

You Are Eternally Secure

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Would you kindly open your Bible to Romans 1, despite the fact that our verse is found in Romans 8. We're gonna sneak up on it because if Romans is a mountain range, then we are going to climb Mount Everest today and we are gonna get to the zenith in Romans 8:38-39. So as you prepare in Romans 1, let me begin with a trick question. I'm telling you in advance you're gonna biff it on this so think very very carefully.

The subject at hand today is eternal security, knowing that grace is indeed not just pretty good but it is amazing and it is sealed for you if you are in Christ. Think of it like this, you right now where you are seated, you're the unjustified person and you are a condemned, damned sinner. That's where you're at right now, but up here where I stand, this is the realm of justification, the cross, that's eternity, that's where our God reigns, that is eternity. When you are unregenerated, you're in the realm of the dead sinner. God makes you alive in Christ and he places you in the realm of justification. Now here's the glitch: some of us have a tendency to think, "Even though I've been brought into the realm of justification, I can find myself back out there again," and your Christian walk is not one that is joy-filled and assured, instead you have wobbly knees and you are lacking joy because you fail to understand your salvation has been secured and you are forever justified.

So as a Christian, if you are in Christ, where is your salvation right now? Where are you positionally right now? You're thinking, "Well, I, I'm up here with you." Wrong. Your salvation is not here in the realm of justification, your salvation is secured for you in heaven. That is where your salvation reigns, lives rather. It does not reside in you. It does not stay secure because of your performance, your salvation is secure because it is not incumbent upon you. It resides in heaven, in Christ, and you did not get yourself saved. You did not make yourself alive. You cannot lose your salvation, your salvation is not just being secured, it has been secured. In eternity past, it was decreed, it was declared, it was determined, and if you are in Christ, your salvation, it's not just up here, it's in heaven and you should leave this place today with your knees strengthened, no longer living in the realm of, "How am I doing today? Am I in? Am I out? Do I believe enough? Am I doing enough?" Let us settle it once and for all, if you are in Christ, you are eternally secure and that is why our Bible verse in the treasure chest of God's word, it is the crown jewel that we're gonna take a look at today.

But you might be here today and you're not in Christ. Please note: nothing you're going to hear for the next half hour has anything to do with you. You get none of this. This is not for you. You get to eavesdrop, you get to hear these beautiful promises that actually were the instrument in helping Charles Spurgeon decide, "If I am eternally secure, if that's what God does for me, I want in." That's my hope for you today. Right now, that's where you live, that's your eternity, it is in hell. Today could be the day of salvation for you as you listen to the crown jewel of our book of Romans which is Romans 8:38-39.

Now there are some people here who don't believe in this doctrine of eternal security. I would like to address you for just a moment. I get you. I understand. Believe me, I understand. There are verses in the Bible that seem to indicate, "Yikes! It looks like you could actually lose your salvation!" People regularly run to Hebrews 6, "Yikes! I was saved but now I'm not saved!" That is the conditional security view and I would just like to suggest to you based on the title alone, if my salvation is conditional, I'm frightened, I have to confess to you. While I respect you for your belief because I understand there are some Bible verses that seem to indicate it, if my salvation is contingent upon me, I guarantee you I will blow it and so will you. Furthermore, might I remind you that the conditional security, that you can lose your salvation view, it smells an awful lot like Roman Catholicism to me.

There was a Cardinal during the Protestant Reformation who believed that what you're about to hear is the chief heresy of the Protestants, not justification, you might think that, the Reformers did, no, the Catholics saw the doctrine of perseverance of the saints as being abominable because you would no longer be in slavery to a system, you would no longer have to do what you were commanded to do. When we believe in grace alone, faith alone, in Christ alone, eternally secure, we are just acting like good Protestants. To fail to do so is really to buy into a works-based system that, "I gotta do something to keep myself up here in the land of justification."

