall into that trap. God may allow the devil to play with your experiences, but the devil is not able to reverse good doctrine. And good doctrine is an anchor you can depend upon in rough seas.

Now let’s look at verse 34

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. We see in the last verse that God is the justifier. It is God who **created the law, **revealed** the law, **interprets** the law and **applies** the law. Through **Christ's sacrifice**, every demand of the law was fully met for every person who has faith in Christ.**

Now in this verse we see Christ the judge. But this isn't the only place Christ is portrayed as the judge.

John 5:26-30 (NKJV)

26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His (Christ's) voice

29 and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Acts 17:30-31 (NKJV)

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Revelation 6:15-17 (NKJV)

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

We need to let this idea sink into our minds. Christ is the judge. With that in mind let's look at the logic again. **34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**

It is Christ who condemns. But Paul doesn't leave it there. The next four things we see about Christ he shows us because **it is all about what Christ did and is doing** for His children. The beauty of the case that Romans 8 makes regarding the assurance of the believer is that it keeps coming back to **what God does**. That is what makes our salvation so secure.

Paul is going to lay out 4 things that will show us that there is no one out there who can force Christ's hand in condemning us.

We are learning about the judge, about the condemner. And what Paul is about to show us **is all we need to know** to be confident that Christ cannot possibly condemn the elect.

First Christ died. Now, why did Christ die? He had no sin. He didn't need to die to satisfy the justice of God. And God is good, so he would not have made His Son suffer for no apparent reason. No, we know why Christ died.

God meted out to Christ the condemnation that we deserved. We deserved death. Christ took it on our behalf. Now think about this. How could Christ be **the condemner** if He has already **paid the price of our condemnation**? Christ would be the last one in the world that would condemn us. He knows firsthand that the full price of our condemnation was paid. He has the scars on His body to prove it. Then He said it was finished. The payment for our sin was accomplished once and for all.

The justice of God is a frightening thing. God will never overlook a sin. God isn't like so many parents, making rule after rule and threat after threat but never enforcing any of them. No, God set in place every law with a purpose and there is a punishment for not abiding by them. Every one! So should you be afraid?

Well, **if you are not in Christ**, if you have never trusted Him to save you from your sins, you would be wise to not allow sleep to come to your eyes before you get right with God. **God's justice is absolute**. And it only requires **one sin**, one act of rebellion on our part to deserve His full wrath. We were even **born** in a state of that condemnation. So call on Christ today while you can.

But what if you are **in Christ**? Should you still be afraid of condemnation?

Absolutely not. In fact, God's justice is now your greatest comfort. You might

ask, how can that be? How can God's justice now **convince me that I am safe?** You might say, "I know myself. I know that I have sinned against God. How can justice be a friend to **me?**"

Well think about it. Christ paid for your sin. Christ paid the full price for every sin that every believer would ever commit. That was justice.

If I were to speed down the highway today and I were to be pulled over and forced to pay a fine, when I paid that fine justice would be met. If I were to receive another fine in the mail for that same speeding violation, that would be unjust. Justice demands that the penalty is met. But justice forbids the same penalty to be paid twice for the same violation.

That is why a believer can be glad for justice. Christ cannot punish the sins of His people. It would be a **violation of justice.** Christ has no intent to punish His children, as they are dearly loved to Him. But even if they weren't, Christ could not punish them due to justice. That is how profoundly Christ's death paid our debt. And that is how significant His death is to their well being.

Then we are told that

furthermore Christ is also risen,

Romans 4:24-25 (NKJV)

24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Christ was raised, not to **provide us** justification but to **show that His work was successful.** His resurrection is **proof of our justification.** I Cor 15 goes into great depth in showing how important the resurrection is to our salvation. It was absolutely necessary to show the success of our salvation. By God raising Christ, God was basically saying, I am satisfied with what Christ did. God showed that Christ had not only overcome sin but had overcome death. Christ was victorious in everything He attempted on our behalf.

who is even at the right hand of God,

Philippians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

We see here that God was exalting Christ and giving him the highest place of honor. That is where Christ sits. This is another affirmation to us regarding the success of His mission. If he were a failure he certainly would not have been exalted.

