

# "The Love Of God" • Romans 8:31-39

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. 3 Little Pigs

1. Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away, there were three little pigs
2. These little pigs all built their own houses
  - a. the first built his out of straw
  - b. the second out of sticks
  - c. and the third out of brick
3. But not long after the first little pig had made his first mortgage payment on his straw house, a big bad wolf came along,
4. And he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew that house down and enjoyed himself a nice pork sandwich
5. Moving on down the road, he came to the second swine's house, the one made of sticks
6. Once again, he huffed and he puffed, and he blew that house down too and enjoyed some delicious fried pork rinds
7. 2 for 2, he came to the third hog's brick house
  - a. he huffed, and he puffed
  - b. but he couldn't blow that house down
  - c. so he pulled out his lighter and tried to set it on fire
  - d. but it wouldn't light
  - e. he hammered with his furry paws; he raked with his claws
  - f. he snarled and bit with his fangs
  - g. but all he did was hurt himself
8. And all the while the third little pig just sat in a high window and looked down at the wolf while he made a complete fool of himself!

### B. Your House

1. What's your house made of?
2. What are you trusting in for protection?
3. When the big bad wolf of adversity comes knocking at your door, what stands between you and he?
4. Straw? Sticks? Or something more solid and secure?

## II. TEXT

### A. V. 31

{31} What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?

1. The **things** Paul means are all he's been speaking of earlier in the chapter
  - a. and that was the suffering we endure as Spirit led believers
  - b. because we live in a fallen and flesh dominated world—
  - c. we are going to experience opposition
    - 1) some times this opposition is nothing more than our own flesh

- wanting to keep to its old ways
- 2) at other times it will be outright persecution that arises from a hostile world
  - 3) and then again, it will come simply from the fact that we live in a cursed creation
2. But what shall we say to all that?
  3. He answers that question by asking another: If God is for us, who can be against us?
  4. Is God for us? YES!!!
  5. Then, in the final analysis, who can *really* oppose us?
  6. No one and nothing!!!!
  7. During a crisis in the Civil War a worried civilian said to President Lincoln,
    - a. "Oh Mr. President, I am most anxious that the Lord would be on our side."
    - b. Lincoln replied, "that gives me no anxiety at all. The thing I worry about is being on the Lord's side!"
    - c. while Lincoln was correct in his application for *that* moment
    - d. we can be confident that indeed, God *is* for us
  8. Paul now gives substance to his confidence in God in *three* arguments
  9. **First**, he says that God will with hold *nothing* in taking care of us . . .

### **B. V. 32**

**{32} 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?**

1. Paul answers his questions in asking them
2. If God would go to the length He did to save us, is it reasonable to think He will not also protect and help us?
3. Since God has already given the costliest gift, is it likely he is going to with hold lesser things we need?
4. For the sake of illustration:
  - a. let's say you enter one of those hundreds of sweepstakes they send you in the mail every year
  - b. and you win second prize; a 1998 Buick Riviera!
  - c. you go to the car dealer to pick it up and they say, "It's all yours- tax free! Take it home and enjoy."
  - d. but then they refuse to give you the key!
  - e. now of course, that's absurd!
  - f. if they are going to go so far as to give you a car, they are going to give you what goes with it to make it yours
5. I like manner, God gives us *in Christ* everything we need
6. In 2 Peter 1:3 we read,