How do we figure out which verses are really the right ones? Well, this is also a Protestant concept, it's called the analogy of Scripture. Scripture interprets Scripture. You interpret the unclear in light of the clear. Think of it like this, you've got some Bible verses, Hebrews 6 for instance, we're gonna put it on a scale. It seems to indicate, "Hm, you can lose your salvation," and there are verses that appear to look that way. On the other hand of the scale, you've got verses like ours, Romans 8:38-39, that are crystal clear, "Oh no, you can't." So how do we figure out which way the scale tips? Well, I would like to suggest to you that while there are verses that seem to indicate you can lose your salvation, there is a mountain of verses that tell you you cannot starting in Genesis 1. How do we figure out which one is correct? You simply weigh them and what you discover is far more verses are crystal clear that you can't lose your salvation and now we're going to interpret the unclear in that light.

Now for instance, if I said to you 50 times this morning, "Don't go out that door. Whatever you do, do not go out that door," and I repeated it over and over and over again, and then I said, "When you're on the other side of that door, make sure you tie your shoes," you might stop and think, "Now wait a second, he just told me 50 times don't go

through that door and then he said when I'm on the other side of that door, I should tie my shoes. What do I do with that?" Well, you don't discard the 50 clear admonitions, you figure out, "Alright, so there must be an explanation for this," like there is for Hebrews 6, like there is for any other verse that seems to hint that you can lose your salvation. "No, I am confident, the Bible is clear, now I'm gonna figure these out." And there would be an explanation for why I commanded you to not go through that door but then said when you're on the other side of the door, and we could probably all concoct some way to make those harmonize.

That's what we do with this doctrine, the doctrine of conditional security isn't secure at all. It's right in the title conditional insecurity, it's kind of like Joel Osteen and good theology, they just – that wasn't in my notes – they don't go together. If you went to a bank with a million dollars and you said, "Is my money gonna be secure?" and the banker says, "Oh, it's absolutely secure if you can remember this 20-digit password without writing it down anyplace. Your money is totally secure if..." You'd go, "Well, it's not secure at all." And the same thing is true with your salvation, it is either eternally secure or it is not and that is the case that I would like to make with you today.

Your salvation is eternally secure. After all, if we've been granted eternal life, it's not eternal if I can biff it, it would be conditional life, but Jesus tells us he gives us eternal life. We don't get eternal life for ourselves. We don't keep eternal life any more than we get ourselves glorified. Do you have plans for that? Do you have some system worked out where you're gonna get yourself to heaven and glorified? No. You couldn't get yourself saved, you can't even keep yourself, let alone get yourself glorified but God does and he promises and it's in his word and that should cause us to leave this place today with two thoughts. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound." Praise God! He took me out of a swamp and he has set my feet on the rock and he has granted me everything that is given to the Son. It should cause us to rejoice as we take the Lord's supper and we're reminded of his redeeming work that was secured for us in eternity past and it should cause us to leave this place to find an unregenerated Charles Spurgeon to say, "Your sins can be forgiven once for all, nailed to a tree. You have a position secured for you in heaven. Repent and put your trust in that Savior."

So let's take a look at Romans 1 now as we begin to scale Mount Everest, which is known as the book of Romans. Romans 8:38-39 I believe is that jewel but we need to recognize that it's really Paul's exclamation point because he's been building and making the case all the way along. It's not like he drops a bomb on us at the end of Romans 8 and goes, "You're eternally secure." He talks about it all through the book of Romans and he moves from somewhat cryptic, unclear to crystal clear.

Starting with Romans 1:1-4. Romans 1:1-4,

1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of

God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,

How does that speak of eternal security? Well, what Paul has just described for you is what happened in eternity past. Before the universe was created, God determined a plan, he was gonna build a universe, he was gonna put two people on who were perfect with one law, knowing that he'd break the law. Why? So that he could send his Son at just the right time to redeem a body of believers, an elect group unto himself called the church of Jesus Christ, not of Latter Day Saints, so that for all of eternity he can be known for his amazing grace. As we get to Romans, he's already accomplished all of that. Unhitch the Old Testament? Are you kidding me? In the Old Testament we see God is working out his plan. Has he missed the mark yet? Has he failed yet? Has he not delivered on every single thing that he said he would do? You and I should read the Old Testament and go, "He was working out his plan of salvation and he's been successful so far. I think I can sleep at night knowing that he's going to be successful in the future."

