

05/29/11

Friend of God #5 – God Loving Us – Romans 8:31-39

Intro

- Christ is risen from the grave...come awake...come awake (church)
 - We are here this morning first and foremost to celebrate a risen Savior
 - that should cause us to come awake as the we just sang....

- Good morning, my name is Andy Woodall and I have had the privilege of serving here at Faith for the past 12 years as the pastor of student ministries
 - prior to that I did a one year academic internship here in conjunction with Baptist Bible College, Clarks Summit, PA to complete a Master of Divinity degree.
 - this was before we had our seminary.
 - I have been married to my most wonderful wife Julie for 17 years, and have
 - four one man-child and 3 kids – awesome
 - Ages 14, 11, 9 and 5
 - you feel free to encourage and correct them as needed
 - my wife and I can use all the help we can get, both as believers and as parents on this journey of life....

- and we are very appreciative of all the wonderful friends we have within our church family that have helped Julie and I and our family grow in Christ.

- and I hope you can say the same....
 - that you have close enough friends in this body of believers that you are
 - genuinely “living life together”
 - That means...
 - You are able to call someone in this church family when:
 - you need help with a household project
 - you are struggling with ungodly thoughts
 - you have to run to the hospital in the middle of the night due to personal Sickness, or spouse or child
 - when you receive difficult news about a loved one
 - when you got a job promotion, award, major life event to celebrate

- you have friends that love you
 - not just friends that play pranks on you
 - or make you the blunt of the jokes....although that can be fun...sometimes too fun

- I hope you have some close friends
 - If you don't, I want to challenge you to
 - speaking of which, I am going to do something that is going to make many very uncomfortable right now
 - look around... everyone should have someone within one seat away from you
 - as you look around, everyone should be sitting within one seat of someone
 - if someone is sitting alone, I am going to ask you, you and your spouse, or you and your family
 - To go sit with that person

- or invite that person to sit with you
 - I have this rule in our Student Ministry
 - no one sits alone

Now, back to friends,

Here's the brief version of my story and how...

God used three key things to draw me to Himself and change my heart

- God used
 - Divorce and pain
 - His attribute of friendship
 - Gospel – His love specifically

-he used my parent's divorce at the age of seven to open my eyes to the reality of sin and pain in this world and the sin in my own heart

- He used His attribute of friendship during a time when I desperately longed for a friend that I did not have to leave...or that did not leave me
 - I switched schools a few times between ages 7-9
 - between moving and changing schools...I wanted a good friend.

At age nine I began to attend a church on the east side of Indianapolis named Heather Hills Baptist Church.

- it was there that I first heard the gospel – the good news
 - what do I mean by that, here is a simple way to remember it....

God created us to be with Him

Our sin separates us from God

Sins can't be paid for by our good deeds

Paying the price for sin Jesus died and rose again

Everyone who believes in Christ alone for salvation has eternal life

Life in Christ begins now and lasts forever

-it was at Heather Hills that I was told the truth from God's word, that God wanted to be my friend...

Solomon makes the point: There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

Prov.18:24b

The apostle Paul said: For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life - Romans 5:10

- we all start out enemies of God until God changed my condition through Christ
 - he reconciled me, or "returned favor" to me through Christ

Jesus said: Greater love has no man than this, than one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you obey my commandments. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you - John 15:13-15

- I don't know where you find yourself today, but I am confident of this
 - you won't find a better, more loving friend than the Lord.

-also, the Bible is clear – there are **Two major categories of people in this world:**

- 1) those who are **Friends of God**, saved by grace through faith in Christ alone
- 2) those who are **Enemies of God**....that have the opportunity to become a friend of God

-We have the privilege today of bringing together several dynamics in our worship service

- First being, like every Sunday for us, we are here to worship our risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

-second, We have chosen as a church, being in the United States, to observe Memorial Day in our service

-Remembering loved ones, friends, and people who have fought to preserve our freedoms in the past

-And recognizing those who are serving, or have loved ones serving in our military today

-Freedom has a price tag, does it not...

