

Title:                   **“WHAT SHALL WE  
THEN SAY TO THESE THINGS?”**

Text:                   Romans 8:31-39

Subject:               *Assurance Based upon the Purpose of God*

Date:                   Sunday Evening—May 23, 2004

Tape #        Y-23b

Reading:       *Bob Poncer and James Jordan*

Introduction:

What is the basis of your assurance and confidence before God? Many, when they think about assurance, recall their past experience of grace, the time when they first believed on Christ, or some climactic event in their lives. Many base their assurance upon their inward grace, their feelings, and even their works. Many even base their confidence upon the opinions others have about them. If you find comfort, assurance, and confidence before God concerning your soul and eternity upon any of these things, your house is built upon sand and will surely fall when contrary winds begin to blow upon it.

The believer’s confidence and assurance arises from and is based upon the purpose of God and the accomplished work of Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture. That is what I want to talk to you about tonight. — **ASSURANCE ARISING FROM AND BASED UPON THE PURPOSE OF GOD.** I like what Martin Luther said...

“Feelings come and feelings go,  
And feelings are deceiving.  
I trust the written Word of God —  
Naught else is worth believing.”

### **GOD OF PURPOSE**

Contrary to popular opinion, the God of this Book, the one true and living God is a God of purpose (Isa. 14:24-27).

(Isaiah 14:24-27) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand: (25) That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. (26) This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out

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upon all the nations. (27) For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

Everything in this world comes to pass and is ruled according to the sovereign, eternal, unalterable, all-inclusive, and sure purpose of our God for the salvation of his elect (Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9-10). It is written, — “*Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed*” (Jer. 51:29), “*that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth*” (Rom. 9:11). The purpose of God is absolute and unconditional.

**GRACE UNCONDITIONAL**

As the purpose of God is absolute and unconditional, the grace of God by which we are saved is also absolute and unconditional. The Scriptures are crystal clear in stating this. Nowhere in the Sacred Volume is salvation ever attributed to, conditioned upon, or determined by man’s works, man’s will, man’s choice, or man’s decision. Every aspect of salvation is specifically declared to be the work of God alone (John 1:12-13; Rom. 9:11-18).

(John 1:12-13) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

(Romans 9:11-18) “(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (14) What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (15) For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.”

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Grace is never spoken of in the Bible as God’s response to man’s choice, but just the opposite. According to this Book the believer’s faith in Christ is the result of God’s eternal choice of his people in Christ. Grace is not conditioned upon something in us. Grace cannot be earned, won, merited, or even attracted or influenced by us in any way. Grace is “unmerited favor.” Grace is God’s sovereign, eternal, and free favor toward sinners who fully deserve his wrath.

**ROMANS 8**

Were I to choose one passage of Holy Scripture that spells out God’s grace most clearly, one passage that identifies and defines God’s sovereign purpose of grace in Christ, it would be Romans chapter 8. In this eighth chapter of Romans the Apostle Paul, writing by divine inspiration, plainly declares what God has done for chosen sinners in Christ and why he has done it. Look, once more, at what our great God has done for us by his great grace in Christ, our great Savior.

**This chapter begins with no condemnation** (v. 1) **and ends with no separation** (vv. 35-39); **and everything in between is grace, grace, grace!** Romans chapter 8 is glorious in its description of...

- The believer’s freedom from condemnation in Christ.
  - Our privileges as Christ’s brethren and as children of God the Father with him.
  - Our everlasting security from all possibility of harm, or separation from our Redeemer, or from his great love.
1. The Lord our God has freed us from all condemnation (vv. 1-4).
  2. He has given us his Spirit, the Spirit of adoption (vv. 15-16).
  3. Grace has made us heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (v. 17).
  4. Grace gives us hope of the resurrection (vv. 23-25).
  5. And God has given us the knowledge and assurance of his wise and good providence (v. 28).

But, why? Why has the holy Lord God done all these things for us? What is the basis of his gracious operations? What is the source from which we have all these blessings, privileges, and benefits of grace?

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All the blessings, privileges, and benefits of grace flow to us from and were infallibly secured to us by God’s eternal purpose of grace, by according to which he created, rules, and shall dispose of the universe (vv. 28-30).

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Tonight, I want to pick up right where I left off this morning. We will begin in verse 31, where Paul raises the question — “*What shall we then say to these things?*” What shall we say to the fact that we are the sons of God? What shall we say to the fact that there is no condemnation to any sinner who trusts Christ? What shall we say to the fact that our great God works all things together for our good according to his sovereign eternal purpose of grace in Christ, in which he has called us his sons, justified us by his grace, and glorified us together with Christ?

