

26. Learning to Rest in the Love of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why God causes all of the things that happen to us to work out for good. We see that the Lord is working through every event that happens in our lives to help us become more like Christ. As a result, when we see Christ, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. We want to help our children grow in their understanding of the way that Christ is working in their lives. We also want to help them learn to rest in the love of Christ. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Romans 8:31-32 says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” We saw that God is working in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ. As we are growing and becoming more like Christ, we see that God wants us to experience a great inner peace. The reason we can experience that peace is summarized by several questions. Since we know that God is for us, the question is asked, “Can anyone be against us?” God showed that He was for us by offering His own Son as the payment for our sin.

In fact, the Father sent Christ to pay the penalty for the sin of every person so that the Father could freely forgive all who would come to Him in repentance and faith. 1 John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. Here, we see the Father said He was satisfied; the sacrifice by Christ was sufficient to include every person who would come to Him in repentance and faith. Those who refuse to come to God by faith in Christ will pay the penalty for their own sins because of their sin of unbelief but God promises that all who come to Him through Christ will be forgiven.

The next question reminds us that all who come to Christ are freely given all things. For all who come to Christ, Romans 8:16-17 promises, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” We have this promise because of the fact that Christ forgives our sins, blots out our sins and remembers our sins no more. We can also assure our children that God promises that He will complete the work that He has started in our lives. Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.” The day will come when He will complete that work and we will spend eternity with Christ.

Romans 8:33-34 give us two more questions that remind us what God has done for us. In these verses, we see a courtroom scene as these two questions are asked, “Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” The word “elect” means *those who have been chosen and picked out by God*. Since God has chosen and picked out each Christian, there is no being that can bring a charge against those that God has chosen and see that charge stand. Then, we see why no one can bring a charge against us. God has justified us and declared us righteous in His sight. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore,

having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have peace with God because Christ died for us and the Father showed He was satisfied by raising Christ.

Since Christ is the One who died to pay the penalty for our sin, once we have accepted that payment by placing our faith in Christ, will He ever change His mind and condemn us? Of course, we know that would never happen. As John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Once we place our faith in Christ, we are no longer condemned.

Instead of condemning us, we see what Christ is doing for us right now. We see that Christ is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. There, Christ is interceding on our behalf. The word “intercession” means *to speak on our behalf to the Father*. In Revelation 12:10, we read, “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’” At the present time, Satan spends his time day and night accusing Christians of sin to the Father. Here, we see that Christ speaks for us when Satan accuses us. When I sin, Satan says, “Did you see the sin that Duane just committed?” Christ immediately speaks on my behalf and says, “I paid for Duane’s sins and Duane accepted the payment by placing His faith in Me.” The Father immediately tells Satan, “I am satisfied with the payment. Case dismissed.”

Romans 8:35-36 go on to say, “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 Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’” The next question that is asked is if anything could separate us from the love of Christ. Then, seven things are mentioned. Tribulation speaks of the various pressures and difficult things that affect our lives. Distress speaks about a dire calamity that places such great pressure on our lives that we feel like we are in a narrow place and cannot escape. Persecution speaks about suffering that is caused by people who are against Christ. Famine and nakedness talk about a lack of food or clothing. Peril speaks about danger from circumstances while sword speaks about a person trying to kill us. Here, we see that none of these things can separate us from the love of Christ.

Psalms 44:22 is quoted in verse 36. In that Psalm, we see that the writer talks about the fact that the Lord is the One who is watching over us regardless of the kind of suffering that we are experiencing in our lives. As Christians, we may suffer or be killed because of our faith in Christ. However, those things will not separate us from the love of Christ. Instead, this passage goes on to tell us that we will experience great victory through Christ regardless of what happens to us in this world. Here, we see that nothing that we experience in our daily life can separate us from the love of Christ.

Romans 8:37-39 says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who 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 created thing, shall be

able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Instead of difficult circumstances separating us from the love of Christ, we see that these things remind us that we are more than conquerors through Christ because of His love for us. The phrase “more than conquerors” means *to conquer completely*. Because Christ is in our lives, the circumstances we experience in life are not any threat to us in light of the eternal life that we have in Christ.

The things mentioned in verse 35 that cannot separate us from the love of Christ are things that could happen in our own lives. As we look at verses 38 and 39, we see that nothing in the entire creation can separate us from the love of Christ. Whether we die or continue to live will not affect our relationship with Christ. Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Here, we see that principalities are fallen angels while powers speak of those in positions of power and authority. As a result, neither godly angels nor demonic powers can separate us from the love of Christ.

We also see that things that are presently happening or will happen in the future will not change that love. Things like height and depth have no effect on that love. In fact, there is no created thing that can change the love of Christ for us. That is why we can help our children understand that there is nothing that they need to fear because God is in control of all things and He will not let anything separate them from His love.

In these last few verses of this chapter, we also learn another very important lesson. We saw that the last eleven verses of chapter seven used the words “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself” about 37 times. We mentioned that the Holy Spirit had only been mentioned once in the first seven chapters of Romans. We saw that the last eleven verses explain the frustration and failure that we will experience when we try to live the Christian life in our own strength. In contrast, in Romans 8 we see that the Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 times. We also see that these final verses use “we”, “our” and “us” instead of “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself”. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that we can experience inner peace in our lives as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit moment-by-moment.

We also realize that as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit gives us power to do what Christ calls us to do. John 15:5 says, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand that as they yield their lives to the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit works in their lives and the love of Christ flows through their lives to others. This is one of the key lessons that we can help our children understand to help them really begin to grow in their spiritual lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how the Holy Spirit works in their human spirit.