

Raised To Life

Never Separated from God

Romans 8:31-39

Pastor Dwayne Smith

I. The Power of a Question

- a. Questions are powerful. Questions are the beginning of learning and growing.
 - i. Jesus told us to ask (Matthew 7:7, 21:22).
 - ii. The right question changes us and points us to God and His purpose.
 - iii. God often approaches us with questions.
- b. Paul starts this section with two key questions.
 - i. Question #1: "What shall we say about these things?"
 1. Paul's question points us back to everything that he has just said.
 2. Peace with God, alive in Christ, dead to sin, God has made us righteous, released from the law, empowered by the Spirit, Children of God, God works everything for our good...
 - ii. Question #2: "**IF** God is for us, **WHO** can be against us."
 1. This is a two-part rhetorical question.
 2. Part 1: If God is for us...Who is God for? His children.
 - a. Everyone is invited, but not everyone has accepted.
 - b. God "for us" is contingent on accepting God (Gospel).
 3. Part 2: Who can be against us?
 - a. This is legal language: Is there a viable case?
 - b. Paul didn't say "no one is against us." We have enemies.
 - c. Paul is saying there is no case—thrown out of court.
- c. What shall we say?...**THANK YOU!**
 - i. Walk in it. Move forward in it. This is your new reality.
 - ii. Don't look back! History should teach us, NOT imprison us.

II. The Power of Challenges

- a. Hard times confuse us: Did I hear God right? Is God with me (last week's sermon)?
 - i. Our definition of success = possessions (material, relational, status, power)
 - ii. God's definition of success = Obedience (1 Samuel 15:22).
 - iii. Disobedience is the act of rebellion and a form of idolatry. Disobedience is often caused by trying to save face with others (myself) rather than God.
- b. We can "hear God" and things not go the way we expected them to turn out.
 - i. Hearing God is about God's destination, not ours.
 - ii. We think God is always rescuing us. **We have been rescued; now we are on MISSION.**
- c. Understanding the battle—victory requires a battle.
 - i. The greater the challenge, the greater the victory (verse 37).
 - ii. The greatest victory is on the other side of death – Jesus' death.

- iii. Battles get us ready; they strengthen us.
- iv. Worst-case scenario is giving up.
- d. NATURE: Struggle is necessary in order to growth (birds flying).

III. The Power of God’s Love

- a. God’s love is powerful – binding when we connect to it.
- b. Paul is convinced!
 - i. Convinced (*pepeismai*): “I have become and I remain convinced, for the conviction he expresses is rational, settled, and unalterable.”¹
 - ii. When I look at all of the evidence, when I consider all that God has done for me, I AM CONVINCED! How could I not be?
- c. Power of God’s LOVE: we need to be reminded of its power.
- d. Nothing can separate us from God’s love.
 - i. Physically – life and death. This tends to be our biggest fear.
 - ii. Spiritually – angels or demons. No good or bad spiritual beings.
 - iii. Time and space:
 1. Time: Fear and worry about today and tomorrow.
 2. Space: height or depths. Nothing in the universe.
- e. We can trust God’s love, because it isn’t dependent on us.
- f. God’s love is continually revealed in Jesus.
 - i. God has revealed and is continuing to reveal.
 - ii. God’s love is not a one-time experience – it’s deeper than that.
 - iii. We need a continual “revelation” of His love.

Reflection Questions:

- What question is God asking me? What question am I asking God?
- What challenges/struggles am I facing? Who am I dealing with them?
- Where do I struggle with obeying God?
- Where am I struggling as it relates to God’s love? How?
- What is God speaking to me today? How will I respond?

WAYS TO RESPOND			
			
COMMUNION	PRAY	JOURNAL	PRAYER WALLS
Visit stations to partake of the bread and cup.	Pray with your neighbor or one of our prayer teams.	Write out a prayer or journal a reflection.	Write prayer requests on the prayer walls.

¹ Stott, John. *The Message of Romans (The Bible Speaks Today Series)* (p. 258). InterVarsity Press.