

### **Inseparable!**

***Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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.***

The headline read, "Indiana woman killed in storm, found clutching great-grandson, 4, inside home." The storms that came through here Monday night were much worse in other parts of the Midwest. This storm produced high winds in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her mobile home rolled and crashed into another mobile home. When neighbors and first responders rummaged through the debris, they found this woman clutching the boy. The boy was found to be in good condition and she was rushed to the hospital where she was declared dead. A granddaughter told reporters, "She always promised that she would protect us and keep us safe and she sure did last night." Everyone is calling her a hero.

Your Lord has promised you that he will protect you and keep you safe. He promises to get you through this world into heaven. Today we return to our study in Romans and in our text the word is "inseparable." God is clutching onto you and will not let go. Nothing will separate us from him. This applies even to sin.

#### *I. Sin will not separate us from God.*

Let me quote you the verses before our text. ***"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? 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."***

Paul promises that the sins we commit will not separate us from a holy God. He doesn't deny the existence of sin. You have to be a fool to try. Sin is all around us. Murder, theft, riots, fights, divorce court, abortion clinics, all scream out that this world is sinful full of sinful people. If you can summarize God's law as "love," then sin is the opposite, not love at least to God or your neighbor. And by using the first person plural, "we," Paul says he is a sinner, too. Learn from Paul. He doesn't cover up or excuse his sin. If you would make a list of sinners. Paul always put himself at the top of the list. He calls himself the chief of sinners. He confesses that nothing good lives in him, that is, his sinful nature.

And Paul does not deny that sin separates the sinner from God. Why did Adam and Eve have to leave the Garden? Why is there a place that is the complete opposite of heaven known as hell? Go ahead, get in between an arguing husband and wife. One or both are pointing out where the other has hurt them. Sin separates. It separates people. It separates the sinner from God.

So if sin exists, and we commit sins, and if sins separate us from God, how can Paul say that sin does not separate us? The answer is Jesus Christ. I like how Paul put it: ***"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?"*** This should sound odd. I can accuse you sin, and I would be right, and you can accuse me of sin and you would be right. We still commit sins. And the devil can certainly go before God with a long list of sins we have committed. But listen to Paul's other question: ***"Who is he that condemns?"*** The sins are there, but no one can condemn us of them because, Paul says, Christ Jesus who died and raised back to life is at God's right hand interceding for us.

Do you keep your receipts? You should. Let's say you paid a bill. Months later they claim you didn't. They send you letter after letter threatening to take you to court. Calmly you write back and send them a copy of your receipt. The threats go away. You have proof the bill is paid.

Christ Jesus is our receipt, our proof. He came, he died, and he rose again from the dead. All of this paid for the sins we commit. And he gives us receipts proving this. One receipt is your Baptism where your sins were washed away. Another is Communion as you receive the very body and blood that was given up for your forgiveness. God tells you in his Word. And Jesus is at God's right hand interceding for us, reminding God that the very real sins that we commit are paid for. Who can condemn us of our sin? God doesn't because of Jesus.

This is huge, folks. Who can bring any charge against us? The devil will. One tactic is to drive us into such depression over our sins that we are too ashamed to come to God. Your own conscience will accuse you of sin. You will accuse yourself. At the end of the day, do a survey. What are the things you wanted to do, but didn't? And what are the things you hated but did? We should be ashamed. Now look at Christ. Because of him God justifies you of your sins. God doesn't condemn you for those sins. So, don't condemn yourself.

#### *II. Nothing else can separate us from God's love.*

So your sins don't separate you from God or his love. Nor can anything else. ***"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*** No one and nothing can separate us from the love of God. We know that answer. But we need to keep hearing it. Remember as a kid? Remember when you got in trouble? Mom and dad punished you. How did you feel? Maybe a little ashamed. But you also felt sorry for yourself. You began to blame mom and dad. "They don't love me. If they did, they wouldn't do this to me."

Well, we really haven't grown up. When we face trouble, we may conclude that God doesn't love us anymore. Why is he letting this happen to me? Paul generalizes the troubles we face in this text. You will notice a progression as things get worse. He talks about trouble. That literally means, "pressure," the stress of things bearing down on us. This leads to hardship. Hardship literally means "narrowness," almost like a sense of claustrophobia where you don't have any options or escape. Next comes persecution which literally means pursuit. You can see why we translate this as persecution as the enemies chase us. But our persecutors are not just those who hate Christ or Christians. The devil pursues us with his temptations and trouble. Next comes nakedness where we flee and have to leave behind basics like clothing. We find ourselves in situations where we have little. And finally the sword as people try to hurt us. Daily we can conclude that we are sheep who have only one purpose, to be slaughtered.

Parents sometimes build fences in the backyard to protect their children. We expect a fence from God. He puts one around us, yet God doesn't keep all bad things away. Why? One thing is for certain. God did not stop loving us. Rather, remember what he said. He who spares the rod hates his children and God treats us like his children by disciplining us. So any trouble that God allows, any setback, is not a sign that we are separated from his love. Rather, they show us he loves us.

One day we know we will leave all of that behind. But don't think that we merely escape like people fleeing a burning building. We don't escape. We win. ***"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."*** I saw something amazing the other day. I was filling up my car with gas and watched another driver do the same, only she was handicapped. She did not have a left arm, her legs obviously were not functioning like normal. She had the gas card between her teeth as she used her one good arm to put the nozzle in the tank. She did not let her handicaps stop her. That is how we are more than conquerors. We will leave all of this behind when we go to heaven. Until then we don't buckle underneath them. When they stoned Paul to near death, or whipped him, or when he was shipwrecked or imprisoned, Paul didn't give up. He kept on trusting God. He kept on preaching Christ crucified. He was always optimistic. So we don't let them get to us now.

There's more. ***"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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."*** Death will not separate us from God; we have a resurrection awaiting us. We are more than conquerors. Life and all its problems will not overwhelm us. We are more than conquerors as God will protect and keep us. We have nothing to fear today. We know the future is in God's hands. We won't let success, the ups in life, tempt us away from God, nor will we let the downs in life discourage us. We are more than conquerors. We have nothing to fear from the angels who are holy and do only God's bidding. We have nothing to fear from the evil angels who can't do what God does not allow. We don't have to fear any power be it government or the devil himself. We are more than conquerors.

Christ has grabbed hold of you. He did not let go when he died. And when he rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father, he still did not let go. Nothing, not even your sins, not even death, can separate you from the love of God. In fact, the only thing that can rob us of the God's love is our refusal to believe what he has promised. So, when guilt or doubt or temptation or trouble or anything comes, remember: they can't separate you from God's love because of Christ. Rather, you are more than conquerors. Amen.