

Romans 8:31-39

Sunday 5/31/2009

The redemption of not only our physical body, but as you remember, we have looked at so many future events: the coming of Christ and all that it does as it relates to you and to me. Remember the last time we really got a handle on the concept of predestination, and I told you how that teaching is a tremendous misapplication of Scripture. We now better have a handle on where it came from, how it started, and all that it got going.

We now know that the concept of predestination has nothing to do with salvation. It is found in Romans 8. In fact, I told you that the word predestination itself is only found four times in the Bible, and the other places are in the book of Ephesians. We now know that predestination has nothing to do with you being saved. Rather, predestination has to do with the fact that once you get saved, you are predestined to get a body like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it is things like this that I really want you to learn, probably more so than the book of Romans. I mean, I can teach you the book of Romans, and you can grasp that, but you have got to see how some of these component things work together. Once you see that, once you understand that the word predestination in Romans is in Romans 8, and Romans 8 deals with the redemption of your body, not your salvation, you begin to see how that is how you use your Bible so that you do not get messed up. That is where bad doctrine comes from.

You could not find a person who believes in predestination and teaches the election of God. He could not break down the book of Romans for you if somebody put a gun to his head. There lies the problem. This is why I am such a stickler for you when learning the Bible. This is why in our Saturdays coming up, I want to really focus on putting those components together. I am telling you, if you want to learn the Bible, I will give you an introductory course, a foundational course in it, that you will build on the rest of your life. It really will be the key to putting it all together of what you are getting through Thursday night, and our one-on-ones together, and Sunday morning, and all the things that go along with that.

We have seen now from Romans 8, it has been a very informative chapter. We have seen where we have laid out many, many major doctrines. We talked about the rapture of the church, the millennial reign of Christ, predestination. A lot of them were good doctrines, and yet we also looked at the bad doctrine that you find in these great chapters.

But today, we are going to pick it up in the last set of verses. These are, to me, some of the most key verses in understanding Romans 8 and putting it all together. I think you will see why today, at the end of our time, why I believe that Romans 8 is probably the greatest single chapter in the Bible as it relates to you and to me.

But let us pick it up here in verse 31 of Romans 8.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

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

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, Father, we ask you today to meet with us. We ask you to take these principles here in this great passage and put it into our hearts. Those that are here today, Lord, for the most part, they want to learn your Word. I really believe that for the most part, the men and women that have gathered here today really want to be used of You. Lord, I pray that You will take them and use them and mold them as You see fit. Use this message to ignite an excitement in their heart about the things of God, to help them keep those things in their vision, Father, that God has for them to do. Help me to lay this out clearly and plainly today, and may they go from here today, Lord, with a greater understanding of probably the greatest single chapter that is responsible for what we, or what we will not get, at the judgment seat of Christ. Help us with our attitudes today. Help us with our mindset, with our priorities, and help us to really look deep within ourselves, Father, to apply what needs to be applied today in all of our lives, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

I. Summation Verses and the Importance of Questions

Now, these verses, verses 31 through 39, are what I call summation verses. You are going to find in the Bible, and you need to put a little note of that there by verse 31, because these last eight verses are really him summing up what we have just looked at in chapter 8.

I do not know if you were paying attention or not, and here is another thing you always want to look at. You have heard me tell you many, many times how important questions are in the Bible. Many people look at the Bible as a supernatural book. They just look at the Bible as a normal book like they would do anything else. They do not put it under the critical examination of looking at everything in that, of what it means to you and to me.

I have told you before that just as important as the statements in the Bible, also just as important are the questions in the Bible. Questions in the Bible will demand an answer. Somebody is going to have to answer the questions that God asks. I have told you before that you are going to find at the Great White Throne Judgment that God is going to ask some men some questions and some

unsaved people questions, and you find over there back in the book of Job where those questions are.

I have found over the years that in every profession a man or a woman can get in, that they stay in an unsaved state, and they think that maybe their education or their profession or what they believe or what they have learned through the years, and what they have associated as truth, and many times just counting the Word of God. I realize in a better way what the Great White Throne Judgment is going to be. It is going to be a time where every unsaved man and every unsaved woman has to justify what they have done and how they have lived their lives and how they have rejected God in the Bible.

You are going to find, I found it coming through the Bible, a series of questions that God could ask every person no matter what their career was or what they have done in their life, and somebody is going to have to answer those questions. God said to Job, He says, "Gird up thy loins now like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." God demands an answer to His questions in the Bible.

I think it is an interesting thing to find the first question in the Bible. The first question in the Bible was not asked by God. Of course, the question in the Bible was asked by the devil. See what that question was, then you ought to go and see what the first question God asked was. It starts to set the whole premise of what the Bible flows all the way through.

I have told you before that as a Christian, we are going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ, and back in the book of Job, there are six questions that God is going to ask you and I at the judgment seat of Christ, and you are going to have to have some answers. I am going to have to have some answers. Questions in the Bible are very important.

Now, I do not know if you have come through this or not when I came through it, but you do see that in this passage I just read, there are seven questions asked. There are seven questions asked, and there are seven questions that God asks coming down through this chapter. These questions do not deal with the judgment seat of Christ. These questions do not deal with anybody at the Great White Throne Judgment. These questions are aimed at you and me as Christians right now as we live on planet Earth after you have been saved. In other words, these are questions that you have to answer right now. Now, there is another set of questions you are going to answer at the judgment seat of Christ, but right now, faced with probably the greatest single chapter in the Bible for you and for me, he has laid out some incredible concepts. Now he is asking you some questions about it.

What I want to do today is I want to talk to you about these seven questions because it is these seven questions that really deal with our purpose on planet Earth. This is why, and we talked about last week about being soldiers, and I talked about you standing for Christ in the face of opposition, and opposition will come. I took you through and showed you through our little mannequin display here of John R. Pons, a D-Day veteran, how to read the ribbon bars on somebody's chest and understand exactly how that is. Then I took you back to the Old Testament and showed you in the book of Joshua that before the nation of Israel got their inheritance, there was a re-accounting of the battles that they had been in.

I ended last week's sermon by telling you that you do not want to go to the judgment seat of Christ without some campaign ribbons on your chest. You do not want to meet God at the judgment seat of Christ without showing the proof. I showed you on Mr. Pons' uniform how you can read and tell what that soldier has been through, what battles he fought, whether he was an infantryman, whether it all means something. For you and for me as a child of God, and the battles that we have to fight, you and I had best have some combat ribbons on our uniform before we go to the judgment seat of Christ.

This is the reason these seven questions deal with the hardship that we talked about, where you and I are to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. This is where it all comes down. This is where it all begins to make sense for you and for me. This is where the reality of it is in verses 31 through 39: the enduring of hardness as a good soldier. This is what you will face, and this is how you maintain the victory in the midst of battle.

You know, there is a great verse over in 2 Corinthians 2:14, which has always been one of my favorite verses ever since I found it. It simply says this: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." That is a great verse. That verse says that there should never be a time in your life, in my life, that we do not have the victory in Christ.