-and some of you hear are very much in tune with it's cost

To you we say "thank you"

-We also are here to recognize and remember the One who has paid the greatest sacrifice of all time in order to meet the greatest need of all mankind, the freedom from sin and spiritual death

Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Galatians 5:1a It was for freedom that Christ set us free.

-Christ's death, burial and resurrection set us free.

-a third dynamic of this worship service is the series we are in....A friend of God

-for those of you joining us for the first time today, here is a quick review of what we have talked about

Week 1: An Outrageous Possibility James 2:14-26 Pastor Viars

-that we can be God's friend

Week 2: God Reaching out to us (that He comes to us)– Rev.3:14-22 Pastor Dutton

-the God of all creation Created us to be with Him and

Week 3: God indwelling us – I Cor.6:19-20 Pastor Viars

God bought us through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and God gave us new life through the Holy Spirit – which is housed in the life of every believer in Christ

Week 4: God Ruling us - Romans 10 Pastor Viars

Jesus being King and ruler over your life means you live for His glory in this sin cursed world,

-today we want to build on those truths and talk about...

Week 5: God Loving Us – Romans 8

Now, as we begin to put all this together, I want to ask you some questions:

- if someone who does not know God was to listen to what you say
 - and watch what you do
 - and observe your attitude....for one week
 - regarding your friendship with God....
 - what would they say about your friendship with God?
- what kind of image would this person have of God
 - would this person think your friendship is more about you, or more about God?
 - would this person conclude that God is your:
 - friend or your enemy?
 - that God is against you or for you?
 - that God has provided for you or is building a case against you?
 - would that person walk away saying – wow, God is a loving friend, How can I be his friend?
 - or would that person walk away thinking...that’s no friendship
 - I want nothing to do with God.

-with that in mind,

-I would like to direct you to Romans 8 in God’s word, Romans 8:31-39

-this is located on page 124 in the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you
Read Rom.8:31-39

-While your finger is there, I want us to take a quick walk through Romans to understand its purpose. I want to give you five words to outline Romans

- **Condemnation (1-3):** All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory
- **Justification (3:12-5):** God has declared righteous those who trust in Christ alone
- **Sanctification (6-8):** Believers in Christ have been set apart unto God to grow...
- **Sovereignty (9-11):** God is in control – of His Nation Israel and of His NT church
- **Glorification (12-16):** Practical areas and ways we are to bring God glory in life

So where are we this morning....

- in Romans 8 we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at work in the life of the person who
 - has trusted Christ as Savior and Lord...
 - and the apostle Paul is now explaining practically what God loving us looks like.

-let’s read Romans 8:31-39 and discover **4 truths about God loving His children that enables us to live victorious lives.**

-To the believer in Jesus Christ...these are truths about you

-To the person here not clear about your relationship with Christ, or know you don’t have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

-these are truths available to you

-the context of our passage, I am going to talk to those who have personally professed Jesus

Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

-you have repented of your sin and are taking steps of growth in your walk w/Christ

-To those who have not made that decision, I pray that you will make it today

-and that in listening to this message God will use His Holy Spirit to bring you to an understanding of your need for a savior

-and use the Power of His word to penetrate your heart and change you today

-that you would believe in Christ alone for your salvation...

- and become A FRIEND OF GOD today

-truth #1 is

I. God is for you (vv.31-32)

-God is for you

- We need to recognize the “If God is for us is a (ei –conditional participle) signifying a fulfilled condition, not a mere possibility. The meaning of the first clause is therefore “*Because* God is for us.”

-Now think for a minute about friends you have had and have now

-some you would say...without a doubt – that person was for me...all the time

-how did you know that?

Is that just because the person agreed with you all the time?

At the core of that, you come to find out the person that is for you is the Friend that is going to be willing to communicate to you truth...

-that you may not be as right as you think you are

-that you thinking you are patient does not mean you really are

-this friend is for you and loves you enough to tell you

-When you have a boss that is for you....

-that doesn't mean he allows you to slack...

-when your parents are “for you” that doesn't mean they go along with your plans

-for a believer in Jesus Christ – what does it mean for God to be for us...

-it means...

A. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in your life

-Romans 8 is one of the most, if not the most, comprehensive chapter in the Bible that explains to us how God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in the life of a believer.

-it is very clear in this chapter alone that God consists of 3 persons. One God, three persons.

-marriage is somewhat of an example, two people...one marriage

-so when Paul says in Romans 8 God is for us....

1) God is directly ministering to the believer Himself. He does not just say, I will send one of my angels to say “hi”

-you have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at work in you, on you, for you...

-and....

2) He equips us so that no one can stand against us...(vv.1-30)

- so the question is, How?

I want to point out a few things in verses 1-30, then continue in verses 31-39

-one of the keys to Bible study if you run across statements, conditional clauses, or connecting words like “therefore” – you want to make sure you read what came in the preceding verses

-notice with me in verses 1-30

v.1 those who are in Christ...

v.2 Spirit of Life in Christ set us free

v.3 God the Father sent God the son

- v.4-6 Holy Spirit – there to guide you
- v.7-8 God the Father has a standard and can be pleased
- v.9 Spirit of God dwells in you
- v10 Christ is in you
- v11 Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you (believer)
- v13-14 HS leads you according to God the Father's plan
- v14-15 made sons of God, God the father leads His children
- v16 HS testifies we are God's children
- v17 Heirs of God and heirs with Christ
- v26 Spirit helps in our weakness
- v26-27 Spirit intercedes on our behalf according to the will of God
 - how encouraging is it to know someone is praying for you
 - how about God the fact that God the HS talks to God the Father on your behalf.
 - That's God loving you....
- V28-29 God the father uses ALL THINGS to conform us to the image of His

B. He did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up

- this should cause us to think about an OT situation of Abraham and Issac....
 - Genesis 22:12 "You have not withheld (spared) your son." Then God directed Abraham to spare Isaac and to offer a ram as a substitute (Gen. 22:2-14), whereas God offered His own Son as the Sacrifice for sin (John 1:29).
- You may have some friends that spare no expense to help you, encourage you, love you
 - You know, as I counsel people through our ministry....teens, parents, singles, couples...and just pastor here at Faith in Lafayette
 - some beliefs, attitudes and words that have been conveyed by some are:
 - Nobody loves me
 - I am not lovable
 - Or, I think I am lovable, but something must be wrong with me...
 - Some have said, like the Psalmist, "Has God abandoned me?"
 - God can't love me
 - God doesn't love me
 - listen to this, God didn't just "not spare" the riches of Heaven
 - God did not get out the fine china, or the red carpet so we feel good or look good
 - He exposes our greatest need, forgiveness of sin, and spared nothing
 - He gave Himself, His only Son,
- John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
- and God does not say, as a friend, and one who loves you....
 - oh, I might give my Son to die for you....
 - it is finished. Done already.

-He has demonstrated His love

I John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

-But not only that, He says

C. He will give us “all things”

- 1) Does not mean all things on the wish list
- 2) Does mean “all things” pertaining to the context of the passage

-reminder – a principle of Bible study – pay attention to repeated words and phrases
“all things” (though it sounds general) is used very purposefully

-another principle of Bible study is - interpret Scripture in light of Scripture
-“all things” is used 137 times in the Bible (this would make a great word/phrase) study

Colossians 1:16-17 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

I Timothy 4:8 bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things
Phil.3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

Romans 8:28-29 and we know that God works all things together for good....to conform us into the image of Christ.

-we then are given commands regarding “all things”

Phil.2:14 Do all things without grumbling and complaining

Ephesians 5:20 Give thanks in all things always....

Colossians Children/teens be obedient to your parents in all things

_and we are given hope in all things

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Our God is the God of “ALL THINGS”

He is a loving friend that will give you all things that are necessary to grow you spiritually

Point: The God of all things is your loving friend who is for you. God intends this truth to impact and direct your view of all things.

-in addition to being FOR YOU....

II. God has defended you (vv.33-34)

-you know, going to the principal's office in school can mean one of two things

- 1) You are in deep...trouble
- 2) You did something really good

-now, the real difference is if you have a relationship with the principal

Think about the difference....

