

The Certainty Of Salvation.

Text: Rom 8:33-39

Suggested Hymns:

248, 179, 331, 326, 328

1) Sin Cannot Condemn Us

2) Tribulation Cannot Harm Us

3) Death Cannot Separate Us From God

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 8:33-39, ³³ *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* ³⁴ *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.*

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."* ³⁷ *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹ 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.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Are you certain that you will go to heaven when you die? Many Christians would answer: *"I think so,"* believing that God's children cannot be certain of salvation. Their uncertainty expresses itself like this: *"I wish I knew for sure,"* or *"I hope so,"* or *"I have always been in doubt about it."*

God's children should be certain as we read in Psalm 103:17, ¹⁷ *But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him.*

Jeremiah is certain, as we read in Jeremiah 31:3, ³ *The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.*

No one should doubt the words of Jesus Himself, as we read in John 10:28, ²⁸ ***“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. St. Paul did not doubt. We read in 2 Timothy 1:12, ¹² For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

In our text God tells us through St. Paul that nothing *shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* With St. Paul we also should say that we are persuaded that no one can pluck us from the hand of Jesus.

Our text shows that *Our Salvation Is Sure.* We are eternally safe with God and shall therefore be with God eternally in heaven. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Sin Cannot Condemn Us

Our text begins, ³³ ***Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? God’s elect, Who are they? The answer is in Romans 8:29, ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.***

They are those people whom God chose out of the world to be His own.¹ Although they are God’s elect, they are not sinless. All people are sinners.² Those who say that they have no sins deceive themselves.³ Even God’s elect have sins.⁴ Think of David, and remember the Apostle Peter.

Sin is disobeying God’s will.⁵ Such disobedience angers God.⁶ It moves God to separate Himself from sinners.⁷ Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise because of sin.

Now, God’s elect are also sinners. Satan tempts the elect by saying, ***“You are a sinner; by your sins you and God are no longer friends; yes, God must hate you, because God says in Deuteronomy 25:16, ¹⁶ “For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God.”⁸***

Satan continues his fiery darts by saying, ***“and if God is separated from you because of sin, if God hates you, how can you be certain that you will be saved?”***

Furthermore, conscience says to God’s elect, ***“You have many sins; you sin daily; your accumulated sins are an unpayable debt of 10,000 talents,⁹ your sins***

are very many.¹⁰ Yes, your sins are greater than those who did not know the Master's will.¹¹ Can there be forgiveness for you? Are you not in error when you say you are sure of your salvation?"

Paul, however, says that any charges against God's elect do not hold,³³ ***Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.*** True, God does not ignore the charges nor refuse to listen to them. But the condemning accusations that sin fires against God's elect do not hold because God Himself "***justifies***" the elect, that is, God declares them free from guilt, and declares them just for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ.

Our text says,³⁴ ***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.***

Sin also accuses God's elect. God must condemn according to His threat in Genesis 2:17,¹⁷ "***but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.***" Against this condemnation Jesus Christ shields us. It is the Christ, the Messiah, who died for us to atone for all our sins, was raised from the dead for our justification,¹² and now sits at God's right hand defending us, not by the shield of His power, but by making intercession for us.¹³

And since Jesus Christ as our Substitute fulfilled God's Law,¹⁴ cleansed us from all sin,¹⁵ destroyed death's power,¹⁶ and reconciled us to God,¹⁷ sin can never bring forth any accusation on account of which God must condemn us.

For each and every sin Jesus Christ suffered and died,¹⁸ With His blood Jesus blotted out every transgression as we read in 1 John 1:7,⁷ ***and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.***

Constantly recalling Jesus' merits, our heavenly Attorney cannot lose His case against sin's accusations! For the sake of Jesus, the risen and pleading Jesus, God will justify us. And since our sins cannot force God to condemn us, and since for the sake of Jesus Christ God declares us righteous, then our eternal salvation is definitely assured.

2. Tribulation Cannot Harm Us

Another set of dangers assailing God's elect are persecutions and tribulations. We read in our text, ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

These sorrows and sufferings cause many people to feel that they are separated from God, and that Jesus no longer loves them. Many Christians still have the mistaken notion that faith in Jesus frees them from troubles, trials, and temptations.

Pastors hear again and again the question "*Why must I suffer this sorrow? I strive to do what Jesus wants me to do.*" Indirectly they are saying that, since they are Christians, they should be immune to sorrows and sufferings.

However, Christ says that because of Him people shall hate God's elect.¹⁹ Paul tells the Roman Christians that they will suffer with Christ.²⁰ Paul and Barnabas exhorted the Christians in Antioch and the surrounding cities to continue in the faith even though they must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.²¹

God's elect, even though they are elect, do suffer tribulations. But not all people suffer the same. Some people suffer tribulations and anguish;²² some are hunted like wild animals, and persecuted; some face physical starvation; others face other physical calamities; some know that sooner or later the sword of war or the executioner will kill them.