Now you say, "How do you do that?" You say, "How in the world does somebody do that?" That verse says that we should always be in triumph in our Christian life, and yet you know as well as I do how hard that is for all of us. But yet, the Bible would not tell you to do it if it was not possible to do. That is what we want to talk about today. The answer to the victorious Christian life, the answer to you always triumphing in Christ Jesus, is found in Romans 8, in particular, answering these seven questions which are asked based on what he has already given us in Romans 8.

II. The Two Adoptions and Keeping Focus

I talked to you throughout the book of Romans how that Romans 8 deals with the two adoptions with you and me as a believer. The first one is a spiritual adoption: the day you got saved, we were adopted spiritually into God's family. You should remember this now. Then the main focus is on the redemption of our body, how that the events are coming and unfolding around us right now, that once you were adopted spiritually the day you got saved, there is coming a time when you are going to be adopted physically, and you are going to get your glorified body. Somebody asked that question on Bible study Thursday night, and we talked about it, went through that, and laid that out that you could better have an understanding. But we also laid it out when we got into Romans 8 in those particular passages.

Now, looking at Romans 8 and thinking about the victorious Christian life that we should always triumph, and looking at these seven questions that we are going to start to go through here in just a moment, I want to give you this key to Romans 8 because I think it is very important. I think in our Christian life, everything that we do, this is certainly true of what is being said in Romans 8, but I think it goes beyond that. I think everything in our Christian life needs to be viewed and

kept in perspective in the light of Romans 8:17-18. I think that these two verses are the key to chapter 8 itself, but I think it is also key to your keeping your focus in the Christian life.

You remember when we came through it, I want to read it again for you.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

If Romans 8 does one thing, if these two verses accomplish or should accomplish one thing in our lives, it should keep our lives in focus and in perspective of the fact that no matter how bad it gets, based on Romans 8, no matter how intense the battle becomes, no matter what transpires in our lives or what things befall us in life, the thing that you always have to keep in mind is that everything that you and I are going through right now, in perspective of Romans 8, is simply temporary. This is not the real deal.

Right now is where we ought to be digging in, holding the line, digging in deep, and fighting the fight, knowing that we are a rear guard action. We are God's people in the last moments of the last minutes of the last seconds of the last time days, that we are holding together until Christ comes back. The thing that we do not want to do, and yet it is happening all around us, the thing that we never want to happen in this church, is that we ever get satisfied and complacent and ever get off our focus where we think that what we are living right now is really life. It is only temporary.

The real deal for you and I is coming down the line when the events transpire that we see God's program go into full flourishing and accomplish what God wants us to accomplish. We are not there yet. God has a plan. We are somewhere in that plan, but this part of our lives, from Genesis right up to now, has all been a preparatory. It has all been there to get it ready to go, that God can do what He really set out to do, and you and I can never lose sight of that. You and I can never afford to lose our perspective. We have to see and understand God's plan. It is all temporary.

Do not get sidetracked with the side events of life. Do not take something that is valueless, if it was God's concern, and make that the number one value in your life, and take the number one value in your life that is God's value and make it valueless. Well, that is what we do. That is exactly what we do. This is why, you know, it is so important to begin to see God's plan and keeping your focus. That is why, as far as I am concerned, taking all you young ones that really want to grasp the concept, it starts with understanding how the Bible goes together. It starts with you being able to look at that book and see that book as it really is, not in a book form, but in a plan, in a schematic, in a, like an architect detailing out in every detail of what he is trying to build. That is the way you have got to learn to look at the Bible, and we have got to be able to take you and do that.

You know, I want to, down the line, I want to take some of the guys here that really have an aptitude for laying out certain areas of the Bible, and we talked about having that roundhouse all day long where we start like at nine and go to three with a lunch break in between, and we just

go from class to class to class where you get a complete understanding of the major concepts of the Bible. But you know what? We cannot do that until you first understand how the Bible goes together itself, because that is getting the cart before the horse. That is giving you the food to eat before you set the table and have something to eat it on, and we have got to get this done first, and then we will get to the other.

Now, these seven questions are asked in a light of verses 17 and 18, and it is also written in a light of what we have learned in Romans 8. If you are going to seriously consider giving your life to God, if you are going to seriously take serious, and I know not everybody does, but I am talking to those of you who are, if you are going to seriously consider giving your life to Christ, then you must understand what I am about to say today, and you must understand these seven questions in light of where you are at since God saved you.

I told you last week, and it is a true statement, and I, it is one of those statements that you hate to make, but it is a reality statement: this time next year, some of you will not be here. I wish you would, but you will not be. Just like this time last year, there were people that were here that are not here today. That is a hard concept to grasp, but the reality of it is that is what we are doing in the ministry, and that is just the way it goes. People come and people go. People that were here a year ago are not here today. People that are here today will not be here next year. It is not a matter of what their excuses are, why they go. That is never the issue. That is never the issue.

In every case, it is simply the answer will be a twofold answer. One, in the course of this year to next year, some of you will lose your focus that you have today. Right now, today, the Bible is very important to you. You want to learn it, you want to read it, but a year from now, it will not be as important as it is. I have people that come into this church that maybe are struggling with some things, and they will say, "Man, you know what? I really want to do it right and serve God." Bless their hearts, they cannot even make it two months. Something pulls them back. Then you have others who make it six months, and then something pulls them back. Then you have some who make it a year, maybe two years, maybe three years, and then something pulls them back.

How does that happen? How does a man or a woman really get saved? I am not questioning their salvation. You know me, I do not think that anybody in the world is saved but maybe me and Zach, and sometimes I worry about Zach. I am not one of these guys who believes that everybody who says, "I am saved," is truly saved. I have been around this game a little while. I know the world that we live in and how easy it is to get saved, or as you think you get saved. But I am with the people I am talking about. I believe they are people that I have dealt with. I believe they are really saved. I believe that they really have trusted Christ in their own prayer. I am not talking about people who have made a halfway. I am talking about people who at one time loved God, loved the Bible, loved everything about God, would not miss a time the Word of God was taught for anything in the world. Then there comes a time in their life when something else is more important. Did the Bible change?

How does that happen? It happens a twofold way. One, people lose their focus. What you love today, maybe you will not love as much next year this time, being God and the Bible. People lose

their focus. Then people lose their perspective. What was important to you today may not be important to you next year. You may find, you may find, just like in many relationships, and I am not saying this is wrong because everybody needs to find where they are at in a relationship, but you find men and women who get into a relationship, they go for six months, eight months, a year, and then one or the other says, "You know what? This is not for me. I do not want to do it anymore." It is not that you are a bad person, or maybe you are a bad person, it goes both ways, but the bottom line is, "I cannot do this anymore."

What happens is, what happens, what happens to two people that started out seemingly to have everything in common, started out loving everything in the world and doing it, but then something transpires? Well, that same concept of losing the relationship that you had, and it comes to the place where it cools off, is what most of God's people do with God. Now, I can understand that in relationship with people because that is life, and that is what makes the world go around. But I do not understand that with God. I realize in our relationships that happens, and that is just a way of life, and you have to accept that. That does not mean anybody is bad or anybody is good. That is just what makes the world go around. But with God, I do not understand it.

How do you lose that perspective? How do you, once loved God and the Word of God, that you cannot have a day go by without being in it? How do you get to the point in your life where you are so excited about God, you see people saved, you actually have God use you to bring other people to Christ, and then suddenly it cools off, you do not care anymore? The two reasons, my friend, are perspective and focus.