And because Christ is in such a seat of significance we can know that we are safe.

But there is more significance in this statement. Let's look at another verse.

Psalm 110:1 (NKJV)

1 A Psalm of David. The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

We see here that Christ sits in rest from what He has done. There is no more needing done in our justification. It is finished forever. All there is to do now **in relation to justification** is to wait to have those who are not justified punished. But there is still more.

Hebrews 10:11-14 (NKJV)

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

This passage is very significant. It ties sitting at the right hand of God to the priesthood.

A priest is someone who has two functions. He **offers sacrifices for sin** and he **mediates between God and man in behalf of man.**

Well Christ was our great High Priest. And he completed the first part. **He offered sacrifices for sins.**

If you look at the plans for the temple of God you will find no chairs in the Holy of Holies. Why is that? It is because every priest stands ministering. There is never an end to the need of their sacrifices. Because their sacrifices could not take sins away. They could only cover them. So the priests were always standing. They were busy. They were active. And they had to be. They were dealing with a continual stream of sin that required a continual stream of blood. The blood of sheep could not justify. It could only point forward to the one to come that could justify.

But Christ offered **one** sacrifice. That is all that was needed. In fact, another sacrifice would have been an insult. His sacrifice was complete. And after that, all there was to do was to sit down at the right hand of God. There was absolutely nothing more that **could** be done or **should** be done to redeem His people from their sins.

So we have Christ, the one that died, the one that God raised again, placed in the greatest position of honor in existence. And He is seated there because His work was so excellently completed. Now, how could He **condemn** a child of His? He would have to have a fight with God the Father regarding the success of His endeavor. He would have to argue that He did not deserve to sit at God's right hand because there is a child of His that His work did not accomplish its end. If Christ were to condemn one of His children, he would have to relinquish the honor of the glory that was given Him.

And now for the final point in our 2 verses.

who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:24-25 (NKJV)

24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Mr. Hodge says that by Christ interceding we are to understand that Christ is continuing to secure for His people the benefits of His death. It is through Christ we obtain every blessing. Christ is at God's right hand, not only **for His own benefit but for ours as well**. It is through Christ that we have access to God the Father. While Christ is there **we will lack nothing essential** for our final salvation and glorification.

I have a boss who lives on the east coast. He, for whatever reason, trusts my judgment and trusts me as an employee. But he does not know me very well. Now I realize that he could be told gossip about me. With the distance between us and how little I see him I realize that this relationship could be marred by an insinuation that I was not serving his best interest. I hope that never happens but I realize that **it could**.

But it is not like that with God. We have Christ in the seat of honor. And we have seen in Romans how He has already shown his commitment to our best interest. So we can be confident that nothing can intrude into our relationship with God

because we have Christ in the seat of honor. And Christ is interceding for us. He is making sure we gain the full benefit of the provisions He put in place.

So we come to the mountain top of all of this solid evidence. And we look from the top and we see that there is no one or nothing that can make a claim stick against us. We look from this mountaintop and see nothing that can ultimately harm us. Christ **died for us, was resurrected for us, sits at the right hand of God for us, and intercedes for us.** What in the world could possibly make Him turn against those He has done so much **to secure for eternity?** He would have to prove all His efforts were not complete. It would undo the salvation of **all** if we were to find there were errors in the salvation Christ provided for us.

Do you see the rock solid assurance we are provided here? It is nothing short of amazing.

We would all do well to stop looking at our lives **from a sight picture** and see ourselves in the light of the **faith that we were given.** If we are the elect, our **salvation could not possibly be more rock solid.** And it would be impossible to be given any more assurance that we have everything we need in Christ. He is interceding for us, for crying out loud. We need to **remember that** this week as we face our obstacles, as we face our goliaths, as we face our difficulties, and as we face our opportunities to minister to each other.

Who can make an accusation **stick?** Who can cause us to be **condemned?** When **Christ is the judge** and the **judge has died to secure our pardon, resurrected to prove His success, was seated at God's right hand in ultimate honor and uses that position to intercede for us.** I would say we are in pretty good shape. Let's act like it!