But tribulations do not separate us from God. These sorrows definitely are not regarded as acts of love by the world. Some afflictions are punishment. Jeremiah tells the backsliding Israelites that their wickedness reproves them.²³

God's Word teaches us that for God's elect, sorrows and sufferings must be regarded as evidences of God's love.²⁴ Indeed, the Bible calls them chastenings,²⁵ and God sends them in order that we are not condemned with the world.²⁶ His intentions are thoughts of peace.²⁷ Even when God's elect begin to feel that their sorrows are an evidence that God has forsaken them, God is still thinking thoughts of peace.²⁸

Since we know that all tribulations work together for good to those who love God,²⁹ we should be happy. Jesus says in Matthew 5:10-12, ¹⁰ *Blessed are those*

who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.* ¹² *"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

The apostles departed, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name.³⁰ Paul glories in his tribulations.³¹ James says we should count it joy when trials assail us.³²

We read in 1 Peter 1:6-9, ⁶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷ *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,* ⁸ *whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹ *receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls.*

Furthermore, our text says ³⁷ *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.* We become sure that God loves us, desires to strengthen our faith by removing all slag,³³ and gives us strength to resist evil and do good.³⁴

And when we become convinced that our sorrows and sufferings as God's elect are sent by God in order to prove to us that He is not separated from us, but desires to bring us closer to Him, then there will be no doubt in our minds about the certainty of our salvation.

Even in the severest sorrow we shall triumphantly say, *"I am sure I will be saved, for these sorrows reveal to me the hand of a loving God."*

3. Death Cannot Separate Us From God

In our text Paul mentions other things that seek to separate us from God's love. *Angels, principalities* and *powers* are named. This means that there is no power, no *"thing present nor things to come,"* not the delightful or terrible present, nor the fearful or attractive future, neither *"height nor depth, nor any other created thing,"* in short, there is nothing that can be named or thought of

which *shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*. No, not even death.

Do you agree with Paul? Many people will disagree with his statement that death does not separate us from God. Is death not the consequence of sin,³⁵ and does sin not separate from God? We read in Isaiah 59:2, ² *But your iniquities have separated you from your God*.

If sin separates from God, then death, a consequence of sin, also separates from God. When God said in Genesis 2:17 that *“in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* He meant not only physical death but also eternal death in hell, the second death.³⁶

Those in hell are everlastingly separated from God’s love and mercy.³⁷ Yes, death does separate from God.

However, death cannot separate God’s elect from God. It is true, God’s elect die the temporal death, for they also are sinners;³⁸ but all who have faith in Jesus as their personal Saviour,³⁹ all who receive believingly what Jesus won for us, will never feel the sting of death,⁴⁰ and will never taste the second death.⁴¹

To them death is no longer death in the proper sense, but rather a blessed sleep in Jesus.⁴² Death does not separate them from God; rather it is the gateway to Paradise, where God lives and where we shall live with God.⁴³

Scripture says in Revelation 14:13, *‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’*

Since we know from Holy Scripture that death does not separate from God those whom He has chosen to be His own, we should regard death as our friend. It frees us from sin,⁴⁴ from physical pain and mental agony.⁴⁵

Through death we enter into delightful communion with God and the blessed.⁴⁶ We read in 2 Corinthians 5:8, ⁸ *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord*. And in John 12:26, ²⁶ *“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also.”*

Finally, Death is planting the seed for a glorious body like Christ’s body.⁴⁷ Can death separate the elect from God? Certainly not!

We all know the familiar Scripture text, Ephesians 2:8-9, *⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.* That gives us certainty because our salvation is based outside of us, namely on what Jesus Christ has done for us, and not based on ourselves.

So based on our text, in summary, we are certain of our salvation because sin cannot condemn us, tribulation cannot harm us, and death cannot separate us from God. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 15:19, John 17:6

² Isa. 64:6; Job 14:4

³ 1 John 1:8

⁴ Romans 7:8-14

⁵ 1 John 3:4

⁶ Col. 3:6; Eph. 5:6

⁷ 2 Chron. 24:20; Amos 3:2

⁸ See also Jer. 25:7

⁹ Matt. 18:24

¹⁰ Psa. 40:12; Psa. 19:13

¹¹ Luke 12:47, 48

¹² Rom. 4:25; Phil. 2:9

¹³ 1 John 2:1

¹⁴ Gal. 4:4, 5; Rom. 5:19

¹⁵ 1 John 1:7

¹⁶ Heb. 2:14

¹⁷ Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18

¹⁸ 1 Cor. 15:3; Rom. 5:6

¹⁹ Matt. 10:21,22; John 16:1,22,33

²⁰ Rom. 8:17

²¹ Acts 14:22. Cf. also 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Tim. 2:11,12; 1 Pet. 4:12-16

²² Rom. 2:9; 2 Cor. 6:4

²³ Jer. 2:19; compare Deut. 28:15-45

²⁴ Heb. 12:6; Jer. 29:11; Psa. 94:12

²⁵ Heb. 12:5-11

²⁶ 1 Cor. 11:32

²⁷ Jer. 29:11; Rom. 8:28

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- 28 Isa. 54:7, 8
29 Rom. 8:28
30 Acts 5:41
31 Rom. 5:3
32 James 1:2,12
33 1 Pet. 1:6-7; James. 1:12; 2 Cor. 8:2; Rom. 16:20
34 1 Pet. 4:1, 2; Heb. 12:10; Is. 26:16
35 Rom. 5:12; 6:23
36 Rev. 20:14
37 Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9
38 Rom. 6:23
39 2 Tim. 1:10
40 1 Cor. 15:55-57
41 John 8:52; 1 John 3:14
42 1 Thess. 4:13-14; Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23
43 Luke 23:43
44 2 Tim. 4:18
45 Rev. 7:16,17
46 Heb. 12:22-23; Luke 13:29
47 Phil. 3:21