I have titled my message — “**WHAT SHALL WE THEN SAY TO THESE THINGS?**” My subject is — **ASSURANCE RISING FROM AND BASED UPON THE REVEALED PURPOSE OF GOD.**

Our confidence and assurance regarding our everlasting salvation does not depend upon our outward circumstances, our inward feelings, or our personal obedience. Our assurance rests entirely upon purpose of God and the person and finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as these things are set forth in the Word of God.

In Romans 8:31-39 the Apostle Paul breaks out into exultant praise. Having established the great truths of God’s rich, free, abundant grace in Christ, he seems unable to restrain himself. Waving the palm branches of victory through Christ, this redeemed sinner defies all his enemies and glories in salvation by Christ, raising these five bold challenges of confident faith. Let’s look at them together. “*What shall we then say to these things?*”

I. I’ll say this — (v. 31) “**If God be for us, who can be against us?**”

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(Psalms 56:9) “When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me.”

The God of all power, of sovereign dominion, and eternal love is for us. He is for us in his sovereign providence, working all things together for our good. God is for us in his saving purpose, in electing love, predestinating grace, effectual calling, perfect justification, and eternal glorification. He is for us in his substitutionary provision, sparing not his only Son. Let earth and hell unite in their rage against God’s elect, we will not fear, for God is for us! — “*The Lord is with us,. Fear them not*” (Num. 14:6).

(Psalms 118:4-9) “Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever. (5) I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place. (6) The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? (7) The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me. (8) *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. (9) *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.”

(Psalms 118:14-17) “The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation. (15) The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. (16) The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. (17) I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.”

II. “**He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?**” (v. 32)

This is heavenly logic, and that’s the only kind of logic that can be trusted.

A. **The Lord God almighty spared not his own Son.**

- The Humiliation of the Incarnation (2 Cor. 8:9)
- The Temptations of the Devil
- The Slanders of Men
- The Betrayal of His Friend
- The Agony of Gethsemane
- The Tortures of Cruel Men

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- The Imputation of Sin
- The Death of the Cross

**B. God our Father, because of his great love for us delivered Christ up to the hands of justice and death for the redemption and salvation of his people.**

**C. Be assured, my brother, my sister, he will with his Son freely give us all things.**

If God has done the greater, he will not leave the less undone. Christ is God’s free grace gift to his elect (1 Cor. 9:15). The gift of Christ includes all other gifts. If God so loved us as to give his Son for us, he will certainly give the Holy Spirit to make that gift effectual.

This is our ground of confidence before God. We are assured of salvation, not because we are assured of our own constancy, but simply because we are assured of the immutability of God’s mercy, love, and grace. We are assured of its immutability because we are assured of its greatness. Infinite love cannot change. That great love that spared not the eternal Son of God, but freely gave him up, cannot fail of its object.

III. **“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”**

(Romans 8:33) “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is God that justifieth.*”

No one can! Nothing can! Satan cannot, he is defeated. The world cannot, it is condemned. The law cannot, it is honored. God in justice cannot, “*it is God that justifieth.*” Notice that here the word is in the present, linear tense, not because justification is continually being accomplished, but because it is forever efficacious and continually revealed and applied to our hearts as we look to Christ (1 John 1:9). God declares that we are perfectly righteous in Christ continually. He will never charge us with sin. “*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin!*”

IV. **“Who is he that condemneth?”**

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(Romans 8:34) “Who *is* he that condemneth? **It is Christ that died**, yea rather, **that is risen again**, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us.**”

It is impossible that one of Christ’s sheep should ever perish, because Christ died in our place. He was raised again for our justification. He finished the work of our redemption, and sat down in heaven. Christ himself intercedes for us in glory.

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

**Illustration:** *The Woman Taken in Adultery*

V. **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”**

No power, no being, and no act of men, of Satan, or of the demons of hell, can separate us from the Savior’s love. Read verses 35-39 with me and rejoice!

(Romans 8:35-39) “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. {37} Nay, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him that loved us. {38} For **I am persuaded**, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- No Earthly Trouble!
- No Spiritual Trouble!
- Nothing In Heaven!
- Nothing In Earth!
- Nothing In Us!
- Nothing In Time!
- Nothing In Eternity!

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- The purpose of God must stand!
- The blood of Christ shall never lose its power!
- The seal of the Spirit cannot be broken!
- The promise of God cannot fail!

(Malachi 3:6) “For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Amen.