Let's keep going. Turn your Bible to Romans 4:7-8. Romans 4:7-8.

7 Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.

God doesn't take your sins into account, make you alive in Christ and then go, "You know what? I think I'm gonna take those sins into account again. I'm gonna go back on my word. They were dead, I made them alive, ah, I'm gonna kill them spiritually again and have their sins accounted to them." That is not at all what this verse tells us.

Go to Romans 5:1,

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Paul's getting pretty clear now, isn't he?

Let's move forward, Romans 5:9-10. Romans 5:9-10, and as we take a look at these verses, Greek is important in this instance. Remember, there's different ways that the Greek language works. The Greek language has slightly different tenses and voices than we do. For instance, you've got the active, middle and passive voice. It describes the type of action that's being taking place. When I'm in the active voice, I'm acting, I'm doing something. When I speak in the middle voice in Greek, I'm acting on myself. The passive voice is I'm being acted upon. So the active voice is, "I throw." I throw something. The middle voice is, "I'm being thrown." Rather, I'm throwing myself. The passive voice is, "I am being or I have been thrown." Do you hear the difference? I'm acting, I'm acting upon myself, or something external is acting upon me. That's the passive voice.

Let's take a look at Romans 5:9-10. Romans 5, "Much more then, having now been justified," it's past tense passive. Past tense. Do you know when you got saved? You think, "Oh, wait a second, let me check the back of my Bible, I wrote it down." Wrong. God wrote it in his book before eternity began. That's when you were saved. So if you ever wonder and get into that panic mode of when was I saved, you can go, "Oh, Romans 5:9-10. I was saved before God created the universe." That's when you were saved and it was acted upon you. You didn't middle voice, justify yourself, you were justified from the outside in.

Romans 5:9-10,

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 ... we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

It's already been acted upon you. You've been saved in eternity past. You are going to be saved forever. That's what Paul is telling us.

Romans 6:22-23. Romans 6:22-23,

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hey, look, God gave you the gift of eternal life but he's taking it back. No, this is clear and, again, you've got an aorist passive tense and voice going on here. This has already happened to you. This has already been secured for you.

Now we move into Romans 7 when Paul describes this present tense ongoing battle with sin, "I want to do good but I don't do good. The good that I want to do, I don't do. I've got this all goofed up and I just, I sin a lot and I hate it!" And that's instructive for us, which we'll revisit later. But then what does Paul say? "Oh, who will save me from this body of death? But thanks be to God because of Jesus Christ, he's forgiven you. Everything is secured for you." And then he launches into a thunderous shout in Romans 8:1. You know the verse,

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But that's not what the Greek says. It could have used *ou* or *un*, which is a strong negation but he uses the strongest possible word, *oudeis* in Greek, and positionally he puts it at the beginning of the sentence as if to scream to you, and I'm going to duplicate the tone that Paul is using, "I sin. I don't want to sin. I just keep doing it. I know I should

do good but I just don't do it. Who's gonna save me from this body of death? Thanks be to our Lord for the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No condemnation!" He thunders it, "No condemnation, saint! Are you in Christ? No condemnation! Not now, not ever!" Let those words resonate in your ears and let them continue to ring as you leave this place so that the next time you hear another voice that says, "You're condemned," you remember Romans 8 and Paul shouting at you, "No condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!"

Let's move forward in Romans 8. Romans 8, we go to verse 29. Romans 8:29. Now if you were gonna pick your clobber verses for the position of eternal security, this would certainly be one of them. Remember active, middle, passive voices. "For those whom He foreknew," verse 29, Romans 8:29,

29 For those whom He foreknew [He foreknew you, past tense, active. God's doing everything in this text] He predestined [He actively, He did it already, it's accomplished already] He predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined [past tense active voice], He also called [active voice]; and these whom He called [past active voice], He also justified [past active tense or active voice]; and these whom He justified [active], He also glorified.

