

The Homily: Fr David Purcell: Holy Cross Pretoria

Romans 8:vs 31-38 says that; “We are more than conquerors through him who loved us”.

Whilst researching material for today’s sermon, a well-known Christian hymn came to mind, the lyrics are very apt, and align with Paul’s message to the Romans. The title of the hymn is “Blessed Assurance”.

*Vs 1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

Paul’s message magnifies the love that God has for us, and the **assurance** of salvation offered to us through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. These verses are amongst the most beautiful verses to be found anywhere in the bible, as they address the doctrinal truth of the eternal security promised by God to the believer. That a believer can never be separated from the saving, redeeming love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Firstly, we must establish the difference between *"assurance" and "reassurance"*.

Assurance is the act of **assuring**; it is a declaration or pledge tending to inspire full confidence - that which instils confidence, while **reassurance** is the feeling of being **reassured**, of having confidence restored, of having apprehensions dispelled.

In Vs31, Paul opens by saying, *“What, then, shall we say in response to these things?”*

It is important to establish who Paul is referring to when he says **“We”**, and the preceding verses 28-30 identifies that group of people as follows;

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.”

Do you recall the Parable of the “Wedding Banquet” in Matthew 22 where Jesus likened the Kingdom of Heaven to a wedding banquet prepared by the King for his son?

The first invitees declined the invitation, where after the King sent his servants out to the street corners to invite everyone else they could find.

The King found no fault with any of the invited guests, good or bad, except for the man who failed to don a proper wedding garment. The King punished only that man, then Jesus concluded the parable by saying, *“For many are called, but few are chosen”*, suggesting that God extends the call broadly, but it is effectual only for those who respond appropriately.

Paul raises the following question.

If God is for us, who can be against us?

The use of the word **"if"** implies the idea of possible doubt, but we know that God loves us unconditionally. Some of the original writings would have been in Greek, and the Greek word *“Ei”* translated is *“Forasmuch”*, *“Since”* and the use of *“If”* in this instance is a conditional statement.

So who can be against us?

It is not God, because He sacrificed his Son for all of us. How will he not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things.

Who on this earth will bring a charge against those whom God has chosen?

For God is the Alpha and the Omega – He is the one who justifies, He is the Judge and He holds the gavel in his hand because only he has supreme authority in the courts of heaven.

Is it Christ Jesus who died on the cross and was raised to life, and is seated at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us?

No, he died for our sins, so *why would He condemn us*. He paid the full purchase price for our salvation on the cross.

A.T. Robertson a preacher and biblical scholar once said, *“Our Advocate paid the debt for our sins with His blood. The score is settled”*. The Cross has dealt with our sins.

So we have thus far established that it is not God and not Christ Jesus, so;

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

Could it be, trouble, hardship, persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

In vs36 Paul refers to Psalm 44 vs22 – *“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered”*

Take Job as an example. His trials were never intended to be a form of punishment, in fact, he was a pious man and did nothing to warrant punishment. Instead, the trials were a test of his faith. In the Book of Job, Satan lays down a challenge to God for Job's faith, saying that he is only pious because of his comfortable life. Through all of Job's trials, Satan was not able to break his faith, and God later blessed and rewarded Job. In vs 37 of the Epistle, Paul makes this statement, *“No, in all these things we are “more than conquerors” through Christ who has loved us”*.

Then Paul asks; Is there anything that can defeat God's eternal purpose, Anything?

Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us? Paul covers the full spectrum of possibilities, and gives a resounding answer, "No!" "Nothing!"

“Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons” neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our lord.

This morning we have concluded that; Satan and his demons cannot separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our lord,

It is not God,

It is not Christ, as he is our high Priest and intercedes for us, so which human could take away our salvation?

There is only one other possibility, ***what about ourselves?***

Do you know of any true believer that would want to separate themselves from the love of God?

I don't, but 1 John 2 vs19 tells us about such people and warns against denying the Son.

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us”.

My brother and sisters, we have this Blessed Assurance that our salvation is ever secure, let us accept this gift before it is too late to do so.

God planned our eternal salvation, Christ provided and purchased it, and the Holy Spirit produces and perfects it.

This is my story, this is my song.

Let us Praise our Saviour all the day long.

In the name of the Father, + and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen

