

# “If God is For Us ...”

Thomas Robinson, *Embraced by a God of Love* 7, November 15, 2015

## Romans 8:31-39

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things?

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

<sup>32</sup> He who **did not spare his own Son** but **gave him up for us all**,  
how will he not also with him **graciously give all things to us?**

<sup>33</sup> **Who will bring a charge**

against **those whom God has chosen?**

It is **God who declares them in the right.**

<sup>34</sup> **Who is to condemn?**

**Messiah Jesus is the one who died** – more than that, who **was raised** –  
who is **at the right hand of God**, who indeed is **interceding for us.**

<sup>35</sup> **Who shall separate us from the love of the Messiah?**

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness,  
or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written,

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;*

*we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”* [Psa 44:22]

<sup>37</sup> **No**, in all these things we are completely **victorious** through **the one who has loved us!**

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

<sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation**,

**nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Messiah Jesus our Lord!**

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## Genesis 22:16-18

<sup>16</sup> “By myself I have sworn,” declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not spared your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your seed as the stars of heaven ...<sup>18</sup> and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ....”

## Galatians 2:20

<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. I live, but it is no longer I, but Messiah in me. And the life I now live in flesh I live within the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

## John 3:16

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his unique Son, that whoever believes/trusts in him should not perish but have life of the age to come.

## Romans 8:26-27

<sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit is helping us just where we are weak. For we do not know what we should pray for – what is really needed – but the Spirit himself intercedes on our behalf with groans that can’t be put in words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches the hearts knows the way of thinking that belongs to the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to God’s reality.

## Psalms 44:20-24

<sup>20</sup> If we had forgotten the name of our God / or raised out our hands to a foreign god, / <sup>21</sup> would not God discover it? / For he knows the secrets of the heart. / <sup>22</sup> Yet for your sake we are being killed all the day long; / we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. / <sup>23</sup> Awake! Why are you sleeping, Lord?

## Learning Who God Is?

The Bible is about God, and humans in relation to God. Paul says his whole proclamation is focused on Who God is. Is God distant, unconcerned, judgmental, condemning, an easy grandfather, an arbitrary tyrant, an impersonal force, nature itself, an abstract idea, an impenetrable mystery, a human projection, nothing, a nagging parent?

We know God only as he opens access by what he does. Paul has taken us through the human predicament and need, what God did through Israel, what God has done in Jesus, what God is doing in the Spirit. Now he wants the meaning of all that to penetrate our heart.

God shows that He is for us! Little words (*hyper hemon*). The “us” is everyone! All his creatures. Not our side against enemies. Jews, Romans, Greeks, Parthians, Americans, Syrians, French. There’s no one he’s against. What He has done creates inviting, freedom-giving love for all. The only “against” is the stuff we humans do to destroy & deface our lives – sin, brokenness.

The “for us” is deep! It is a radical commitment: God dies in his Son. God lives in us in his Spirit. It invites us into a deep, lasting relationship that puts our lives into a new scale of God’s life.

## God the Judge vv 31-34

Paul starts from the scriptural portrait of God as Judge, but challenges us with questions.

God has no desire to be fair. In spite of our destructive ways, blindness to him, rebellion, sin, he has created a way to be gracious, to break the power of sin and death enslaving us, to give us his own life, to honor us by desiring a real relationship with us, weak creatures.

The gift of Jesus is the gift of everything! God speaks a language of painful sacrifice we can feel deeply, like Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22). God chooses by giving, inviting, loving.

In Jesus is the conquest of death by new life, the hope of renewal, the daily care for life.

## God and the Love of Jesus vv 35-39

In v 35 Paul changes the image to that of a love relationship: family, parent-child. The danger is separation, breaking that tie of love. Who or what could break it? Many possibilities.

Paul has been thinking about this in his own life and in scripture. Psa 44 is a song of lament and challenge. ‘God you’ve done great things, made great promises in the past, but now you’ve forsaken us. Awake, save us.’ Paul himself has experienced what the Psalmist felt. From “tribulation” to “sword,” all come from Paul’s life (2 Cor 6:3-10; 11:23-29). Paul knows our lives are vulnerable, but that in Jesus, God had done just what the Psalmist longed for.

In Jesus’ love, God’s love takes new, visible, astonishingly concrete substance. God made himself vulnerable to his creatures. He loved us by taking on himself the depth of injustice, violence, cowardice, weakness, pain and death that we suffer. He broke death’s power and created resurrection life. He opened for us victory over it all by loving us so deeply.

## The Love that Refuses to be Conquered

Paul has no illusion that the struggles, the challenges, the threats to our lives are not real. He draws on the well-known images of hostile powers ranged against God: The fear of death, the prosperity of life. Present circumstances; Worries about the future. Angels, Tyrannies.

But ultimately the truth is simple: God is the creator of everything. No part of that creation, however threatening it may try to be, has power to stand against God and separate us from God’s amazing love. He shows us that deep love in Jesus and draws us into his life. There we learn who God is and who we are. There we live in the spacious world of Love.