You who are in Christ were known by God before eternity began when he saved you, he justified you and he glorified you.

Now some people would say, "Now let's just slow the roll on this a little bit. There are people who are going to hear this and they're gonna take this as a license to licentiousness." Paul already dealt with that in Romans 6. "Do I go on sinning that grace might more abound? Certainly not!" The doctrine of eternal security, it doesn't cause you to go, "Whoop-de-do, I am off to the sin race track. I am jumping on my stallion and I am gonna ride that thing around and around and around again." The more you ponder this, that these verses are true, before eternity began God saved you, will cause you to hate sin more than anything and ultimately to have joy in him. It is God's active work. It is all of him. Does the human have any responsibility? Sure, we've got responsibility. Do we make genuine decisions? Yes, but it is clear God actively did the saving. God's not gonna save people in the future, he's already done it. He's predetermined it. He declared it, he decreed it and he's delivered it. It is set in stone. Your future is not up for grabs and it certainly doesn't rely on you and your performance, it relies on Christ and his.

Romans 8:33. We're still climbing the mountain but we're getting close. Romans 8:33,

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Even as we assemble here today, Jesus is interceding for you. If you, my dear friend, have the ability to get yourself unsaved, Jesus' intercessory work failed. He didn't accomplish it and he never doesn't accomplish it. Who condemns you? Nobody because you're in Christ. Who can bring an accusation against you? When you listen to the voices in the courtroom of your brain saying, "Guilty! Guilty!" you remember this verse and you throw them out of the courtroom and say, "There are no accusers who can stand against Christ. The gavel has been slammed, it has been predetermined you are not guilty." Don't listen to the voices tell you otherwise. You have been declared by the Judge not guilty.

There are no accusers, including your thoughts, that can condemn you. Do you have thoughts that sometimes continue to nag you? Continue to keep you from having exultant joy? "My chains are gone. I've been set free. Well, maybe the shackles are going back on." Throw that accuser out of God's courtroom. He has, why don't you?

Romans 8:35. Our first list, lists are important not so much for their detail but because of what they're trying to say. Verse 35 of Romans 8,

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

The idea is not to examine each and every one of these little details, it's designed to scream at us, "NOTHING CAN SEPARATE YOU FROM CHRIST. YOUR THOUGHTS MAY DECEIVE YOU. YOUR THOUGHTS ARE LYING." That is the problem with the fall, our brains are busted. We keep thinking the wrong things and we need to remember that God wants to conform you into his Son's image by doing what? Renewing your mind. How do you do that? Why do you need to do that? Because your brain keeps telling you lies. "Okay, maybe I got saved but, oh wow, what I just did last Saturday night. Ooh, the way that I just yelled at my kids. Ooh, I haven't been reading my Bible enough." You're listening to accusers and you're believing them and this verse says, "Stop listening to lies and start believing God's word, right, Jerry?" And he's looking and going, "Well, who are you talking about here?" It's Jess. He's told me his name is Jess but, you know, there's just times I doubt it. So don't be offended, Jimmy. Okay, it's Jess now but Joseph, I just don't know. Okay, you would find it amusing, he'd find it annoying and might I suggest to you when you doubt your salvation so does God. His word said it. When you say, "Not so sure," you're calling God a liar. This is earnest business that we are about. Trust his promises. He's declared it. It is true.