-if you know the principal, and you have done something really good

-going to the principal's is great...encouraging

-but the language here is stronger than the principal's office, it's a courtroom....

A. He is your defending attorney, not your prosecuting attorney

-some hold the view – “God is out to get me”

God does not hide around the corner of your life and look for ways to

Irritate you, hurt you, make you made, make you hurt

Some really believe “God hates me”

-He has already provided the sufficient payment to defend you...

Romans 8:1 says Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The life of a believer is about living freely for Christ,

Not abusing yourself for past failures

God is letting you know....

His focus is on defense, freedom, and growth...

God is not out to get you, but he is out to grow you.

Since that is true, we need to understand that....

B. He is your Judge

Psalms 7:11 God is our righteous judge...

Romans 2:16 God will judge the secrets of men

-when you try to be your own judge, you end up beating yourself up....

-when you allow the fear of man to be your judge, or guiding force

-this ensnares you.. Proverbs 29:25

-life is one vicious circle

C. He provided the payment

-the same God that sets the standard has provided the only sufficient payment for that standard

Hebrews 9:22 says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Colossians 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross

Point: God, Who alone is Judge, has paid the price for your sin and wants you to freely pursue and enjoy your relationship with Him.

III. God's love can't be separated from you (vv.35-36)

-you know, some friends come and some go

-some you are with over the long haul

-there is a bond

-for believers, it's amazing, you can go for a long time without seeing each

Other, then pick right back up where you left off....

-unfortunately we are way to familiar with love that separates

-marriages, parent child relationships, friendships, work relationships

One of the characteristics of God's love and friendship with his children it nothing or no one can separate us from His love, and

A. He initiates His love

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

B. He is the standard of love

I John 4:8 says "God is love"

I Corinthians 13:4-8 gives us an outline of God's definition of what love is and is not.

And , let's recognize too

C. "You can't be separated from the love of Christ" does not mean:

- 3) you cannot or will not suffer
- 4) You will feel warm and fuzzy inside all the time
- 5) You can do something to make God love you more
- 6) You can do something to make God love you less

D. His love involves growing pains

Quoting from the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) version of Psalm 44:22, Paul continues, *Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."* In other words, Christians should not be surprised when they have to endure suffering for the sake of Christ...

Before Paul wrote this epistle, God's faithful people had suffered for centuries, not only at the hands of Gentiles but also at the hands of fellow Jews. They "experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword... (Heb. 11:36-38).

2 Timothy 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

The cost of faithfulness to God has always been high. Jesus declared, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:37-39). Paul assured his beloved Timothy that "indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12).

If a professing Christian turns his back on the things of God or lives persistently in sin, he proves that he never belonged to Christ at all. Such people have not lost their salvation but have never received it. About such nominal Christians, John said, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us" (1 John 2:19).

If the things of the world continually keep a person from the things of God, that person proves he is not a child of God.

Point: No trial or harm is able to take away or change God loving us; therefore we are able to pursue the hardships of life with great confidence.

-our fourth and final truth about God's love in this passage provides incredible hope

IV. God's love enables you to overwhelmingly conquer (vv.37-39)

A. God says "You can" through him

-so to the believer who says

"I can't" do what God has commanded me to do

-love this person

-be patient, raise godly children

-be kind to this person at work...

-based on the Bible, that is not true

B. God desires for you not just to get by, or just exist

-that's the world's way

C. God has made you to conquer

-not destroy conquer, but

-you are able to succeed in following God and being an example to other

-you are able to have a godly attitude....so that the world may see Christ in you

D. God has made you to overwhelmingly conquer

Point: No thing, person, or idea can separate you from God's love and friendship; It's time for you to live for Him with confidence.

"For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim. 1:12)

The Lord is a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

God is the very best and most important friend anyone could ever have.

Some today need to be reminded of these truths as a believer and take steps of growth in your thinking and living to give the right account of God loving you to those you are around

Others, today, you need to make the decision to trust Christ as your savior and go from being God's enemy to being one of His friends.

We would love to talk more with you about that any time, even today...

I trust that these four truths will be lived out by us all so that we may live victorious lives for Him.