I am going to say it to you again: if you are going to seriously consider giving your life to Christ, then you must understand what I am about to say today, because if you are going to make it, if you are not going to become a casualty, if you are going to make it, the only way you are going to make it is that you bolt down cement in steel girders and steel beams with lead your perspective and your focus, that you never lose it in what you are trying to do, because the moment it goes, you are on your way out. You are on your way out.

I have had people say to me, "You know, so-and-so, they are not coming back to church." Told me last week the word "coming back." My answer was, "So-and-so left two years ago." Just because their body was here means nothing. They left two years ago. You see, we get so caught up in the fact that because we see somebody here, that that means they are here. God never looks at it that way. Never looks at it that way. That is just the way it goes. That is just the way it goes.

III. The Seven Questions

Now, let us look at these seven questions and let us help put them into perspective in your life and my life, because these are key, and these are the questions that you have to answer and I have to answer right now in this life.

1.) *What shall we say to these things? (Romans 8:31)*

Now, let us look at question number one, and it is found in verse 31. He simply says this: "What shall we say to these things?" I love that. He just gave you the greatest, he just gave you the greatest chapter in all of the Bible that tells you why God saved you, tells you how He saved your soul, and now He is going to give you a glorified body, that you are going to be a joint heir with Jesus Christ. He basically laid out God's plan, where you fit in, what He wants to accomplish in your life. He has given you the inside information of why He saved you. You could better now understand why He puts you where He puts you into this church. You can better understand now why He gave you the Bible that He gave. He has something for you, and now you have been faced with everything in chapter 8 that talks about the redemption of your body, talks about the redemption of your soul, the adoption that God has for you, the great things and eternity, the plan of God that He has. After He lays that out, the first thing in summation He says is simply this: "What are you going to say to these things?"

You know what you are going to say? You are going to say yes or you are going to say no. It is that simple. Do not we like to make Christianity so complex? Do not we like to blame it on somebody else all the time so we do not have to face these questions? Do not we like to say, "Well, I do not like this," or, "I do not like that," or, "So-and-so this," or, "So-and-so that," and, "That is my reason," and, "That is my..." You know what the bottom line is this: in light of Romans 8, what He has done, what He has done for you, what He has given you, and what He has for you, the answer is simple: What do you say to these things? Are you in or are you out? Yes or no?

You know, life is an ongoing process of making decisions, is it not? Making choices. I have watched this thing for many, many, many years. There are not a lot of things that I am an expert in, but I would classify myself, and if you think I am bragging, that is your problem, not mine. I have to be an expert in something. I cannot be like not know anything in my life. I pride myself on the aspect of knowing people. I pride myself on the aspect of being in this business for many, many, many years, seeing every scenario, every circumstance.

One of the greatest things that I have ever done in my life, and it is something that I try to get you to do, it will help you more than anything else you can do. The greatest thing that I ever did in my life was make the decision that I am going to get involved with people's lives on a one-on-one basis where I get into their world and share their problems. I have got to see every mistake a person can make. I have got to see people who made bad, terrible mistakes and made a way out and did what was right. I have seen people who had issues that they did not want to deal with, and I have watched them blame those issues on somebody else because their pride would not let them deal with what they deal with.

I have dealt with people and talked to people that put on a superfluous outward appearance, "I am a real Christian," and they want to project to everybody, "Look how spiritual I am. Look how much I know about the Bible. Look how I, God is really, I really want to love God and learn God." You know what? You find out later on that their whole life has been a sham, running from one place to the other with the FBI right on their trail and the IRS right behind them. You see, I never look at the outside. I have been told every lie in the world, and when somebody says, "I

really want to serve God," in my heart, I say, "Hey, I hope so, but we will see," because the proof in the pudding is not what you say, but it is what you do after you say it.

What do you say to these things? I have seen every mistake a person can make. I have made many of them myself in my own life, in my own journey. I have seen people come to the place where they, you know, my goodness, they put on a front that they are so spiritual, and yet their own children hate their guts, would not have anything to do with them. Their own children behind their back tell other people that, you know, how abusive they are in their lives. You do not buy anything you see on the outside. Stay with the stuff and prove the thing out. That is what the Bible says, "Prove all things," does it not?

But life is an ongoing process of making decisions and choices. You know what gets you and me in trouble? Bad choices. The start of your demise as a child of God, the start of you going back to the world, the start of you losing your focus, the start of you losing your perspective, goes right back to the single fundamental thing that you and I have got to stop making bad choices. Hey, if I have somebody that has got a marital situation, or they have financial problems, or they have this, or they have a problem with their kids, you know what? I have the answer. Somebody says, "Well, it is a long process to fix this or fix that, especially if you, you know, you hurt your wife, or you hurt your kids, or whatever. You do not fix that in a day." No, you do not. But I will tell you what you can do in the next 10 seconds to start the process: stop making bad choices. That is where you start.

This is why, folks, and I am just going to tell you again, I say it all the time, this is why I put such a horrendous emphasis with you on biblical principles. This is why I drill them into you all the time. This is why I will stop in the middle of a sermon and lay it out for you. This is why on Thursday night Bible study, I will give you the concept. That is why I did what I did on that scenario of biblical principles in your life. You know why? Because the only way you are going to get out of the mess you are in, or keep from going back to that mess, is to stop making bad decisions. Start making decisions based on the Bible and the principles in the Bible. It is that simple. It is just that simple.

A lot of young couples, they get into all kinds of problems. I think that in all my life, and I was thinking about this week, I look back even in our own church in the last six years, but I even thought back beyond that, and you know, I always talk about how that the vital asset of this church, the greatest commodity we have, are not only our children there, but the fact that of the young couples that God gives us. Now, that does not lessen the value of you older folks, which I am a part of that system. It just is a logical, "Hello, the older we get, somebody is going to have to take it over." It does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out, but some people have never launched many rockets.

But it is a thing where you have got to, and I watch this thing, and you have got to realize this: sometimes people come in, and every couple that I have noticed in the last 10-15 years of my life dealing with people, almost without exception, if you start to peel back the layers of why they do not make it, if you start to look back and peel back the layers of why they do not make it, in almost every case, it goes back to some bad choices, and many, many times, most of the time,

those choices are financial choices. You peel back the layers, and when you get right down to it, you come right back to the fact that at some point in their life, they got so much burden on top of them because of bad choices, bad debt, to the place where they will never get out from under it.

You know what that does? That pushes weight. Anytime you have bad choices that linger with you, now some of them you can make bad choices, you can get forgiven by God and go on, and there is no real, no real trail that follows you, no real burden. You just walk away from it. You are a good old drunk, you can get saved tomorrow and quit drinking just like that. You are good. But boy, you have something that you have sold your soul to, something that requires 90 percent of your attention that you should be given to God, but now you cannot because you have got to give it to the IRS, you have got to give it to this person, or you have got to give it to this bank, or you have got to give it to this. Let me tell you something, those kind of bad choices put so much horrendous weight on your focus.