Now we get to our verse, Paul's exclamation point on the entire ascent. We're at the summit. Our verses,

38 For I am convinced [here's our second list] that neither death, nor life, [listen to the negations] neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

Let's take a look at our text with three alliterated points, how Paul was convinced. Paul was convinced of this truth. Guess what voice it was? Passive. Paul didn't persuade himself. The Greek word is *peitho*, it's the verb. He didn't, "You know, I'm taking a look at this and I've kind of convinced myself, do you know what? I don't think I can lose my salvation here." No, God convinced Paul to be convicted of this. That tells you, that tells me when we leave this place, we too ought to be convicted and convinced of this. Convinced. What do you say, wobbly-kneed saint? How's about today? How's about today we just put an end to the voice that is nagging you, that is causing you to doubt, that keeps grabbing you by the ankle and tripping you up and maybe robbing you of seasons of joy? How's about we stake our claim on these verses today? You plant your flag and you stop wobbling? Your knees have been locked and your trembling legs are strengthened when you are persuaded. Be persuaded today. What more does God have to do to persuade you that he has accomplished your salvation than, say, dying for you? Rising from the dead? Ascending into heaven? Be persuaded.

We're convinced about so many things, aren't we? We're convinced about politics, the way the nation ought to be run, sports, entertainment, whatever it happens to be. Boy, hold onto those. Alright, you hold onto those as much as you want to but be persuaded theologically. Paul was and he wants us to be too. Why? Because he knows that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. If you want to look up the verse later, it's Ephesians 1:13-14, we're not sealed through a ceremony, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. That is the covenant seal, God dwelling in you. God dwells in you. He doesn't take up residence and go, "You know, I've had it. I'm out. I checked in but I'm gonna check myself back out again." You are sealed with the Holy Spirit and, again, if you can break that seal, you're more powerful than the Holy Spirit and I think we'd all agree you're not, nor am I, nor is anybody. You are sealed.

Stop listening to the lies. Be done wobbling. Maybe these are some of the lies that you listen to. See if you find yourself in this list of lies. A real Christian, you tell yourself, doesn't doubt. Do you ever say that to yourself? "Real Christians don't doubt, why am I doubting so much?" Well, first of all, let's understand doubt is not disbelief. You have a thought that says, "Oh, you know, I'm not sure I'm saved," or maybe something wild and radical like, "Oh, what if God doesn't exist?" Foolish thoughts and doubt does not mean that you are somehow apostate, it just means you doubted. Do you ever believe the lie that doubt indicates damnation? Thomas doubted. Peter certainly appears to have doubted and been wobbly. It's not a damnable sin. We don't want those thoughts, we want them to go away, but doubt does not mean that you are dead in your trespasses and sin.

Maybe the lie, "Real Christians have 100% assurance." I don't think that's necessary. You should, it's great if you do, but you don't have to. Just because sometimes you don't feel fully convinced that you are his doesn't mean you're not his at all.

Maybe you believe the lie that your life is such a mess, "God clearly doesn't love me." Well, if we are determining God's love based on our circumstances, we are failing to remember the greatest love that could ever be shown to us. We're just failing to remember our biggest problem has been solved. "Alright, I don't have the job, I don't have the

income level, I don't have the kids that look as good as everybody else's kids on Facebook. My life is just, God couldn't possibly love me," says the devil or Job's friends. It's a lie. Dismiss it from the courtroom of your brain.

"Your good works are phony. A real Christian doesn't battle sin this long," you tell yourself. Really? Paul did. Remember Romans 7? Romans 7, he's just battling with sin. What's the difference, though? He was battling with sin. If this is your issue, you think, "Yikes! I'm constantly at war with this besetting sin! I can't be saved!" That is 100%, that's 180 wrong. It is the unbeliever who does not care about their sin. It is only the true convert or the one being converted who does care. Do you care about your sin? That's a very good sign. Don't let that lead you to doubt, let that lead you to rejoice. "I am saved anyway. In this is love, not that we first loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for us." When? When we cleaned ourselves up. When we stopped sinning. While we were yet sinning, Christ died for us.

Do you believe the lie you don't have the same joy that you had when you were saved? Ooh, that's one that gets people. "I just, I don't have that, that, that excitement." Alright, anybody here been married for more than 10 years? Alright, now, ladies, don't be offended yet. You think, "Okay, wait a second, you mean he's not as thrilled as the day that...?" I remember when my wife walked down the aisle, man, I did not plan on this. Nobody gave me this advice, "Get ready, you could sob like a child when you see her coming down," and I fought it like nobody's business. In hindsight, maybe I shouldn't have because that certainly is the way that I was feeling, Sweetheart. It was like [panting,] just couldn't hardly contain myself. Well, now we're 28 years into this, do I still have that buzz? No. Does that mean I love my wife less? Absolutely not. I love her far more profoundly than I did even on that day. It's a different type of love. It grows in its type of love, its complexity and its depth, and so just because you don't have that same sensation, it doesn't mean you're not saved any more than you're not married to your wife because you're not sobbing every time she walks down an aisle.

"Real Christians don't have besetting sins that still ensnare." Is that a lie you believe, thinking you're disqualified from salvation? Oh, yes, I don't know anybody who doesn't have some sort of a besetting sin and if you don't think that you've got one, it's probably pride and self-deception because we all do and it is a forever battle, it is a constant battle, it is a never-ending war against sin. Remember Romans 7? But what was the difference with Paul? He was at war. He hated his sin. Do you hate your sin? That's a good sign.

The question of sin, it's not an if question for the believer, it's a when question, and the answer quite honestly is now. Right now we're all sinning in various ways whether we're cognizant of it or not. Christians sin but they don't love it and they don't act passively toward it. They engage it in the battle. They don't wake up in the morning and say, "Today I sin," and they plan and they plot and they scheme and they connive, they spend their day on the computer getting ready for tonight, they go out, they commit their plans, and then they wake up the next day and go, "And I'm at it again today!" That's the sign of the person who is of the devil, 1 John 3:8-9. Is that you, thought, really? Is that you, Christian? Now if it is, you should examine yourself and see if you're in the faith, but if

you're in that war, that battle, and maybe you're even growing weary of it because it has been decades for you, it's not the sign that you're not saved, my friend, that is the sign that God is persevering you. Do not believe the lies.

There's one more lie: your new sin proves that you're not saved. You're tripping through life, you're kind of getting sanctified and stuff, doing pretty good, keeping that besetting sin mortified, but then all of a sudden maybe you come to this church and you hear a sermon on, pick a topic, coveting, coveting, and you hadn't even pondered it, you didn't even maybe know what the word was, and then all of a sudden you hear this thing about, "Are you desiring other people's stuff? Are you dissatisfied with the things that God has provided for you? When you do that, you are pointing a fist to the heavens and saying, 'You are not doing a good job of running my life. I can do it better. You're in my chair, off with You!'" That's what coveting is and you've never heard that and you realized it's you and you might be inclined to go, "Then I'm not saved. I've been doing that. I've been living in that sin." Indeed, but it's a sin of ignorance.

Think of the process of sanctification and even salvation like you were a busted-up hotel. You're a run-down, ramshackle, it has been abandoned and nobody's been taking care of it. The shutters are falling. The door is off its hinges. That's you before you get saved. God saves you, God redeems you, and then he enters in typically into the lobby, the big thing that's there and he tends to clean it up, probably your besetting sin, all of a sudden you realize, "Yikes! That big ugly thing, I hate that thing more than anything else and I'm going to war against that and I am never going to let it have a breath of air. I'm gonna kill it, kill it, kill it because I hate it." Is God done with the sanctifying process? No. The Holy Spirit then progressively and for each one of us he opens up different doors which is why your thing shouldn't be anybody else's thing and vice-versa, he opens up a door, he shines a flashlight and goes, "Did you know you were coveting?" And then he goes to the next door after you've suddenly started hating that and he goes, "Did you know that looking at those images on the internet is filthy and foul and damnable and a violation of the trust to that young lady you said I'm gonna be the type of man you're imaging I am? Did you know that?" And you go, "Oh, I don't want that." Now does that mean you're not saved? No, it means he's progressively sanctifying you. A revelation of a new sin does not disqualify you from salvation, it actually demonstrates that you are saved.

