

## Romans

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish  
January 8, 2025  
Romans 8:31-39



### Vss. 31-34a

- Paul has been speaking of how we are safe and secure in Christ and how the Holy Spirit empowers us even when we are weak...which is all the time. How can we even begin to fulfill the ethical demands of Christ as laid out in the Sermon on the Mount apart from the Holy Spirit? It is utterly impossible. We are too weak and on our own we will never be strong enough.
- So if then God is for us, who can possibly stand against us? God's commitment to us is total and complete. The language Paul uses here is drawn from the story of Abraham and Isaac. In Genesis 22:10-12, Abraham has Isaac on the altar and is prepared to sacrifice his only son. He raises his hand to plunge the knife into the boy, but God stops him. In verse 12 the Lord says to Abraham, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me". Thus God's love for us, His commitment to us, is so great that He did not spare His only Son, "But delivered Him over for us all". Now we can know that we can have full faith, trust, and confidence in God, just as He did in Abraham. Surely if God has given us His only Son for our benefit, "how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?".
- Often, as we read this with sinful eyes and we interpret this with sinful minds, we believe that "all things" must mean material things. This is the mistake of the proponents of the Prosperity Gospel and the "Name it and Claim it" crowd. Again recall the Truth of the Sermon on the Mount: your father in heaven knows you need such things, but seek first the Kingdom of God. Paul is rightly speaking of "all things", the food and water we need, yes, but also the Bread and Water of Life, the Spiritual things of God that give us true life.
- So again, who can stand against us? Who can legitimately bring a charge against God's people? Who can condemn the one whom God has justified?!

### Vs. 34b-e

- Moreover, we have Christ as our defense attorney!! Early on in the history of the church, one of the ways they began to veer from The Way was the idea that Christ was some vengeful judge who was out to get you. In the Apostles Creed, which appeared in the 5th Century, there is much to like, and much is pulled from Romans 8. One line virtually quotes verse 34 but then veers off: "He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the quick and the dead", while the actual scripture says that it is Christ "who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us!". It is the Father who is the Judge, but it is Christ who is our attorney, our

advocate, who intercedes for us! So as Satan accuses us, Christ strikes each sin, so that each and every sin is forgiven, Satan has nothing left for which we can be accused, and we stand blameless and pure before the Father.

#### Vss. 35-37

- Jesus tells us in John 10:28-29 that nothing can snatch us out of the Father's hand. Here Paul affirms that truth by asking and answering, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?". Paul is well aware, as we see in the book of Acts, that so often our faith is so weak, so thin, that when times get tough our faith crumbles. Tribulation, persecution, hunger, poverty, threats and danger may come, but the dangers of this world do not drive a wedge between us and God, they only serve to bring us closer! Tough times are going to come. Being a disciple is supposed to be costly! As the world hated Christ, so too will the world hate us! And to drive the point home Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 where we are simply sheep to be slaughtered.
- But because of how God responds when we are in those tough times, we will "overwhelmingly conquer"! Not because we are strong, but because Christ is strong and as times get tough and we are being pressured and threatened, God love for us comes to us many times greater and gives us what we need. Remember the story of the Martyrs of Compiègne...

#### Vss. 38-39

- Paul now doubles down on how nothing can snatch us from God's hand. Nothing, not death, not the troubles of life, not jealous angels holding principalities and powers who seek our ill and not good, not the troubles of the present nor the fears of the future, not the height of the stars nor their depth, nor any other person or thing or world in Creation "can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus".
- Here is a thought to hold on to in our darkest and loneliest moments. Even if we think of the most horrible terrifying thing that can happen, not one of them can separate us from the love of God, in fact they only serve to strengthen the bonds between us and the Father. As William Barclay says, Christ is the "Lord of every terror and Master of every world. Of what then shall we be afraid?".