It is like me going out to Lake Jacomo, looking at the other side, and being a great swimmer and saying, "Oh, I am going to really enjoy this nice swim," and I have got my sight on the other side, and I am going to start swimming over there, and I know it might be deep, but I am a great swimmer, and boy, I am going to swim. Let me tell you something, you may swim it over and back. Next time you try it, let us put 20 pounds of lead on each ankle. You may struggle through and get to the other side. Next time you go, let us put 100 pounds on these ankles. You better hold your breath because you are going to walk over from the bottom. The more weight you add, I do not care if you can see the other side. I do not care if it is right there. That thing is only 300 yards across. "I can do that with my eyes closed." Maybe you can, but you cannot do it with 100 pounds on each ankle.

Many times, that is what we bring into our relationship with Christ, and because we do not get the help, because we do not get what we need, because we will not say, "Hey, I am in a jam," because we think that we can fix it ourselves. Hello, you cannot fix it yourself. You keep making more bad choices that just put more weight on your ankles, and I do not care if you can see heaven on the other side. I do not care if the angels are over there plucking their harps, you are going to drown. If it is just 10 feet of water, you are going to drown. You have got to get rid of those weights. You know how you get rid of that weight? Stop making bad choices.

I have seen young couples and older couples and middle-aged couples and individuals make so many bad choices that they just simply bury themselves. It does not matter how good they are. It does not matter what they know about the Bible. It does not matter how good they work with people. They have buried themselves, and they lose their focus because now they have got to give the time they were going to give to God to their job, to a business, to something they have got to do to get themselves out of the mess they are in. The truth of the matter is, they will never get out of that mess. You know why? Because the more money you make, the bigger mess you will get in, because it is not about more money, it is about bad choices.

I am telling you, "What shall we say to these things?" Romans 8 showed us that all that God has for us. You understand that God has a plan. God's will for your life, a better understanding of

your part and what is coming in the future. You have a better understanding of all that God has done for you. The process has now in Romans 8 been clearly laid out for you.

You know, I never want this church or any sermon I preach, or anybody else in this church preaches that maybe does not deal directly with this, but at the end of the sermon, I do not want you, I do not want you walking out of here without being faced with that choice: What are you going to say to these things? What are you going to say to these things? That is the first question. What are you going to say to this? You know what you are going to say? Yes or no? In or out?

When I was in the army, we used to have a saying. It was a saying that had to deal with guys who got into combat versus guys who did not want to get into combat. I cannot tell you the whole thing because some of it is not family associated with, but it simply went like this: "You either get your [butt] in the grass, or you get in the rear with the gear." You are either going to be on the line, or you are going to be in the rear with the gear. It is yes or no. But the bottom line is, after Romans 8, and He tells you exactly what He has done, what are you going to do now? What do you say to these things?

2.) If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

Question number two. I love this one. This is found in verse 31 too: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Now, the answer to that is a lot of people will be against you. So what?

You know, the next thing that not only do the bad choices drown people out, but you know what really stops a lot of God's people from really getting into this thing? I can more understand this, even though I do not, because I, but I am more sympathetic to this, even though I am not. But I mean, the first question, I do not have any sympathy for you. I mean, after what He did for you and what He has got for you, if you can look at all that Romans 8, look at that chart up there and see what God has got planned for you on eternity, and come here at any length of time and get even a little bit of grasp of it, and then you simply do not care, I have no sympathy for you. This one, I have a little more sympathy for you, but not much, really, probably not any, but I am just trying to be a nice guy today.

You know, the second thing God's people do not like to deal with, we do not like to deal with opposition, do we? We do not like to be ridiculed. We do not like people to say things behind our back and slander us. We do not like people to be malicious against us in their false accusations. We do not like the backbiting that goes on many, many times. We do not like, but you see, that is where the real battle is. Do you ever read Paul's epistles? Do you ever go through there and list how many people were against what he was trying to do? Now, if there was any man who had the credibility of God on him that nobody could question, it was Paul. It did not stop him back then, and I am going to tell you right now, this is what it means when it said, "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Some of you will not pay that price. You know why? Because you are so fragile. You just do not function if your friends are mad at you or do not like you because you are going to take a stand for something that is right in the Bible. So you fold up like a broken accordion. Why? Because of the fact that you do not understand Romans 8.

Then it says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" A thousand people could be. One time, it came to Martin Luther, who was the great reformer, broke from the Roman Catholic Church, hated all of his life. They even rewrote history to try to damage him and malign him. You know what? Somebody said to Martin Luther one time, "Martin, do not you know the whole world is against you?" You know what Martin Luther said? "Good, then I am against the whole world." At some point in your life, you have got to realize, yes, if you are going to do this, there is a price that you are going to have to pay, and sometimes it is with your friends. It is sometimes with people that once loved you who now hate you.

I think the greatest example is if you want to go back and study at some time, and I remember teaching you this when we first started our church, but it is in Ezra 4. It is a story back there of Zerubbabel who went back with Ezra after the 70 years captivity, and Jerusalem, we now know from our own studies, Jerusalem was the central thing of God's program in the Old Testament, much like your body and my body. It is Jerusalem where the temple was built. You have heard me say the analogy many times: in the Old Testament, it is a literal temple. In the New Testament, there is no literal temple. Your body is now the temple. In the Old Testament, all the world came to the temple. It was the center of worship with God. In the New Testament, we take our temples to the world. But your temple, your building of God, your temple right here, your body, is the central point of your worship with God and your fellowship with Him. That is the same.

We see back there that they want to go back, and I remember reading the story of Ezra going back at night, and he looks down, and Nehemiah did this too, they look down and they see all of the where the temple was laying in ruins. Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple, and it is all laying in disarray. I look at that and I think to myself, just like so many of God's people's lives when I find them, and you know what they did in the book of Ezra and also the book of Nehemiah? They began to rebuild, and they do not start, you know what many of you are doing in your life right now? Many of you have made some bad choices in your life. Many have made some bad decisions in your life, but you paid the price. You bellied up to the bar. You took responsibility for it, and when you had an easy out, you took the hard way, and you said, "I am going to make it work. I am not going to stick another person. I am going to do what I have got to do." I can appreciate that.

But you know as well as I do, and many of you come back, and your life is in rubble, and you clear off the thing, and you start to rebuild that temple just like they rebuilt it. Let me tell you, and you can go back and read it on your own, but in Ezra 4:1, when they begin to rebuild that temple, you know what the Bible says? The moment they start to build, the adversaries show up. You know who the adversaries are, do you not? They are the people who do not want them to rebuild God's temple. I am going to tell you something this morning, there are some people in your life, there are some people that maybe are your friends, there are some people maybe in your family that do not like you building your temple for God.

Now, I want to look at this thing for just a second, and we are not going to turn back there, but I will tell you, the Bible says that they have one goal, one goal, and that goal is to stop the building process. The Bible says in Ezra 4:4, it says the first thing they did was weaken their hands. The

second thing they did was trouble them in building. The whole reason they weakened their hands and troubled them in building was to frustrate their purpose. Hey, God saved you for a purpose, and the world and many unsaved people want to frustrate that purpose in your life to keep you from building that temple.

What are you going to say to these things? You know what Romans 8 has laid out for you. What do you say now? What are you going to do? The devil will use lost people, and the devil will use saved people to do this. Some of the most wicked people I have ever met in my life are people that are going to go to heaven, will last for eternity. There is a verse back in Proverbs, I think it is in Proverbs 13, where it says, I am going to have to paraphrase it now, but it talks about somebody who hates the Word of God, somebody that hates the Word of God to such a degree that it is their undoing or something like that. You know what the greatest example I ever met of a person like that was a saved man. A saved man. Could you imagine that? I mean, to read that verse, or somebody that hates the Bible, hates the Word of God, and wants to do everything to undo it, and you would think it would be a lost, drunk, fornicating dope addict. No, it was a saved man who was a pastor of a church. Incredible, incredible, incredible.

Let me tell you something, the devil will go to great lengths to stop you. I have never met, I never, I never saw anything that an unsaved person could not do that a saved person could not do, except die and go to hell when they die. Whatever wickedness that an unsaved person can do, if a saved person puts his mind to that, or her mind to that, they can lie, they can cheat, they can stab you in the back, they can do everything that the adversary does, because God will use, or the devil will use anybody he can.

Now, coming down through here, and I will just give you this, and you can look it up on your own because we are going to move through here, but there are four ways that they did it. Now, see, the Bible says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" That is your second question, and the answer is, there will be a lot of people against you, but so what?

The four ways adversaries work against God's people:

- 1.) *They come in and say, "We want to help you build." (Ezra 4:2)*
- 2.) *They hired counselors against them. (Ezra 4:5)*
- 3.) *They made false accusations against them. (Ezra 4:6)*
- 4.) *They spread rumors and half-truths and lied. (Ezra 4:11-14)*

You know what? You always have to ask yourself when I start to feel that way, and I am not going to sit up here and tell you that my emotions are made of steel. Things people say hurt me just like they do you. But the bottom line is this, you know what? When I start to feel that way, the first thing I ask myself, "Well, Bob, who are you doing this for? Yourself or Me?" And I say, "Lord, I am doing it for You." "What? Then shut up and get back on the line." "Yes, sir."

- 3.) *How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*

Third question, verse 32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Now, simply put, here it is: if God saves you, folks, then God is going to get you equipped to do the job. If there was a purpose in God saving you, then there is a purpose for you after you get saved. That verse says, "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?" And then it goes on to say that if God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him for us, how shall He not follow through with it and give you and me everything we need? And the answer is, He will. God will give you and God will equip you with everything you need to get the job done for Him.

That is the job of the New Testament local church. That is why we preach the way we preach on Sunday morning. That is why we do what we do on Thursday night. Now, I am going to tell you right now, you got a great lesson last Thursday night if you were here when the young man came in, William, and you got a great lesson the other night of how important it is for you to know church history, how important it is to know exactly where you are at in that Bible when it comes to somebody going to question the validity of the Word of God, when somebody is going to throw out the questions to you that he threw out to us, where he is asking, and he obviously is a young man that believes the Bible is like any other book, and throwing those things out. Every time he threw something out, where did I take him? I took him to a place that he was not prepared to go because he had no understanding of history. You cannot separate history from the Bible. You cannot. That is why I pound it into you.

You know what? If you were there Thursday night and you saw that, I got news for you, God wants to put you in the exact same scenario someplace. But what do you say to these things? In or out? Yes or no? Up or down?

The Bible says in the book of 1 Thessalonians 4 that this church has a threefold goal:

1.) To perfect the saints. That is not to make you perfect, but that is on a daily basis as I get you focused on the Word of God, focused on the things of God, looking at your own self, correcting the areas in your life that need to be corrected, and you perfect yourself on a daily basis.

2.) Once you get yourself perfected to a certain degree, then the next aspect, I get you ready for the work of the ministry.

3.) The last thing part of that is edifying the body of Christ. That is what it is for. That is what I want. I want you to do for others what I am doing for you.

I told you last week, "Man, equip me that I might equip you. I equip you that you might equip others." That is simple. It is just that simple. But the question is, what do you say to these things? See, that is the real question. Some of you have some great potential, but boy, you need some perfecting. Some of you, you have got to work on your timing of element. You are late for everything. I mean, we start church at 10:30, some of you cannot get here a quarter till. Boy, I guarantee you, if you were going to the Royals game or you were going to here, you were going there, and you had to be there at a certain time, you would be there on time. I am not mad at you, I am just saying you cannot be in charge of ministry and show up after everybody else is there. You cannot do that. You have to perfect yourself, that when you are in charge or you are in ministry, or church is just as important as anything else you do. You cannot forget responsibility

when you have it. Somebody gives you something to do, do not show up and say, "Oh yeah, I was supposed to do that." You have to follow through. You cannot procrastinate. You have got to have control of your life. You cannot let your life control you. You have to learn through the process, and everybody gets there, but you only get there when you answer the question, "What are you going to say?" Are you really going to take Romans 8 and apply it to your life and say, "You know what? If He did that for me, I am going to give Him everything He wants." That is when you learn accountability and responsibility. That is when you learn to be disciplined. Along with discipline, you learn to be balanced. That is when you learn that the real way that you become a leader, contrary to what some people say, the real way you become a leader is to be a good follower. That is how you learn to lead. You learn discernment and perception. You will come to the point that I always say to you, that is when you always say to you, you always look behind, look around, and look ahead. There is not any given scenario you do not end that you are not thinking outside the box of what you are dealing with. Do not get caught in that trap. The ability to always adapt and adjust to any given situation. If God saves you, then God will prepare you. He will give you those things freely.

4.) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? (Romans 8:33)

Question four, verse 33: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" It is God that justifieth. You know, the day you got saved, you got elected to get a glorified body. That is what the word election or elect means in here. Remember in Romans 8, the day you got saved, you got elected to get a glorified body and reign with Him throughout eternity as a joint heir with Jesus Christ. There is no higher calling in all the world for you or for me, and we can never lose our perspective, our focus, or lose sight of that great truth. It is God that justified you. It is not me. It is not your wife. It is not your husband. It is not your boss. It is not your best friend. It is God that justifies you.

But before all of that, before you get to that point, before you get to the place where you get that glorification, we have our warfare. We have our mission. We have our cross that we must bear for Christ. We know that God's will, God also has a plan. Do not let anybody intimidate you, saved or lost. Do not let anybody, as the Bible says in Revelation 3:11, do not let anybody steal you, take your crown from you. Nobody, nobody, nobody.

Remember, Bible Christianity separates before it joins together. The Bible says, and I heard some old preacher say this one time dealing with on a concept of separation, and a concept of separation is this, and I have told you this before: the biggest problem some of you have once you get saved is you cannot separate yourself from your old friends, and you will do it for a while, but then it will start to creep back. You will be here every Sunday, and then suddenly you will miss a Sunday, then you will miss a Thursday, and you always have a good excuse. The problem is, when you are in that mode, there are no good excuses, and pretty soon you are right back where you were before, and you wonder why.