Be persuaded like Paul was. You're his despite the lies that you tend to believe.

Point 2, take a look at the contrast and the completeness of our text. Look at the list. It's kind of an A to Z and they're negative. It kind of gives it a sharper edge, it's like this can't happen, this can't happen, this can't happen and so it's as if Paul is taking the nail and he's just hammering it in over and over and over again. What's gonna separate you from God's love? Nothing. It is an exhausted list. That's when we get to "nor any other created thing" just in case you're confused that principalities, powers, in other words, angels and demons, nothing, height, depth, anything in between, nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. He tosses in just for good measure in case you didn't get it, "nor any other created thing."

That is a complete list, nothing can separate you from God's love. Do you hear that? Nothing. You can't separate you from God's love. If you can, you will have thwarted God's eternal plan. You will have thwarted Jesus' intercessory work. You will have thwarted the seal and broken the seal of the Holy Spirit. You can't do it. Your parents can't do it either. Your conscience can't do it. Your spouse can't separate you from God's love. Your circumstances cannot separate you from God's love.

Your past, big, ugly, nasty sins cannot separate you from the love of God. May I ask, have they? Have they? Did you commit a whopper before you got saved? Frankly maybe you've committed a whopper since you got saved and you think, "I'm not His child. If I am, I'm kind of the back-row child. I don't deserve all the blessings." You're right, you don't, none of us do. But you think because of that sin, you did something that haunts you to this day, let this verse tell you don't be haunted anymore, dear believer. It's not that we do a brain swipe like we're an Etch-A-Sketch and just go, "I'm gonna forget all of my sins. I throw it in the Sea of Forgetfulness." That's not the point of the verse, it's that we don't go fishing for it.

And when it does start bubbling to the top, you had an abortion and you remember it, it's Mother's Day and you are grieved on Mother's Day, nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Nothing. That can't do it. You struggle with homosexual desires, "Not me. At least, okay, maybe, but just barely." No, not if you're in Christ. Nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Nothing.

What have you done? Is it greater than King Jesus and his ability to forgive you? Nothing. Not even angels or demons can separate you from the love of God. He's not a quitter. "He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it." He is faithful. He doesn't lie. He's not a failure. He's not a loser. Why? Because point 3, you are in Christ. That is our key. In Christ you are secure. Why? Because he's secure. Because he finished it and it has been accomplished and it is hidden in Christ. Look at Paul's language. We're not separated from God's benevolence, his tolerance. "He puts up with me. I won't ever be separated from that." No, no, no, you can't be separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Do you struggle with that? I know a lot of people do, that God loves you, especially in conservative circles. "Whoa, whoa, slow your roll on the God loves me business. We've heard enough of that. That gets abused too much." Well, it might but that does not mean that we should not remember it and rejoice in it, that we can't be separated from the love of God. Do you struggle with being loved by God? May I just tell you as lovingly as I can, get over it. Get over it. He loves you not because you're so lovable but he loves you because you are in Christ. He loves you with as much love as he has for his Son. That's a lot and it can never change and it can never waffle. Might God be grieved over your sins? Absolutely. Does he love you less? Absolutely not. You are hidden in Christ and his love for you never burns out. The embers never grow cold. It's not a romantic love and, "Oo, you're just so lovable!" If we're so lovable, well, do you know what? I would be nervous about my security too frankly, because whatever it is that you think is so lovable about you, it's gonna go away. Gravity's gonna take it and sag it and your sense of humor,

you're gonna get dull of wit, your good looks, whatever you think it is that makes you so wonderful, it's gonna go. But that's not the way God thinks about you. He doesn't think about your wonderful attributes, he thinks about his Son and sees you hidden in him and you are loved by the Father because you are hidden in the Son, redeemed by the power of the Holy Spirit and you have everything in Christ.

Where do we go from here? Where do we go from here? How do we leave this place now that we have been reminded of these truths? Might I suggest to you we do just that, we remember these truths long after we leave this place? You don't have to get the cd, you just need to turn open your Bible to Romans 8:38-39 and be reminded that God's love for you is based on Christ. Your eternity, it was secured in eternity past and you have already been glorified. You don't need to die to be glorified, you already have been and you remember it and you let that encourage you and strengthen you and go beyond that to actually give you joy. "He saved me! He saved me! He didn't save somebody shiny and pretty and famous and rich, he saved me! I'm His! I'm hidden in Him!" It should cause us to leave this place not just going, "Okay, that was a pretty good day," but clicking our heels, telling others and as we take communion saying, "This is why I love my God, He gave His life for me! I deserve to die and instead He died on my behalf. I am not gonna be a mopey Christian anymore. I am not gonna let people hear my knees knock because my God has saved me and I am hidden in Him."

However, you are here today and you are not and you have been eavesdropping into realms that you have no privilege or access to. I am going to plead with you this day be reconciled to God. You have been hearing about the love of God in Christ Jesus, the love of God in Christ Jesus, the love of God in Christ Jesus, and you think, "Oh, that's just so warm and fuzzy. I love that idea of being loved by God." God loves a whole lot more than stuff, he loves righteousness and he loves holiness and God loves justice and I can guarantee you, if you are not hidden in the cleft of the Rock, my friend, he is going to grind you to powder. If all you have ever heard about is meek Jesus who's been loving and hung out with sinners and made meals for people, oh, he did all of that but when that Lamb returns, I promise you, you will beg for the mountains to fall on you and crush you so you do not have to face the wrath of the Lamb. Why? Among other things, you've been neglecting so great a salvation. Forget your lying, forget your lusting, forget your pornography, forget your adultery, forget your any other sin that's a whopper like abortion or homosexuality, you have been neglecting so great a salvation. Maybe you've been coming to this church year after year. You're a young person and you have not submitted, surrendered to the King. You're kind of playing it coy and cool. I've got one foot in with my parents, they see me on Sunday and it's sweet, but your heart and your other foot, it is in the kingdom of darkness and the reality is you're deceiving yourself because you've got two feet firmly planted in the kingdom of darkness and your master is the devil. You are a slave to sin and I promise you, when the benevolent Master returns to gather up his children, if you are not one of them, he will not spare you anything because his mercy and his grace and his lovingkindness, it will be put on display with those whom he has saved but his righteousness and his holiness and his justice, it will be put on display on you.

You have heard that God doesn't just save, he saves to the uttermost. He saves you from top to bottom. You are not so bad and so far gone that you cannot be saved. You are not so sinful that God cannot clean you up. You are not so far gone that his long arm cannot extend to you and bring you into the family and adopt you as his beloved child and keep you as his beloved child. Why would you reject this marvelous offer of salvation? Why? What is it? "I don't need it." Oh, yes you do and maybe you've self-deceived yourself but listen to that conscience in your brain. You have committed crimes against the Sovereign and he is keeping record and not one of those thoughts, not one of those deeds, not one of them will be erased from the book unless you are hidden in Christ Jesus and this day he doesn't just extend an offer, he commands you right now, "Be reconciled to God." Today is the day of salvation and if you have been saved, as we prepare for communion, let us ponder this, there is nothing, nothing, nothing that can separate us from the amazing love of God in Christ Jesus. Let the bread remind you of his body broken. Let the juice remind you of the blood that was shed for you. Why? Because God saved you before eternity past.

Let's pray.

Father, we have Your promise that You have begun a good work in those of us who are saved and You will carry it out to completion, that You can keep us from stumbling and to present us before Your glorious presence without fault and with great joy. Help us to remember that. Help us to believe that. Help us to not waver. Those of us who are in Christ, we praise You for the glorious good news that You love us so much that You sent Your Son to die for us and no one can snatch us from His hand. It is in His mighty name we pray. Amen.