

“Best Chapter in the Bible” Medal Winner

As much as I appreciate everything in the Bible, there are some parts of the Bible that are more important than others. All of God’s Word is special of course. Every word of every sentence of every paragraph of every chapter of every book of the Bible was written by the Holy Spirit himself through the pens of human authors. And so while every syllable of God’s written Word is filled with his power and his truth and his love, and even though it is all able to enlighten and convince and save us, some parts of the Bible are more important than others. Some parts of the Bible are more readily applicable to our everyday lives. Some parts of the Bible more clearly convey the main themes of Scripture. Some parts of the Bible strike our hearts more profoundly and in such a moving way that they are worth hearing and reading and studying again and again and again. Chapter eight of the book of Romans is one of those sections.

I’ve mentioned this to many of you over the years, but Romans 8 – in my humble opinion – is one of the greatest chapters in all of God’s Word. I don’t think I’ve ever actually sat down and listed my favorite chapters before in order, but I don’t think I could leave Romans 8 out of my top three. It’s certainly a medal winner! Romans 8 would stand on the podium of my “Best Chapters in the Bible” competition if I had anything to say about it. And especially the last half of the chapter. And especially the last part of the last half of the chapter. Because that section of the Bible reminds us of three incredible truths: 1) If God is on our side, what can possibly happen to us that he doesn’t allow? Nothing. 2) If God forgives us, what sin can possibly be held against us? Nothing. 3) If God loves us with an unbreakable kind of love, what can possibly separate us from his grace? Nothing. Here again is the last section of one of the greatest chapters in the Bible:

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that 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.

What Can Overpower God?

A lot has been made lately of North Korea and their anti-American leader and whether or not we are really prepared if nuclear weapons would be launched against our country. Are we protected? Are the appropriate defensive mechanisms in place? Do we have enough military strength in the right locations to prevent something catastrophic before it happens? The safety and the security of our nation is on the minds of a lot of people right now as outspoken enemies of this country continue to make underhanded threats.

The same can be said for Christians in any place at any time. There are a lot of attacks against our faith and a lot of enemies against what we believe and a lot of danger to our spiritual lives. But “If God is for us,” Romans 8 says, “who can be against us?” There are certainly plenty of enemies opposed to us in this world, but none of consequence. Because if God is for us, then no person, no demon, no worldly danger can get the best of us. Our Lord is the Champion after all! He never loses! And if he doesn’t lose, neither will we. We *are* protected. We *do* have the appropriate defensive mechanisms in place. We *can* rely on the spiritual military strength of our Lord to prevent something catastrophic before it happens. Because if God is on our side, what can defeat us? Nothing.

But the fact that God is on our side doesn’t just have to do with protection, it has to do with provision too. This is how Romans 8 puts it, **“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”** The Lord cared so much for us that he was willing to give up his own Son to a horrible death by crucifixion so that we could be forgiven and live forever with him in eternity. I have three children of my own, of course. And I can’t imagine giving any one of them up for anyone else at any time for any reason! But that’s exactly what God the Father did for sinners like us. And so if he went to that extreme to secure our salvation, what lesser need will he ever fail to meet for us in this life? Nothing! He supplies us with everything that is necessary for our existence – and a whole lot more. He provides us with blessing after blessing even when we don’t ask from them. He pours out on us innumerable gifts – both the obvious and the unexpected. He demonstrates his grace to us in so many ways on a daily basis that we can’t even keep up with them all. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” If God is for us, what do we have to worry about? Nothing.

What Can Be Held against Us?

But just because he is “for us,” just because he protects us and provides for us doesn’t mean we don’t have issues! We might have the most outwardly pleasant life there is, but internally we still struggle. No matter how put together we might look like to others, inside it’s not so pristine. Deep within our hearts it’s not even close to clean and orderly and good. It’s a chaotic mess, isn’t it? Our natural sinfulness roils and churns like a steady boil, threatening to overflow at any second. It takes all of our effort to keep it contained, doesn’t it? It takes constant work to suppress our spiritual sickness so that everyone around us isn’t completely horrified by who we are!

But Romans 8 addresses that problem too. **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.** Oh, there could be any number of charges brought against us of course! The devil would have a heyday listing off all of the offenses we are responsible for and all of the laws of God that we have broken. But God has already justified us! God has declared us to be innocent in his sight through faith in Jesus as our Savior! And so what will we be charged with? Nothing! Plus Jesus is our Judge – the same Jesus who died for us, the same Jesus who rose for us, the same Jesus who sits at the right hand of God for us. This same Jesus also intercedes for us too, so that if the devil does accuse us any variety of spiritual crimes that we have committed, Jesus stands before his Father and says, “I did it. I’m responsible. I took the fall. I have already suffered the full punishment for their sins on the cross. These Christians, these children of yours

are not guilty. In fact, they aren't even on trial. All charges have been dropped. They are acquitted. They are free." And Jesus' closing argument: the nails in his hands and his feet – it wins this case every time. If Jesus is our Scapegoat and our Lawyer and our Judge and if God the Father has already announced that we are innocent, then what could possibly be held against us? Nothing.

We might still feel guilty at times. We might still come to the realization that who we are or how we have acted is completely unbecoming of a Christian, but those violations of God's commands will not be held against us when it comes to our eternity. Those abuses of God's law have been transferred to Jesus and he has successfully taken them away. So what is left on your rap sheet? Nothing.

What Can Separate Us from God's Love?

Everything that God has done for us makes our life in heaven guaranteed. Everything that God has done for us secures our spot in Paradise with our Savior, but we aren't there yet! For now, we still have to live in a sin-soaked world and deal with the fallout of a sin-infested human race. We were just reminded of that evil streak this past week when another school shooting took place in Florida. Seventeen high school students killed. Fourteen more injured. Kids killing kids. According to the Associated Press this was the 18th school shooting in this country in the first month and a half of 2018! It was apparently the 290th school shooting since 2013! We live in a country and exist in a world that is horrifying and cruel and downright deadly! How will we be able to survive if it gets any worse? How will our children and our grandchildren cope with a society that is spiraling out of control? How will our faith be kept intact as the teachings of the Bible and Jesus himself continue to be waylaid by cultural trends and government laws and fake Christianity? Romans 8 speaks even to that:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that 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 life is not always so easy. This life is not always so fun. This life is not always what it's cracked up to be. But if 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 Christ Jesus our Lord," then what do we have to be concerned about? Nothing. What do we have to be anxious about? Nothing. What do we have to be nervous about as we look into an uncertain future in a volatile and unpredictable world? Nothing. Because nothing will separate from his love. Nothing will be held against us in the end. And nothing will be able to overcome the power and the love and the will of our God who is always on our side. Nothing. *Nothing.*

That's why Romans 8 is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. Keep going back to it when this world seems to be falling apart. Keep going back to it when your guilt is eating away at you from the inside. Keep going back to it when the attacks against your faith are almost too

much to bear. Go back to Romans 8. Go back to God's Word. Go back to God's promises. And know that nothing – NOTHING – will be able to take you away from your Lord.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

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Amen.