

## Romans 8:31–39

**<sup>31</sup>What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?**

**<sup>33</sup>Who will bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies! <sup>34</sup>Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God’s right hand and who is also interceding for us! <sup>35</sup>What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup>Just as it is written:**

**For your sake we are being put to death all day long.**

**We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.**

**<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

**<sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces,**

**<sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. If God is for us, who can be against us? It’s a well known passage, a passage of great comfort. Most people, even those who don’t know much about the Bible, have probably heard this passage at one time or another. **If God is for us, who can be against us.** It’s a short passage and easy to remember. It makes us feel good, makes us feel invincible, makes us feel like nothing bad can ever happen to us. **If God is for us, who can be against us!**

Well, I can think of a lot of things. Cancer, covid, and every other sickness and disease. Old age, that can be against us. Bad people, robbers, and criminals, are all against us. Enemies of our country and the freedoms we have, they’re against us too. Tragedies and accidents, the result of living in a sinful world, that’s all against us every day, as well as the sinful nature that we’re born with.

And then there’s the devil, he’s definitely against us. He sees a passage like this and mounts his attack: If God is for us, why did he allow this tragedy or that accident? If God is for us, why isn’t life easier? If God is for us, why do I suffer? Or maybe God is for *us* but not for *me*. Maybe I’m not a part of us, because look what happened to me.

And so the devil sows his seeds of doubt, leading us to believe that since we are Christians, followers of Christ, there should be a noticeable and quantifiable difference between us and the rest of the world when it comes to hardships and suffering, pleasures and treasures. But there’s not. In fact, sometimes it seems as if believers have it worse.

That’s called sinful pride — believing we deserve something more from God because of who we are. It’s an attempt by our sinful nature to justify ourselves before God’s Law. “No, I’m not perfect, but, at least I believe in God.” And what work of that is ours? That’s God’s work. We had nothing to do with it. We were dead, blind, enemies of God. We couldn’t come to God if we wanted to, and we didn’t.

It’s an attempt by our sinful nature to overlook how sinful we really are. “Repent of what? I’m doing my best in a sinful world. It’s not like God is helping me much, as I strive and toil and suffer through his life. If he picked up his end a little bit, made my life a little better, or a lot, then I’d do my part.” How often don’t we see that in our natures? Lord, if you give me more, then I’ll be generous in my offerings. Lord, if you grant me this or that, then I’ll be able to carry out your will in my life better.

How dedicated Satan is to getting us to pass on the everlasting treasures of our God for the fleeting treasures of this world. To be blind to the peace and security he’s given us in Jesus as we stubbornly try to hold on to the world around us. To forfeit our faith in our Savior for our own worthless works, trading his greatest blessings for an eternity in hell.

**If God is for us, who can be against us.** It’s a well known passage, but maybe not very well understood. There are two keys to understanding it correctly. Language and context. First of all, **If God is for us, who can be against us**, sounds silly by itself. As we said, a lot of things stand against even the most faithful Christian. But in the original language, what the Roman Christians would have understood Paul to be saying is this: If God is for our advantage, who or what can be to our disadvantage? In other words, the things that our God has given us make anything else we face, struggle, or suffer at the hands of the devil, the world, our our sinful flesh of no consequence.

And Paul gives us the context we need so that this passage is brimming with all the comfort we could ever ask for, and more. Look what “*God for us*” means: It means in the face of sin, death, hell, and the devil threatening us and our eternity, God did not spare his own Son! Nothing we need is too much for him to give us. Lost in our sin, destined for hell, we needed a rescuer, some way for us to gain perfection and lose our sins.

There was only one way for that to happen. Find someone to suffer in our place. And not just anyone, it had to be someone who could live perfectly and die. But not only that, his life and death had to count for everyone. That narrows it down to one person who could save us. Jesus, who was true man so he could live under God's law, and also true God so that his perfection and death would count for all.

God didn't hesitate. Moments after the first sin, God promised the very Savior we needed. Thousands of years later, fulfilling every prophecy about the Savior, Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, lived perfectly for us and died for our sins.

"God for us" means that when there is something we need, he gets the job done, completely, as Paul points out here when he asks, "Who will bring a charge against us?" No one. God has justified us, declared us not guilty because of what Jesus did. In baptism Jesus' perfect life and death for every sin was made yours, given to you as a free gift through faith. Any charge the devil brings of sin, or guilt, or shame against us is meaningless. We are perfect and holy in God's sight.

So God has justified us. Who is he that condemns? "God for us" means that no one can, no one will. Jesus' life and death has set us free from condemnation, and changed our future and our destiny forever.

Ok, but what if something separates me from all this? "God for us" means that nothing can. Yeah but, what about all those things that are against us? Things like cancer and covid and old age and bad people and enemies, tragedies and accidents? Or as Paul said, **trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?** <sup>36</sup>**Just as it is written: For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.**

No! Paul says. In all these things we are more than conquerors — because — God is for us. If God is for our advantage, and he is! — he gave up his one and only Son to save us from sin, death, hell and the devil. He's secured our eternal futures with him in heaven, we have forgiveness for all our sins, and victory over any enemy that could take any of these things, these things that really matter — away. If God is for our advantage, are any of these other things that we face in this world for our disadvantage? How can they be? Even death is now the doorway to life, because Jesus rose and promised to raise us too.

And just so there could be no mistaking the overwhelming confidence and comfort Paul is conveying to his readers he knocks it out of the park, or as the younger generation would say, he drops the mic.

**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

A list of ten things, as a way to underline, italicize and make it bold, to make it memorable so that we fully understand just what Paul is saying when he says, **If God is for us, who can be against us?** With Jesus, the answer is clear: nothing! Nothing from our past, nothing from today, nothing ever.

What a way to start Lent. Already on the first Sunday of the season we have the reminder that nothing Jesus faced would derail his work for our salvation. We can watch him go forth to suffer and die for the sins of the world, for our sins, confident that with God for us, he would prevail in our redemption, no matter what.

And for our lives, as we look to the future we have the assurance that that same God is for us still. No matter what is waiting for you in your future, with God for you it does not change your fate, does not alter your future, does not separate you from his love or negate the victory he secured for you. However big, however unexpected, no matter how much it rocks your world, may we always remember, and clearly understand, If God is for us, who can be against us? Amen!