This old preacher said, "You know what?" He was preaching on separation. He said, "The Bible says in the book of Ephesians, 'Those that God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'" And everybody went, "Amen." And he said, "But I have got my own version of the second half

of that verse: 'Just as God hath put together, let no man put asunder, and also what God hath put asunder, let no man join back together.'" When God separates you from the world, do not get back with it. When you know there are people in your world, whether it is a boyfriend or a girlfriend, I do not care who it is, do not let your, if you are a young guy here and you have got a girl, do not let that girl take your crown from you. If you are a young gal here and you have got a boyfriend, do not let that boyfriend take your crown from you. I do not care what it is. Wives, do not let your husband take your crown from you. Husbands, do not let your wife take the crown from you. I am not saying you divorce them, but I am saying there is always something you can do to say, "You know what? I married you and I love you, but if you think I am losing my crown, I have got something else for you." "Oh, by the way, I love you and I am not going to ever leave you, and I am going to stick with you, but I have got one last thing to say." "What is it, honey?" "Bam! Wake up! You are not taking my crown." Now, if your wife is the opposite, do not hit her. Sick the dog on her or something, but do not hit her. You cannot go around hitting women.

You have to choose. You have to choose. Sometimes your friends, sometimes your job will do it. You see, you have got to have the balance. You have got to have the ability to know that there are certain things in your life as a Christian you just cannot tolerate, and your first mistake, your first bad decision, is thinking you can hang out with those people, go to those places, do those things, and it will not have an effect on you. That is your first bad choice. Now down it goes from there. "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. What God has put asunder, let no man join back together." That is a great piece of philosophy.

5.) *Who is he that condemneth? (Romans 8:34)*

Question number five: "Who is he that condemneth?" There is a question: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Now, the question is, who is he that condemneth us? Well, let me tell you who it is. I have got three sections here.

The Devil will try to condemn you.

The devil is the first one. He will try to condemn you. He will try to get you to feel guilty about something in your life that has already been forgiven for. He will try to get people who will not forgive you when God has forgiven you to put that kind of guilt trip on you. The bottom line is this: you do not let that happen. It is God that justifies you. If you are here this morning and you are saved, there is nobody, and you made your peace with God, whatever dumb things you have done in your life, who is anybody out there that condemns you after it is under the blood? The devil. The devil. What good is getting saved and getting your sins forgiven? What good is 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," if God's people can hold it over your head all your life? Why do you let people intimidate you? The devil will try to do that. He will try to put you on a guilt trip. It is impossible to put me on a guilt trip. That really is. You may try it on somebody, it will never work on me. You know what? I know what I give you. I know what the book says, and I know where your accountability is or where my responsibility is. I am a hard person for you to put on a guilt trip. Bottom line is this, man, do not let people do that.

Unsaved people will try to condemn you.

Unsaved people will do it. You know, unsaved people watch every move you make. You ever notice this? You ever notice, and I have seen this happen, I have seen this where there were couples that had lost family members. Some of you have lost family members, and you know how well they, how they watch you. You could be around with me and do some stupid stuff, and I just would not even think anything about it. You could be with me, and I will tell you, I will tell you a story. My old buddy Peter Ruckman, he tells the story how that he was preaching at a little place with Bob Gray down in Alabama, and they were, a preacher took him out to eat together, and there was this wannabe preacher in his church who was a, you know, I want to be, every church has got him, and he begged and begged and begged this guy to go out to eat with Dr. Ruckman and Dr. Bob Gray. So the pastor said, "Okay, come on, we are going to go out." They took him to a place that had all you can eat, and you could pick different things. Ruckman said, "I got the," I forget what he got, but the other guy, Bob Gray, got all you can eat chicken. Ruckman did not get all you could eat. He got something, I know what it was, but this guy got all you could eat, and so he goes back four or five times and gets some chicken. No, I am sorry, I would have went back four or five times. He went back two or three times, got some chicken, sitting down there, and after he poured the end of the meal, the guy Bob Gray says to Pete, he says, "How was your meal?" Ruckman says, "Well, you know what? I was not that bad. I thought it would be better than it was. I should have got the chicken." And Bob Gray says, "Well, here, I am not going to eat these pieces. Here is a couple pieces of mine." So Ruckman ate them. You know what that saved person did? He went around and told everybody how Ruckman stole chicken and did not pay for it at the restaurant. Yeah, a saved, going to heaven person who was so jealous of Ruckman, so envious of Ruckman, who did not have one toenail of the ministry Ruckman had, and all he can think about is, "He stole two pieces of chicken." That will send you to hell, Pete. I had all this stuff for you down here by two pieces of chicken.

You have unsaved people in your family, they watch everything you do. I have known couples that were in this church that tried to get their unsaved people to play softball. They played volleyball, got them to come out. You know, I have watched it for years. I have watched people, you try to do everything you can to win your lost people to Christ, but you know what? They watch everything you do, and when you and I will go out someplace, and like the chicken thing, if we went out to a chicken place and you got something else and I got chicken, you know what I would say? I would say, "Have some of mine. Here, I am hungry. I will go get six more pieces." You know, you have big good cargo pants on, put the rolls down inside to eat it when you go home. You paid for it. But you know what? Your unsaved folks in your family see one little thing you do, one little thing which to us is a no-brainer, big deal, and they are all over you, are they not? See, unsaved people will, and God's people will too.

God's people will try to condemn you.

Anytime I get feeling, anytime I, anytime I get feeling sorry for myself, and I, and I do not very often, I mean, if I took, if I, if I, if I took seriously, I looked at time, I think I told you that sometimes type in Dr. Peter S. Ruckman on the computer, and what will come up is 88 pages with 20 things on each page, 88 pages of people who say some of the nastiest, godliest,

ungodliest stuff you will ever see in your life. Now, would you like to do that, knowing somewhere on the website that you have got, you plaster, you know, Brian Donovan, Brian Donovan's associate, you know, a man that used to be in Pete's church who did not get along very well because they saw him for what he was. You realize he took a photograph of Donovan and then superimposed the photograph of Donovan into a bar with two girls on each side, brushed it out with Adobe Photoshop, and then put that thing all over the internet that Brian Donovan was out carousing with the women while he was working at the church down there. A saved man did that. A saved man going to heaven did that. My point is that that does not surprise me. I am telling you, you better be ready for it. It is God that justifies you. "Who is he that condemneth?" Nobody can condemn you once you are under the blood of Christ, and you have done what God has called you to do. You are clean and green to do what God wants you to do. Their purpose, their purpose is to weaken your hands and to frustrate the work of God's ministry.

I remember years ago when I was just a young guy, the church I was at, we had a thing, I told you some of this story, for the church that we had there, they had a, they had a deal where they had a kind of like a, on a Sunday night, they had different classes, and everybody in the church, there is like 1500 people in the church, and everybody got to sign up for classes. I remember I was teaching a book of Revelation. There was a guy in that church there, he was not a pastor, he was one of the great spiritual Pharisees. Some of you know who he is, so I will not say his name because I do not want to embarrass who he was, but the bottom line is this, this guy was, he was an idiot. He was a Calvary Bible cadre. He was a Calvinist, and he thought he was the guru when it came to the spiritual things in the Bible. His specialty was the book of Daniel. He did not know more about the book, my guy, two labs at home that know more about the book of Daniel than he ever thought about knowing. But he was the big guru, and I never forget this, in one of those sweet moments in time, I never take revenge, but there is sometimes God just serves it up to you on a dish, and you just have got to do it.

