

No Worries (Part 1) – Rom 8:31-39

Rom 8:31-39 (Intro); Fresno, Doug, Jeremy; We're on the downhill side of our focus on Blessed Assurance, and if you've lived for any length of time . . .
Or experienced any measure of hardship in your life – you're well familiar with doubt
Wondering whether God really cares about you; And whether you can be *sure* of his love; Every single one of us has questions and doubts like that from time to time

And the purpose of this passage is to address those doubts, and settle them once and for all
So that you know beyond a *shadow* of a doubt, that God loves you; Period
And will never stop loving you; Or let anything get in the way of his love for you

That's the goal; That's the point of this passage; That we would . . .

Rest assured of God's love

That *no worries* would define us; B/c his love never fails, it never gives up, it never runs out on me – just like we sing sometimes; It's steadfast, it's sure . . .
And it's a massive blessing you can *bank* on as a child of God; And I want you to see it

[31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*
[32] *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*
[33] *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*
[34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*
[35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*
[37] *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
[38] *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

➤ Here's the deal – Paul has been developing/explaining the gospel for 8 chapters now
Talking about the sin that separates us, the Holy Spirit who helps us, God who justifies us, Christ who died for us, and the hope that fuels us
And he indicates he's ready to draw some conclusions with the question in v31 – *What then shall we say to these things?*
“In light of all I've just written, what should we think?” He asks a question

And to answer it, he sets up a rhetorical Q&A format, as if he's *responding* to our doubts about salvation; Our concerns

For instance, when he asks in v31b – *If God is for us, who can be against us?* . . .
He seems to be responding to a concern about those who oppose us; Like . . .

1. What if my enemies are too strong? (v31-32)

That seems to be the question or doubt, that he's responding to

What if the number of people who oppose me in life, are just too powerful for me to handle? What if they're greater than I can withstand?
What if their vengeance carries the day? What if my faith won't sustain me in the face of their bitterness and opposition?

Have you ever thought some of those things? I have

And I'm quite sure the mayor of Baltimore has, and the President of the United States, and every *other* leader in the history of the world; Especially God-fearers . . .
Like Elijah, and Jeremiah, and Peter, or Paul – men who were *persecuted* for their faith
What if my enemies are too strong? It's a real thing

➤ But it's not just a leadership question – we're *all* surrounded by enemies who are too strong for us; From playground bullies and malicious co-workers . . .
To social activists and radical Muslims; Even Satan himself
We are literally *surrounded* by enemies who are too strong for us; Legions of them
Prowling around like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour
Seeking people to overcome; Seeking people to adversely influence

And it begs the question – What if they're too strong? What if I can't keep the faith? What if I can't overcome? (1 Jn 5:4-5)
To which Paul responds by basically saying, “So what? So what if your enemies are formidable”

• **GOD is on your side**

That's essentially what he says in v31 – *If God is for us* [v31], *who can be against us?*
If the one who set the stars in place, and created the world, and commands the storms is for you, how can you fail?
If the all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present God of the *universe* is on your side, who stands a chance of opposing you?

Nobody; That's the implied answer

B/c God's power to protect is insurmountable; Oh he may allow the world to take your stuff on occasion, or even your life
But not your soul; Not your eternity; Not your hope; He's got that
And he's got you; With a power to protect that's insurmountable

➤ But it's not just a *de*-fensive thing, God being on your side – it's offensive as well
B/c God is *for* you as his child; That's what it says – *If God is for us* [and he is], *who can be against us?*

You see, God doesn't just protect us, he propels us; Like wind in a sail
And it's unstoppable; God's power to propel is unstoppable
Like a storm that drives a ship; Or a hurricane that overwhelms everything in its way
Enabling us to overcome our enemies not by might, or by power, but by God's Spirit

➤ And 3rd here, his power to provide is *unbelievable*
His power to protect is insurmountable, his power to propel is unstoppable, and his power to provide is unbelievable; Giving us everything we need; And then some
V32 – *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*

Having already given us his best, the life of his Son, what makes you think he's going stop? He won't; And can't

He can't *help* but pour out more; He can't *help* but supply our needs; He can't *help* but give us everything we need for life and godliness (1 Pet 1:3)

It's like parents who sacrifice a huge amount of time and money to adopt a child;
Sometimes waiting *years* to hold them and love them
Do you think for a minute that they would *neglect* their new son or daughter the second
they're home? Leaving them to fend for themselves?
No way; They're going to lavish their child with everything they possibly can

And the same is true of God with us; Who sacrificed his *Son* to adopt us into his family;
Far more costly than time or money; He's not going to *withhold* from you
You may need to wait for it; Even until eternity; But having given us his Son, *how*
will he not also with him graciously give us all things? He will (**Summary**)
B/c he's *for* you; With protection that's insurmountable, power that's unstoppable, and
provision that's unbelievable; It doesn't matter how strong your enemies are

That's the first doubt Paul addresses; The 2nd is this . . .

2. What if my sins are too many? (v33)

What if my accusers have something on me? Something God hasn't taken into account?
Or what if somebody brings up my past? What if they dredge up the junk, and show that
I'm not *worthy* of God's love
What if my *spiritual rap sheet* is just too long, and I'm not good enough to be saved?

