

**Romans Session 128**  
**The Ultimate Security 6**  
**The Hymn of Security 4**

*Romans 8:31-39 (NASB)*

<sup>31</sup> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*

<sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

<sup>33</sup> *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;*

<sup>34</sup> *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

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

<sup>36</sup> *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."*

<sup>37</sup> *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

<sup>38</sup> *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,*

<sup>39</sup> *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

As we continue our study of the believer's salvation, and the security that He provides. So, after Paul has established the truth that it is impossible for any person to take away our salvation. He takes on the questions that some will ask, "Is it possible for circumstances to rob a believer of his salvations?"

*Romans 8:35-37 (NASB)*

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

<sup>36</sup> *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."*

<sup>37</sup> *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

In these verses we learn from Paul that that too is impossible.

Unpleasant and dangerous circumstances obviously can have a detrimental influence on the faith and the endurance of believers.

The question here, however, is whether they can cause a believer to sin himself out of salvation.

In essence, this question is an extension of the one discussed above regarding the possibility of a believer's dislodging himself from God's grace.

Paul anticipates and refutes the notion that any circumstance, no matter how threatening and potentially destructive, can cause a genuine believer to forfeit his salvation.

In verse 35, Paul lists a representative few of the countless ominous circumstances that a faithful believer may encounter while they still live in the world.

*Romans 8:35 (NASB)*

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

First of all, it should be noted that **the Love of Christ** does not refer to the believer's love for Him but rather to His love for the believer.

*Romans 8:37 (NASB)*

<sup>37</sup> *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

*Romans 8:39 (NASB)*

<sup>39</sup> *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

No person can love Christ who has not experienced the redeeming work of Christ's love for him:

*1 John 4:19 (NASB)*

<sup>19</sup> *We love, because He first loved us.*

In this context, **the love of Christ** represents salvation.

Paul is therefore asking rhetorically if any circumstance is powerful enough to cause a true believe to turn against **Christ** in a way that would cause **Christ** to turn His back on the believer.

So, at issue, then are the power and permanence of **the love of Christ** for those He has bought with His own blood and brought into the family and kingdom of His Father.

John reports that;

*John 13:1 (NASB)*

<sup>1</sup> *Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

As John makes clear in his first epistle, "**the end**" does not refer simply to the end of Jesus earthly life, but to the end of every believer's earthly life.

*1 John 4:9-10 (NASB)*

<sup>9</sup> *By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.*

<sup>10</sup> *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*

*1 John 4:17 (NASB)*

<sup>17</sup> *By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world..*

We have confidence as we face the day of judgment, because we know that the divine and indestructible **love of Christ** binds us eternally to Him.

In a majestic benediction at the end of the second chapter of his letter to Thessalonica, Paul says;

*2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (NASB)*

<sup>16</sup> *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,*

<sup>17</sup> *comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.*

Eternal comfort and good hope are the permanent gifts of God's grace, because, by definition, that which is eternal cannot end.

Ok, let's look at the circumstances listed by Paul

**The first** threatening circumstance Paul mentions is **tribulation**, from the word *thlipsis*, which carries the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure.

In Scripture the word is perhaps most often used of outward difficulties, but it is also used of emotional stress. The idea here is probably that of severe adversity in general, the kind that is common to all men.

**The second** threatening circumstance is **distress**, which translates the compound Greek word *stenochoria*, which is composed of the terms for narrow and space.

The idea is similar to that of tribulation and carries the primary idea of strict confinement, of being helplessly hemmed in. In such circumstances a believer can only trust in the Lord and prayers for the power to endure. Sometimes we are caught in situations where we are continually confronted with temptations we cannot avoid.

Paul counsels' believers who are under such **distress** to remember that;

*1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)*

<sup>13</sup> *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

Until He provides a way of escape, the Lord provides the power to resist.

**The Third** threatening circumstance is **persecution**, which refers to affliction suffered for the sake of Christ.

Persecution is never pleasant, but in the beatitudes, Jesus gives a double promise of God's blessing us when we suffer for His sake.

He then bids us to;

*Matthew 5:10-12 (NASB)*

<sup>10</sup> *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*

<sup>12</sup> *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

**The Fourth** threatening circumstance is enduring **famine**. This is often the result of persecution, when Christians are discriminated against in employment and cannot afford to buy enough food to eat.

Many believers have been imprisoned for their faith and have gradually starved to death because of inadequate food.

**The Fifth** threatening circumstance is **nakedness**. This does not refer to complete nudity but to destitution in which a person cannot adequately clothe himself. It also suggests the idea of being vulnerable and unprotected.

**The sixth** threatening circumstance is **peril** which means simply to be exposed to danger in general, including danger from treachery and mistreatment.

**The Seventh** threatening circumstance is the **sword**. Paul here is referring to a large dagger and was frequently used by assassins, because it was easily concealed.

It was a symbol of death and suggests being murdered rather than dying in military battle.

Paul was not speaking of these afflictions in theory or second hand. He himself had faced those hardships and many more, as he reports so vividly in 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

Referring to certain Jewish Leaders in the church who were boasting of their suffering for Christ, Paul writes;

**2 Corinthians 11:18-27 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> *Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.*

<sup>19</sup> *For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly.*

<sup>20</sup> *For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.*

<sup>21</sup> *To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison. But in whatever respect anyone else is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself.*

<sup>22</sup> *Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.*

<sup>23</sup> *Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.*

<sup>24</sup> *Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.*

<sup>25</sup> *Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.*

<sup>26</sup> *I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;*

<sup>27</sup> *I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.*

Quoting from the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) version of Psalm 44:22 Paul continues;

<sup>36</sup> *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."*

In other words, Christians should not be surprised when they have to endure suffering for the sake of Christ.

Before Paul wrote this epistle, God's faithful people had suffered for centuries, not only at the hands of Gentiles but also at the hands of fellow Jews.

They experienced mocking's and scourging's, yes also chains and imprisonment.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, n goatskins, being destitute afflicted ill-treated, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

**Hebrews 11:36-38 (NASB)**

<sup>36</sup> *and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.*

<sup>37</sup> *They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated*

<sup>38</sup> *(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.*

Oh, the cost of discipleship. The cost of which Jesus spoke of when He said count the cost of following Him.

We need to say that only true believers persevere, not because they are strong in themselves, but because they have the power of God's indwelling Spirit.

Their perseverance does not keep their salvation safe but proves that their salvation is safe.

Those who fail to persevere not only demonstrate their lack of courage but much more importantly their lack of genuine faith.

God will keep and protect even the most fearful person who truly belongs to Him.

On the other hand, even the bravest of those who are merely professing Christians will invariably fall away when the cost of being identified with Christ becomes too great.

Only true Christians are overcomers because only true Christians have, the divine help of Christ's own Spirit.

***Hebrews 3:14 (NASB)***

***<sup>14</sup> For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,***

To some Jews who believed Him, Jesus said;

***John 8:31-32 (NASB)***

***<sup>31</sup> So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;***

***<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."***

Holding fast and abiding in God's Word neither merit nor preserve salvation.

But the presence of those virtues confirms the reality of salvation, and the absence of them confirms the condition of lostness.

Just as we can only love God because He first loved us, we can only hold on to God because He holds on to us.

We can survive any threatening circumstance and overcome any spiritual obstacle that the work, of Satan puts in our way because;

***<sup>37</sup> in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.***

Will finish this section and come to the conclusion with Paul when we meet next time.