I never forget, well, I will tell you, he had, he had some kids, and all his kids were out of control. He was a great spiritual guru, but his children hated him. He did not know this, and this is why he did not like me, because his children were coming to me because I was their youth pastor, telling me how he abused them at home, and the moment he got wind and I knew that, I was the bad guy. See, because he does not like his children rapping on him because he wanted to have this polished figure for everybody, you know, like I am going to tell somebody, you know. And so anyway, where I am up, I am baptized one Sunday night, and his wife says to me, she says, "I just do not know how you ever raise your children without sending them to Christian school." And I said, "You mean like yours that I just spent nine hours, six hours last night with your husband driving around town looking for your runaway boy? You mean that kind?" Oh, oh, oh, jeez. He did not like that.

We have these classes signed up. I am teaching the book of Revelation. I have got 228 people signed up for my class. He had three, and one of them was his wife. He comes up to me, now this is, this is, this is the, this is audacity of pride. He comes up to me and he says, "Brother, I would really like to help you." And I said, "Well, thanks, you are, I would like to have help. I am going

to make the car payment next month and mail out the house payment." You know. He said, he said, "You know what?" He says, "Can I give you a bit of advice?" And he said, "Sure." He says, "You know, you are never going to go far preaching the way you preach." He said, "You need to go, you need to get some polishing on your preaching." He said, "Do you ever think about picking up some classes at Calvary Bible College?" He said, "And I will tell you something else," he says, "if you are ever going to be successful in ministry, you really need to study Greek and Hebrew." He said, "Now, I know that you do not care for that, but," he said, "I am telling you that is where the real truth lies, and you need, you need to do that." He says, "What are your feelings toward that?" And I said, "Okay, I need polishing in my preaching. I need to go to Calvary Bible College, pick up some classes. I studied the Greek, studied the Hebrew. I got it. Now go to Bible college, get polished, study Greek, study Hebrew, and then I can run two in my class like you." He did not like that either.

Do not ever be intimidated by anybody. If you are doing what God has called you to do, and you are right with God, and you are where God wants you to be, and you are preaching the truth, let them go pound sand. What do you say to these things? You see, this is where, this is why people will not, because there are going to be people who are going to try to condemn you. There are going to be people, and who is he that condemneth? The devil will, unsaved people will, and unfortunately, God's people will. All the purposes, all the purposes is to weaken your hands and to frustrate God's building in your life. Do not ever forget, there are unsaved adversaries, and there were saved adversaries in God's work.

6.) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Romans 8:35-37)

Now, question chapter six, in fact, six and seven kind of go hand in hand there in verses 35 through 39, but I split them up into two questions. They are really two questions with, or one question, but then two parts of the question there in verses 35 through 39, but I split them up into two questions. They are really two questions with, or one question, but then two parts of the question, so I make them six and seven.

Look at verse 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" As it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Now, verses 35 through 39 are fine. Like I said, these are the last two questions, verses six and seven, but they are broken down: 35, 36, 37 will be question six, and then 38, 39 will be question number seven. I know, and if you are ever dealing with somebody, this is a great passage. 35 through 39 are great passages on eternal security, and I know that you already know that, but I want to show you what these passages are in a great concept of our everyday warfare in our walk with Christ. Why in the mission of battle, why the rage is all around us, while people quit and fall on every side through the filth of Laodicea. Oh, by the way, how many saw the winner of the spelling bee this week? Huh? And all together, what was the word that she gave her? Laodicea. Talk about God not being in everything. How would you like to be, how would you like God gets His message out? That girl is going to go around the country. She is going to say, "I won a

spelling bee. I won a national spelling bee." Everybody say, "What was the word?" She say, "Laodicea." And I open your Bible, Revelation 3, and let them have it, man. What an opportunity. Around here, I do not care if you can spell it, as long as you understand it. Laodicea.

This question starts out like this: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" You see, the first question deals with the things in physical life, the things that he talks about that he asks the question, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" are things that people do to you or the world does to you. Look at verse 35: "tribulation, persecution, nakedness, distress, famine, peril, sword." Those are all physical things. Paul faced those in his life when he went through his life. All of those things wound up being killed by the sword, probably after 2 Timothy. Boy, you see that thing, how it lays out. Those things are physical things.

And of course, the next verse, verse 36, is a quote of Psalms 44:22, which is the tribulation context, is dealing with Israel in the tribulation period being slaughtered like sheep for burnt sacrifices. We do not have time to get into that today. That would be a good Thursday night Bible study question on. But you know what it says there? It says that they kill us all the day long. So what? So what?

Now, this is where, like I talked about last Thursday night, this is where the importance of church history comes in. That guy the other night, remember his question? He asked me, he asked me, "How do I reconcile the fact that people in Christianity all down through history were murderers and killers and butchers and did things in God's name, in the Bible's name, that are horrendous things?" And that was his question, one of his questions. And the answer I gave to him is this: I said, "Because there is a true line in the Bible." And I said, "You know how you all can find a true line in the Bible?" And I did not go into all the detail. I gave him a simple answer. It put him right between the eyes. It is separate everything he was saying from what the Bible said. And maybe he did not catch it. I said, "You know how you find the true line in the Bible?" I said, "The true line is willing to die for what they believe in Christ, but the true line is never willing to kill somebody else because they do not believe what I believe." You know, that is about as good a definition as you are ever going to find of the true line in the Bible. They are not, "I am willing to die for what I believe, but I am not willing to kill you because you do not believe what I believe." Try that on a Muslim. Try that on a Roman Catholic. Try that on Joe Valitnich. Try that. If they had the world control, let me tell you something, you would all be dead. I would not be because I would be hiding in the mountain someplace. I would have me a little rebel group. We would come down and, I was going to say, we would throw fire bombs through the windows, but Jehovah's Witnesses do not have any windows in their church. You ever notice that? Do you know why? You know that too, do you not? You know why Jehovah's Witnesses do not have windows in their church? Anybody want to raise your hand, tell me why? All right, I will give it to you, because they know that if it all goes down and they take the world, I will be throwing fire bombs in their windows. Boy, they paid a price for it down through history.

This is the great concept of the church triumphant, the church militant. You see, the church triumphant is the fact that they all knew what we are supposed to know in Romans 8. They had answered the question when they were faced with, "What shall you say to these things?" They said, "Kill us all day long if that is what it takes. We are not going back. We are not going back."

They understood that there was a church triumphant on the other side that is going to heaven, getting the victory, never happened to worry about this old world again. That is where it all really gets started. But they also understood before they got to the church triumphant, they had to go through the church militant, and that is the battle you and I are in every day right now. That is the battle of so many God's people are conscientious objectors. That is the battle of so many God's people are conscientious objectors too. That is the thing that so many of God's people say, "I am done. I cannot go on. I have got so much burden on me. I cannot, I cannot focus on this and that. It is easier to focus on this than to do what God wants me to do." It is a shame, but there it is.

There it is in verse 37, and I love this, you had to mark this in your Bible. It says, "For nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." You ought to mark the word "more." We are more than conquerors. You know why he says we are more than conquerors? I mean, it would be enough just to be a conqueror, but we are more than conquerors. You know why? Because if you understand Romans 8:17-18, you know that the more than conquering is not only you are going to overcome and you are going to conquer, but you are going to be a joint heir with Him for all of eternity. That is the more than conquering. That will keep you going.

