

ESF Lord's day service message
5/5/2019

More than Conquerors

Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?³⁶ As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Keith Hartsell of Wheaton, Illinois, was driving around with a friend of his in California. At one moment he noticed that his friend's cell phone was locked with an unusual password, “pro nobis.” Keith asked him what pro nobis meant and why he chose that for a password. Keith's friend told him it was Latin and it meant "For Us," and then he suddenly started choking up. Keith thought, "Why would those two Latin words cause so much emotion?"

Then his friend composed himself and explained that after walking through deep personal pain, true healing came when he learned that God

is "for us" or the Latin phrase *pro nobis*. Keith's friend said that after his parents' divorce, he thought that God didn't care about him or God had given up on him. But he finally found hope through those two simple words: *pro nobis* (for us).

Paul says here that we, believers are more than conquerors. Why? Because we have the power in God's love which is stronger than the powers of all conquerors.

When we are connected to God's love, there isn't any force which can break or destroy our lives.

To prove this truth, Paul asks four questions in this text:

- 1). "Who is against us?"
- 2). "Who will bring a charge against us?"
- 3). "Who is the one who condemns?"
- 4). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

The answer to each question is, "No one." Paul does not mean that we have no enemies or no problems. Paul means that, with God's love, we have the power to win over all adversaries.

No one can be against us (verses 31-32).

In our lives, there are many enemies and obstacles we must fight. Sometimes we feel that the whole world is against us. But, even though the whole world may oppose us, if we trust in God's love, He is on our side. When God is our support and our backbone, there is no one who can be against us.

How do we know that God is on our side? How can we be sure that He loves us enough to be on our side? As a sure sign of His love for us, God did not just say, "I love you." But He has proven His love through marvelous action. Look at verse 32, "*He who did not spare his own Son,*

but gave him up for us all how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

God loves us so much that He gave up His most precious possession, His only Son- Jesus. If we have this love, what does it matter if all the power in this world lines up against us?

We may be intimidated by powerful adversaries when we have no power to fight them. We are so small and so weak in front of great adversaries. But we shouldn't be intimidated, because when God is on our side, He enables us to overcome them.

Jesus assures us of this in Matthew 12:20-21: *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.*

When you face the enormous power of your adversaries, you may feel like a bruised reed, a damaged blade of grass swaying in the wind. You may feel like a candle whose wick is about to be snuffed out in the wind. But when you trust that the almighty God loves you and fights for you, He enables you to overcome the power of all adversaries.

In the story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel chapter 17), David was only a boy and Goliath was a gigantic warrior. David was a shepherd who had never been trained to be a fighting soldier. Goliath was a well trained soldier. David had no weapon but some stones in his hands. Goliath had a huge weapon that could crush any opponent. But the conclusion of the story is that David was able to fight Goliath and defeat him. How? David believed that the almighty God was with him and fought for him. *1 Samuel 17:45-47*

⁴⁵ David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, ...This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll

strike you down and cut off your head. ...it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Like the boy David, we can fight against any powerful enemy and we can be victorious when we trust that the Almighty God loves us and fights for us.

No one can condemn us (verses 33-34).

The arch enemy in our lives is the devil. The devil brings charges against us day and night. That is why the Bible calls the devil, "the accuser" (Rev. 12:10). The devil uses evil spirits and people as his agents to accuse us. The devil or his agents bring charges against our conscience, like a prosecuting attorney. They file charge after charge against us, saying: "You have done this bad thing and that bad thing. You have sinned this way and that. I have all the evidence and facts of your sins. You are a dirty sinner. You deserve to be punished." With such charges, the devil keeps condemning us and depressing us.

But we have to know that God's judgment is the final judgment and it is the only one that counts in the end. Even if the devil accuses you of countless sins with undeniable evidence, it's God's judgment that matters.

There is a story of a baseball umpire named Pinelli. In a game, he once called Babe Ruth out on strikes. When the crowd booed with sharp disapproval at the call, Ruth turned to the umpire and said, "There's 40,000 people here who know that the last pitch was a ball, tomato head." Figuring that the umpire would erupt with anger, the coaches and players braced themselves for Ruth's ejection. However, the cool-headed umpire replied, "Maybe so, Babe, but mine is the only opinion that counts."

Even if you conquer many things in this world, you will be a loser if you can't be justified by God. Because you will live with constant oppression in your heart caused by the guilty feelings from your sins.

How does God judge a person? God judges according to whether or not a person believes in His way of righteousness. His way of righteousness is that all men are sinners and no one can be righteous before Him by any human efforts or merits. His way of righteousness is that only by faith in the blood of Christ who sacrificed His life to pay the price for the sins of man, a person can be righteous before God.

No matter what accusations or charges or evidence or arguments are brought against you, God is the one who justifies you. When all the world brings charges against you, God cancels all charges against you and God declares you are free from condemnation. And that is what the phrase means: *It is God who justifies.*

And the reason why He justifies you is not because of who you are or what you have done, but because of what Christ has done for you. The reason God is in favor of you is because you are in Christ. Through His death on the cross, Jesus broke down the dividing wall between us and God. And God says that we are right with him. Christ died for you, was raised to life and is at the right hand of God, interceding for you. When you stand in God's courtroom, Jesus Christ will be your defense lawyer. God accepts Jesus' plea for you and He rejects all the accusations against you.

After hearing everything that can be said against you, the judge gets up from the bench and says to you, "I know you have done all those things and you deserve to be condemned. But I gave my Son to redeem you from condemnation. My Son suffered your penalty, so based on His suffering, I declare that you are free from condemnation in this courtroom (Romans 3:24)."

That declaration guarantees that you are a child of God, the King of all kings. The declaration sets you free from all the curses caused by your mistakes and sins. The declaration guarantees that you will be with God eternally. That is why you are more than conquerors.

No one can separate us from the love of God (verses 35-39).

Men conquer the world with extra ordinary courage, strength, endurance, skills, talents and wisdom. And they become conquerors. But there is no conqueror who can conquer all troubles in life. And they don't have the power to overcome death and the fear of death. However, those who believe in Christ have the power to overcome all troubles in life including the fear of death.

God does not always pull His children out of all hardships and troubles. But God enables them to victoriously overcome all troubles.

Stephen was a young man "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:50). But he was stoned to death. Look at the fate of some of the apostles. James was executed by king Herod. John was a prisoner on a desolate island. Paul went through all those things too. He said in 2 Cor. 11:23-27

.... I have... been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ... I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

They were not defeated by those hardships and fear of death. They conquered all of them with God's love. They suffered but they were able to overcome all the sufferings and became victorious. While Stephen was dying, he victoriously overcame the fear of death. He testified of the victory: "Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the

right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).

Paul testified how he became more than a conqueror in all troubles in 2 Cor. 4:8-11, *“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ”*

With God’s love for us in Christ, we have the same strength they had.

One day, C.H. Spurgeon was walking through the English countryside with a friend. As they strolled along, the evangelist noticed a barn with a weather vane on its roof. At the top of the vane were these words: GOD IS LOVE. Spurgeon remarked to his companion that he thought this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message. "Weather vanes are changeable," he said, "but God’s love is constant." "I don’t agree with you about those words, Charles," replied his friend. "You misunderstood the meaning. That sign is indicating a truth: Regardless of which way the wind blows, God is love."

God’s love for you in Christ attaches you to Him forever. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. Nothing. In the midst of all life’s afflictions, God assures you that he will never forsake you. In Christ, our heavenly Father is on our side. With His aid we can handle all that Satan and the world can throw at us. We will be super-conquerors through Christ.