**His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,**

### **C. Vs. 33-34**

1. **Next**, Paul asks who can condemn us

**{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.**

2. Can I say that it is extremely gratifying to see the way so many of you have opened up to God and moved deeper in your relationship with Him as we have been studying through Romans over the last couple months
3. One of the main themes the Holy Spirit has used to work in many is precisely what Paul says here
  - a. that God hasn't *just* forgiven us of our sins
  - b. He's done that *for sure*
  - c. but he's done *more*
  - d. we aren't just forgiven, we are declared righteous in Christ
  - e. this truth has taken root in many hearts and has set people free from fear and anxiety
  - f. it's brought peace and great confidence
4. Just last week we read Paul's bold assertion in v. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."
5. So, who can bring a charge against God's own redeemed?
6. If God, the Supreme Judge, has already passed judgment and declared us not only innocent but as having fully satisfied the requirements of holiness —
7. Then who is able to lift a finger against us?
8. Who can over rule God's judgment?
9. Clearly, the answer is NO ONE
10. But let me tell you, that doesn't keep one particular party from trying
11. You see, Satan *tries* to condemn us; he tries to make some charge stick
  - a. in the book of Job we see him appearing before God and slandering a faithful man
  - b. in Rev. 12 he is called the "accuser of the brethren" who accuses them *night and day* before the throne of God
  - c. but none of the devils charges against you and me stick
    - 1) you know why?
    - 2) look at v. 34 again!
    - 3) Jesus sits at the right hand of God and makes continual intercession on our behalf
  - d. when Satan accuses you, Jesus simply raises his nail pierced hand to silence him

#### **D. Vs. 35-37**

1. **Third**, Paul asks what can separate us from the love of God

**{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.**

1. Is there anything that can intervene between us God's love and us?

2. Is there anything that can interrupt the flow of divine affection for those He purchased with His own blood?
3. Can trouble, or hardship, or suffering, or hunger or want?
4. Can danger disrupt God's love?
5. No! Because God's love is not something that is affected by circumstance or time or anything else
6. It is utterly free!
7. He quotes Psalm 44:22 to show that God's people have *always* suffered at the hands of those who oppose God
  - a. both the Romans to whom Paul wrote this, and us who read it 1900 years later shouldn't be upset by the hostility we face as believers
  - b. while God looks at us as His flock
  - c. the world sees us as mutton
8. But here's the point, the world's wrong!
9. They only see things from the perspective of this moment
10. Eternity tells a different story
11. We are more than conquerors through Christ, because He loves us
12. Notice carefully the way Paul describes us
  - a. we aren't merely conquerors
  - b. we are *more* than victors
  - c. we are, as he puts it, hyper-conquerors
  - d. our victory over our enemies and troubles is so complete, so total, and so final that Paul had to make up a new word = *hypernikao*
13. Those of you who know me may be surprised that I would use basketball as an example but I think this well illustrates the point
  - a. how well would a junior high school basketball team do against the NBA All Stars?
  - b. not well!
  - c. in fact, we might suggest that the youngsters just sit it out
  - d. if they *did* try to play a game, the final score would be absurd
  - e. and we wouldn't just call the All Stars winners, we'd call them annihilators!
14. That's the picture Paul gives us here
  - a. the devil is such a thorough liar he's deceived himself into thinking he can eventually defeat God
  - b. but in reality, he's got less chance than a junior high basketball team on the court with Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal, Charles Barkley, Grant Hill & Hakim Allijuwon
15. Now, a word of caution lest our confidence and opinion of ourselves move off base
  - a. our standing as super victors lies not in our own strength or superiority
  - b. our victory comes from our union with Christ
  - c. we are more than conquerors, how?
  - d. **THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US!**
16. We are victors because He has won
  - a. that's why Paul says Jesus **LOVED** us instead of **LOVES** us in v. 37
  - b. He is thinking of something very specific – The Cross and the

## Resurrection

- c. while it's true that God LOVES us right now
  - d. He has demonstrated that love in one definitive, history shaping event, the death and resurrection of Jesus!
  - e. As John writes in his first epistle, For this reason the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil
  - f. or as Paul write to the Colossians; in the cross, Jesus disarmed Satan and his minions
17. Our victory today stands on His victory that day
18. Chrysostom was one of the early church fathers who was arrested and taken before the Roman emperor
- a. Caesar threatened to banish him
  - b. Chrysostom replied, "You can't banish me for this world is my father's house."
  - c. the emperor again threatened, "I will slay you."
  - d. Chrysostom said, "You can't, for my true life is hid with Christ in God.
  - e. "I will take away your treasures," the tyrant fumed
  - f. Chrysostom humbly replied, "All my treasure is in heaven, as is my heart."
  - g. in a rage Caesar said, "I will drive you away from man and no one will befriend you."
  - h. the man of God answered, "You cannot, for I have a friend in heaven from whom you can not separate me. I defy you, for there is nothing you can do to hurt me."
19. Chrysostom clearly understood what Paul wrote here
20. May we, as well!