7.) Who shall separate us from the love of God? (Romans 8:38-39)

The last question, verse 38 and verse 39. Now, this is still under this first question here, second part: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He says, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, these are the things where the first set of questions were the things the world does to you. These, this set of questions, are the things the devil does to you. See, if the devil cannot separate you from Christ eternally, then he is going to try to do it in your daily walk with Christ. Now, like I said, I know this passage, the great passage on eternal security, and I am not taking away from that, and I would use it anytime I needed to, but I am telling you, there is more to it than that, because this just, nothing can separate you from God's love as far as being saved, but boy, there are some things that can separate you from your fellowship.

Verse 38 says, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, life, angels, principalities, and powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, any other creature." Now, let us look at those one at a time and give you a little something to study on this week.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God:

* ****Death:**** *Death can never separate you from God because when you die, you are going to heaven to be with Him. You know the passage you want on that one? Psalms 139:1-24. Read that this week. Put that note right there by that verse.*

* ****Life:**** *The next thing that cannot separate you is life. No matter how bad your life gets, no matter how far you get away from God, God has promised to get you home. God will get you home with all the laurels and all of the rewards and all of the things that He has for you. He will*

either get you home that way, or He will get you home in a wheelchair and a casket, but He is going to get you home. He is going to get you home in glory, or He will get you home in disgrace, but He is going to get you home. He is going to get you home with all the accolades and all of the great rewards that He could have possibly have because you gave your life to Him, or you will get you home naked as a jaybird standing before the judgment seat of Christ in shame and reproach, but He will get you home. But what do you say to these things? What do you say to these things?

* **Angels:** *Fallen angels cannot stop you from getting there.*

* **Principalities and Powers:** *That is the devil and his world organization and his cronies in Ephesians 6, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Remember that thing.*

* **Things Present:** *That is the things you are going to face today.*

* **Things to Come:** *You are worried about tomorrow. Do not be. What the future holds for you cannot separate you from God's love either.*

* **Height:** *Nothing above your head.*

* **Depth:** *Nothing below your feet.*

* **Any other creature:** *Shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

You see, Romans, and if you did not get anything else about Romans 8, put this note someplace in Romans 8 where you see it: Romans 8:31-39 puts the whole chapter of Romans 8 into context, and Romans 8 puts the whole Christian life into context. That is how it works. That is how it works.

Now, the question, we go back to question one after laying this thing out in light of Romans 8: What do you say to these things? See, it is easy. Christian life is not complicated. You like to make it complicated so you can sneak between the raindrops, do you not? You like to pump up the smoke machine so you can live within the smoke screen. You know what? The bottom line is simply this: Christianity, Romans 8 nails it right to the floor. After light of all that God has done for you, He has adopted you spiritually, and He is going to adopt you, you are predestined to be adopted physically. He has got all this thing out here as a joint heir with Jesus Christ. He shows you everything He has got for you, everything He is going to do. Put it in a proper context. You are going to have to stay in the fight down here, bear the reproach. He laid the whole thing out for you, and then He simply says this: "Hey, what do you say to those things, Bob? Are you with Me or against Me?"

You know what Jesus said over there in Matthew, do you not? He said, "He that is not with me is against me." There is no middle ground with God. You are either in or you are out. You are either in or you are out. You are either going to do the different, I told you last week, three kinds of people in every church. There are some of you here who are young people that you want to

minister. You want to minister, and you will do whatever you have got to do to get to that point. Some of you here that are already ministering, and you will do whatever you have got to do to make sure that you equip others as you have been equipped. And there is, every church has got them, there are some people that do not care anything about ministry. All they care about is themselves. I do not know what to tell you. I just asked you the same question I have got to answer: What do you say to these things? That is the question today.

You see, nothing will ever separate us from the love of God, God loving us, nothing. But we can separate ourselves from loving God. The problem is not God. The problem is us. Life is choices. Life is choices. God made a choice to save you and unconditionally love you. He loves us through thick or thin, good days and bad days. It does not matter what stupid things we do, God is always willing to forgive and forget. It is God's people that have the problem with that, by the way. But God made a clear choice to save you and unconditionally love you, and through thick or thin, good days or bad days, and never stop loving you. Romans 8 shows you and me that we also ought to love Him just like He loves us. This, that He had to make the choice for us, you have to make the choice for Him.

But you know what He did? A guy asked the other question the other night, basically he says, "How do you know God? How do you, how can anybody be so conceited to say that they understand and they know God? How can anybody in all of the world say, 'I understand and comprehend a God who is as big as He is and as complicated He is'? How can anybody ever say as mortal man ever say that I understand God?" I got my answer to him. My answer was this: "You know what? You are absolutely right. The Bible says in Isaiah 55, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.' There is no way I can understand God. There is no way you can understand God. There is no way anybody in this room can understand God. So you know what God did? God wrote a book about Himself so I could understand Him." That is the answer.

See, He loves you unconditionally. How about you loving Him? Do you love Him unconditionally or when it is convenient? Do you not? Are you not glad God does not deal with us like we deal with Him? Are you not glad that God does not forgive you like a lot of God's people will not forgive you? Are you not glad that God unconditionally, He will take you however He finds you, and He will always do what is right with you, and whenever you are willing to do what is right, He is ready to take you back? Well, you cannot get a bill of that. But my question is, what do you say to those things? What do you say to those things? This is a determining factor whether you make it or you do not in Christianity. You have to stay focused. You have to stay, you have to stay focused, and you have to keep your perception of where you are at. You cannot ever, ever, ever, ever get to the point where you lose your focus, because the moment you do, the moment you lose your central focus of what God has got to you, I have seen young couples get married, and you know what? Their focus of God just goes here. You know why? Because they are so focused on her, or she is focused on him, and God gets put out of the equation someplace. I have seen individuals where they get to the deal where that, you know, God takes care, they get a better job, or they get another job, or they get this over here, and suddenly God's focus on God is gone, and now it is over here. I have seen people come to the

place where they do well for a while, and they really get excited about God, you know what? But they do not make the break with their old friends, and slowly but surely, they lose their perspective, and they love, they quit loving the things of God, and they start going back to loving the things of the world. That is why it happens. That is why it happens.

You know what the tragedy is? You know what the tragedy is? Most of you here this morning understand that. Most of you here this morning are doing what you need to do. It is a tragedy of every sermon: the ones who need to hear it are somewhere else this morning. Oh, there is an adversary out there, all right. He makes sure, he makes sure that if you do not get fed fiercely, you get fed by the things of the world. What do you say to these things? And that always in light of the greatest chapter in the Bible that shows you what God has done for you. I, I cannot, I am like Joshua, I cannot speak for you, but I know this: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Every family ought to have that up on your picture, up on your kitchen someplace, or in your room. Every time your child gives you a problem, if you are doing what you are right, and you quit making the bad choices, every time your child, every time somebody in your family has a problem and they do not want to do, do not want to go to church, do not want to do this, you know what? All you do is point that out and say, "You know what? Did you think we put that up there because it matched the wallpaper? We put it up there because that is how we live. Now, you can stay or you can go, but that is the line right there." But you see, that creates conflict, does it not? Opposition. Does it not kind of ruffles the family a little bit? We just cannot stand conflict. We will roll over and fold up before we will stand and do what is right. Welcome to Laodicea.