Is that you? If so, you're in good company – with the rest of the world; Literally
B/c *none* of us are worthy of salvation; None of us are good enough
That's why salvation is an act of *grace* on God's part
Your sins *are* too many; And your rap sheet *is* too long; But not for God; Not for God

➤ Which came into focus for me about 15 years ago, when I worked with a post-prison
ministry; I would go to prisons from time to time and interview potential residents
Men who would live in the house and be a part of the ministry upon their release

And during one particular visit, I not only met with an inmate, whose name was Steve,
but his case worker as well – the guy responsible for his release and probation
And as I was standing in his office, he told me to hand him Steve's file, his rap sheet;
And pointed behind me on top of a file cabinet

So I turned around and started looking for a few papers held together with a paper clip or
something; But when I couldn't find it, I was like, "I'm sorry, I don't see it"
And he was like, "It's right there"; And I was like, "You mean this?"
And I picked up a file folder that was almost 2 inches thick, and said, "*This* is his rap
sheet?" And he was like, "Yep; Pretty much"

And I just stood there; I had no words; I was stunned; I couldn't even *imagine* doing that
many illegal things; It just defied my sensibilities

But the thing that dawned on me in the months that followed, is that Steve's *criminal* rap
at 2" thick, *pales* in comparison to our *spiritual* one; Our list of *sins*

➤ And lest you think they're too many, Paul responds by asking *another* rhetorical
question in v33 – *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?* God's own
And the answer, once again, is nobody; Nobody can bring a legitimate accusation of sin
against you; At least not for the purpose of disqualifying you as God's child

Or stripping you of your salvation; Or his purpose for your life
Your sin has been forgiven; It's no longer an issue when it comes to your standing
before God

And for someone to say otherwise about you, to dredge up even *one* sin from your
spiritual rap sheet, would be like tattling to the mafia boss . . .
About his favorite nephew Vinny; You just don't do that; Vinny's privileged
And so are you as one of God's *elect*; You're precious, and chosen, and special

So the question, "What if my sins are too many?" is moot; It doesn't matter
B/c God has forgiven you; He's chosen you, and forgiven you
And at the end of the day, that's all that matters

B/c nobody but . . .

• **GOD** is your judge

IOW it doesn't matter what anyone *else* thinks about your standing, or what *you* think
about your sin – it only matters what God thinks; B/c *it is God who justifies* – v33
It's *God* who declares you righteous; It's *God* who determines your innocence; It's *God*
who says, "forgiven"; It's *God* who strikes the gavel
The one whose word trumps all others; That's *your* judge; That's *my* judge

Which means your standing as his child is not up for a debate
If you've put your faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, his decision is final; And
your rap sheet is clean; You're justified (gavel); No matter what you've done (**Sum**)
Rest assured, and put your doubts to rest

And then 3rd, and closely related . . .

3. What if my guilt is too much? (v34)

What if I'm still responsible to *pay* for some of my sins? Kind of like the Catholic belief
in purgatory; What if my liability remains? What if part of my debt is yet to be paid?
What if there's something that someone could bring up, for which I still deserve some
sort of punishment? That's the 3rd question Paul seems to be responding to

Saying in v34 – *Who is to condemn?* [i.e. Who's going to legitimately advocate that
you're still guilty before God? That you still owe him payment for your sin?]
And then he answers by saying – *Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who*
was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

IOW in light of the fact that *Jesus is the one who died* for you – the perfect Son of God
who paid your debt in full . . .

And then rose again to prove his victory and seal the deal . . .

In light of all that, who can legitimately say that you still deserve condemnation? That
you still deserve death – eternal separation from God in the torment of hell?
Who can say that? Who's to condemn in that respect? Nobody! Same answer

➤ Not even you; Like when you *feel* guilty for something you've done wrong
In no way does that make you responsible to *pay* for the wrong
God may *discipline* you for the purpose of correction and prevention, but the payment
has already been made; In full
Feelings of guilt do not make you guilty before God; They're 2 different things

One is *conviction* – feelings of shame and wrongdoing, that God often uses to get our attention and make us stop . . .

And the other is *condemnation* – legal guilt; Where you bear the responsibility to *pay* for your sin; Something a follower of Christ is free of

B/c Col 2:14 says that God has *forgiven* us *all our trespasses* [past, present, *and* future], by *canceling* the record of debt [aka our guilt] *that stood against us with its legal demands*

IOW Jesus has satisfied God's requirement of payment *for* us, once and for all

Which means *there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*

We no longer stand *guilty* before him, but righteous (Rom 8:1)

Even when we *feel* guilty for sins we commit; How amazing is God's grace?

How amazing is God's grace, that we can do something wrong, feel guilty about it, but not *be* guilty? That's amazing

Our guilt is not too much b/c Jesus' sacrifice is greater, and none of it remains

Not to mention the fact that . . .

- **Christ is your advocate**

He didn't just die and move on, leaving you to fend for yourself in the courtroom of life

He's *at the right hand of God interceding for us* (34)

Looking out for us; And appealing to the *Father* on our behalf

Ensuring that an accusation of guilt or condemnation will *never* reach his ears

And guaranteeing that we will *always* receive his best

How good is that? How reassuring is that? That the one who gave his life for you,

continues to insure that yours won't be lost

That your salvation won't be undermined

That your innocence will never be questioned; That he's your advocate (**Summary**)

Rest assured; Your enemies are *not* too strong, your sins are *not* too many, and your guilt is *not* too much; God's love is greater; No worries

Prayer – Amazing love, how can it be, that you my God would not only die for me, but

live for me, and intercede for me, and help me; Thank you Lord; You are worthy; Help

us to take these truths to heart, and live accordingly, confident of your blessed assurance

We give now of our tithes and offerings, asking you to bless both the gift and the giver

Close – **Jeni Shafrath** – Director of Women's Ministry

Phillip Lindsay – Director of Jr High Ministries

John Cochran – EP

Sunday at 11 and 3 – documentary screening with Tony and May (PowerHouse)