## E. Vs. 38-39

**{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.**

1. My favorite piece of classical music is *The Moldau* by Smetana
2. The Moldau is a river in Hungary
  - a. it begins high in the hills and slowly gathers volume and speed as it makes it's way to the sea
  - b. Smetana's composition follows the journey of the Moldau from its headwaters to it's end
  - c. it starts with one light flute and the occasional plucking of strings, just like the river's origin as a tiny stream
  - d. but as the piece moves on it gathers more instruments in, just as other streams join the main river
  - e. the pace of the music quickens, it's volume brightens
  - f. then it alternates between wide and serene stretches and more hurried and powerful moments, perfectly mirroring the river's journey through the valleys and plains of Hungary
  - g. but as it approaches its end it slowly rises into a crescendo of power

- and joy, a mighty force
3. On the score at this point is written the word "fortissimo"
    - a. with strength!
    - b. this tells the musicians they are to play with vigor and strength
    - c. this is the climax, the point to which the rest has been driving
  4. If Paul were writing a musical score, no doubt he would write the word "fortissimo" above the staff at this point
  5. Without a doubt, as he pens these words, he reaches the climax of Romans
- {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.**
6. Paul was persuaded these things could not separate him from the love of God because he had suffered most of them in one for or another
  7. He had known hardship,
    - a. he had been stoned to death at Lystra
    - b. he knew what it was to be face to face with demons
    - c. he knew what it was to sit at the top of the heap *and* to be at the bottom of the ladder
    - d. he knew the allures and enticements of this life
    - e. but in and through it all, he knew what it was to experience the love of God
  8. You see, the love of God wasn't merely some neat theological construct for Paul to bounce around his huge intellect
  9. It wasn't a doctrine to debate or an abstract to conceptualize
  10. It was his air, his bread, his water, his light, his life
  11. Paul knew that the love of God is made real in the person of Jesus Christ
  12. And Paul believed in him--not with a dry kind of mere *religious* belief that is taken out for a walk once a week on Sunday mornings for a couple of hours
  13. Paul's belief in Jesus was *complete*
    - a. nothing was more important to him
    - b. Jesus was His life
    - c. to live was Christ, to die was gain, he to the Philippians

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Love Without God*

1. Vast multitudes of people today are trying to find love
2. The reason they are so driven is because God created man to love and be loved
3. To love Him and to be loved *by* Him
4. Because man is a rebel, he wants the love, but he doesn't want God
5. And so, ultimately, he moves through life empty
6. Oh sure, the world has come up with some pretty convincing imitations
7. But it doesn't take long before you realize you've bought a fake

8. God offers His love as a free gift
9. It's received by believing in Christ

**B. Not Without Cost**

1. G. Campbell Morgan was a well known preacher of some time ago
2. He told of a coal miner who came to him and said, "I would give anything to believe that God would forgive my sins, but I cannot believe that He will forgive them if I just ask Him. It is too cheap."
3. Morgan said, "My dear friend, have you been working today?"
4. The miner replied "Yes, I was down in the mine."
5. Morgan asked, "How did you get out of the pit? Did you pay?"
6. "Of course not," Said the man, " I just got into the cage and was pulled to the top."
7. Morgan pressed, "Were you not afraid to entrust yourself to that cage? Was it not too cheap?"
8. The miner looked puzzled at such a foolish question, "Oh no, it was cheap for me, but it cost the company a lot of money to sink the shaft."
9. Suddenly the truth struck him.
  - a. what had not cost him anything -- salvation -- had not come cheap to God.
  - b. that miner had never thought of the great price God paid to send His Son so He could rescue fallen humanity.
  - c. now he realized that all anyone had to do was to "get into the cage" by faith to be lifted from the dark pit of sin and death
10. Friend, God loves you
11. And He loved you when He sent His only Son to die for your sins
12. His resurrection from the dead is the proof that nothing can ever separate you from the love of God
13. But that loves comes *only* through Jesus
14. Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior?