



Sermon, Sunday August 4, 2024

“Christ’s Love God’s Love”

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:31-39 ³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced 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.

Introduction: Apostle Paul

Apostle Paul was the most outstanding preacher, missionary, theologian, and spiritualist in Christian history. At least ten books in the New Testament were written by Paul. However, while Paul was alive, not only was he not respected by people, but he also experienced many difficulties. Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 in verse 36 of today’s text and expressed that his situation was like as sheep to be slaughtered. Apostle Paul died without knowing what fruit the seeds of the gospel he had sown bore.

In general, people lose passion or become desperate if they do not receive recognition or compensation for their efforts. So, many people live with the mindset that they will not suffer or lose anything. But although Paul may have been partially influenced by his surroundings, he overcame his circumstances. The reason Paul was able to overcome his circumstances was because he focused on God’s love in Jesus Christ, not on his circumstances. So, in today’s text, Paul says, **“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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.”** (Romans 8:38-39)

Paul used the expression ‘I am convinced’ in this verse. Paul was convinced that there was nothing in the world that could separate us from God’s love revealed through Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! May we have Paul’s confidence that nothing in the world that makes us afraid can separate us from God’s love. But can we live with this faith and confidence?

Body: God’s love

The phrase ‘God’s love’ is something we often hear in our religious lives. However, we cannot completely understand God. We must slowly move toward God and God’s love until the end of our lives. More precisely, we must entrust our souls more and more deeply to God’s love. For this we must ask the following questions: **‘Who is the God that Paul speaks of in today’s text, and what is God’s love? What is God’s love that frees us from all the forces of the world? ‘How did Paul gain this confidence?’**

However, in today’s text, Paul does not say ‘God’s love’ but ‘God’s love in Jesus Christ.’ In other words, Paul thought that God’s love and the love of Jesus Christ were the same. Paul realizes God’s love, which the



Jews had a vague idea of, through the incarnation of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Incarnation refers to an event in which Almighty God humbled himself and came to this earth in a human body. Paul came to the conviction that he was free from sin and death through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection.

In today's text, Romans 8:33-35, Paul explains three things that God did on this earth through Jesus. First, only Jesus' death on the cross can free us from the bondage of the law. Verse 33 of today's text says, **'Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.'**

In this verse, **'who will bring any charge'** means holding someone accountable for a sin. In the Roman era when Paul lived, all order was maintained by law. This is the logic of putting society in order by giving appropriate punishment to those who break the law. Jewish law also insisted on the same logic as Roman law. So those who broke the law were accused, and those who kept the law were praised. For this reason, Jews lived with the burden of the law throughout their lives. Paul was one of those people.

However, Paul could not enjoy spiritual peace and satisfaction through the law. Because it was fundamentally impossible to keep all the laws. Paul realized that faith in Jesus, not human works, was the only way to obtain righteousness from God. So, in today's text, Paul says, **'Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.'**

Second, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross frees us from **'condemnation.'** Today's text verse 34 says, **'Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.'** If **'any charge'** in verse 33 of today's text refers to questioning people's sins, the **'condemnation'** refers to judgment on people's sins.

Jesus was crucified on the cross after being accused by the Jews. Those who accused Jesus thought that Jesus was judged through his death on the cross.

However, according to Paul, the life of Jesus who died on the cross did not end with judgment. Because God raised Jesus from the dead. Also, Jesus, who was resurrected and ascended to heaven, is still praying for us at the right hand of God. Verse 26 of today's text says that the Holy Spirit helps us with our weaknesses. The world judged Jesus as a sinner by crucifying him, but God's judgment on Jesus was his resurrection, ascension, and reign over the world.

If we can believe that Jesus, the first fruit of resurrection, is interceding for us at the right hand of God, **'no one or force in this world can bind us to the fate of sin and death.'**

Thirdly, we cannot separate ourselves from God's love revealed through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Verse 35 of today's text says, **'Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?'**

The **'love of Christ'** spoken of in this verse is the same as the **'love of God'** spoken of verse 39 of today's text. In verse 35 of today's text, Paul lists things that are difficult for people to handle. It is tribulation, adversity, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger and sword. Terminal illness, economic poverty, imprisonment, bullying, and loneliness are some of the difficulties we experience in human life. However, Paul declares that these difficulties that humans experience in life cannot separate us from the love of Christ. The reason Paul can proclaim these words is because he experienced the absolute love of Christ.

At that time, Paul and other Roman believers were constantly experiencing hardships that could jeopardize their faith. Paul felt a religious kinship with them. Paul said of the situation at that time in Romans 8:18, **'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.'** Do you believe these words of Paul?

This verse mentions two things a Christian will experience. One is present suffering, and the other is future glory. Christians cannot avoid present suffering. In fact, suffering is something everyone wants to avoid.



However, if we can recognize and experience the **‘glory of the future’** in our actual lives, we can overcome the **‘sufferings of the present.’**

Our problem is that the present suffering we are experiencing is so urgent and great that we do not recognize the **‘future glory’** in our present lives.

Conclusion: Please try to enter the deeper spiritual world of Christian faith.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Now let’s summarize today’s message. We cannot avoid the hardships we experience in our lives. It is also difficult to overcome easily. As Paul proclaims today, it is not easy to recognize and live in the ‘glory of the future’. Because the pressing problems of the present make all these promises empty and unrealistic.

What should we do in this reality? There is no other way. We must realize what the ‘future glory’ that Paul calls out in today’s text is, and how it was given to us as a promise through Jesus Christ and go deeper into the spiritual world of faith.

So, we must pray harder, read God’s word, and meditate on it. We must also be able to long for worship. Furthermore, we must earnestly seek and experience God every day.

Paul, our predecessor in faith, was able to be confident of **‘future glory’** by experiencing a deep spiritual world.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Please remember Paul’s spiritual confidence in today’s text. Only the cross death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus Christ can liberate us from all sin and death. This is the love of God that today’s text speaks of. **Amen.**

