If God Is For Me, Who Can Be Against Me?

A Study Outline on Romans 8:31-39

Text: Romans 8:31-39

Central Truth: The blessing of the Lord, the goodness of God, and the victory of Jesus do not prevent an enemy, an opposition, or an attack. They guarantee your victory.

Key Question: What are you persuaded about?

For personal study and small group discussion. Companion to the article at go-me.org. All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible (1995).

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we turn our attention to Your word. We thank You that You have not left us in darkness but have given us the light of Your word. We trust the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us today. We purpose to be doers of the word and not hearers only. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Read the Passage Aloud

Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to the public reading of Scripture (1 Timothy 4:13). Read the passage slowly and together before you discuss it.

> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:31-39)

I. The Question That Settles Everything (Romans 8:31)

> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?* (Romans 8:31)

A. The context of the question

1. Romans 8 sits at the center of the epistle and summarizes the foundation of everything Paul has argued.

2. "What then shall we say to these things?" gathers the whole argument into one conclusion. In today's words, Paul asks, what is the point?

B. The answer in one sentence

1. If God is for me, whoever approaches in opposition to me has already lost.

2. This is a revelation to be received, not a slogan to be repeated.

a. Revelation changes how you respond to opposition.

b. A slogan only changes what you say when things are calm.

C. The quiet objection: "Yes, but"

1. "Yes, but" means no.

2. "Yes, but" means my lived experience carries more weight than the truth recorded in God's word.

3. When we measure life by experience, we turn our eyes away from our help.

Application Questions

Where in your life have you said "yes, but" to Romans 8:31 this month?

What experience are you currently allowing to outweigh the written word of God?

Transition: If God is for us, the next question is obvious. Who exactly is for us, and what has He already done about the thing in front of us?

II. Who Is For You? (Exodus 14:10-22)

> *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward."* *(Exodus 14:15)*

> *The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.* *(Exodus 14:22)*

A. The impossible set of circumstances

1. Pharaoh's army behind, the sea ahead, rock on both sides, and two million people.

2. Everyone present agreed that this was the end.

B. God's question to Moses

1. "Why are you crying out to Me?" is not a rebuke of prayer. It is a redirection of attention.

2. Moses had spent all his attention on who was against him and none on who was for him.

a. Whose idea was this deliverance? God's.

b. Who made the sea Moses feared? God did, with His words.

C. The simple answer

1. Moses stopped crying and stretched out the rod. The answer was simple, and simple asks something of us.

2. We prefer complicated answers.

a. Complicated answers shift responsibility away from us.

b. Complicated answers hand us a built-in excuse when things do not work.

D. The detail we would never have asked for

1. Scripture records that Israel crossed on dry land, not mud.

2. If God is for you, He handles the parts of the problem you never thought about.

Application Questions

What sea are you staring at right now, and who spoke that sea into existence?

Name one "dry ground" detail from your past where God handled something you never thought to pray about.

Transition: Moses had a rod as a sign that God was for him. We have something far greater. Paul proves God is for us by pointing to the cross.

III. The Proof That God Is For You (Romans 8:32)

> *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* (Romans 8:32)

A. Paul's argument from the greater to the lesser

1. If God gave the greatest gift, He will not withhold the lesser ones.

2. "Freely give us all things" is the guarantee that not one promise will fail.

B. How cheaply we view the cross

1. If the cross "might work for some people" but your situation is unique, you have not looked at the cross long enough.

2. Walk the road with Jesus.

a. Hear the insults and watch the soldiers strike Him.

b. See His back opened and see Him nailed to the wood.

c. God did not hold back His only begotten Son from any of it.

C. The cross was not an accident

> *Then I said, "Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God."* (Hebrews 10:7)

1. God delivered Him over. Jesus came willingly to do the Father's will.

2. The sacrifice was for you, so that no matter what arrives, you can say, "God is for me."

D. The posture this produces

1. Believe this so firmly that you ridicule bad news.

2. Laugh at defeat while it stands in front of you.

3. God is more interested in your victory than you are.

Application Questions

When bad news arrives, what is the first sentence that comes out of your mouth? What should it be?

How would your week change if you believed God is more committed to your victory than you are?

Transition: God is for us and the cross proves it. Yet Paul knows something can still pull us off course. He asks what could separate us, and the answer is a matter of persuasion.

IV. What Are You Persuaded About? (Romans 8:35-39)

> *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* (Romans 8:35)

A. The love of Christ

1. "The love of Christ" points to Jesus as Messiah, the Anointed One on whom God poured out His Spirit.

2. Paul prayed that the church would know this love together (Ephesians 3:17-19). We step into the fullness of God's love by sharing what He gave us with one another.

B. How easily we separate

1. Paul makes separation sound nearly impossible. In practice people separate over small things.

a. An offense, even something as small as someone turning their back.

b. An unexpected turn of events.

c. A good opportunity that looks like God and leads away from the assignment.

2. Distress is an effective tactic of the enemy. "I cannot concentrate. I cannot serve this week."

3. These are not character flaws. They are matters of persuasion.

C. The test of persuasion

1. Some things no argument could shake you from. No document could convince you that your name is not your name.

2. Other things you would at least entertain a debate about.

3. Where does "God is for me" sit on that scale?

D. Polycarp's persuasion

1. A disciple of the Apostle John, arrested in his eighties for his faith.

2. The governor offered an easy exit. Offer incense to the emperor, check the box, and go on with your ministry.

3. Polycarp answered that he had served Christ eighty-six years and Christ had never done him wrong (Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.3).

4. When they moved to bind his hands, he told them not to waste the rope. He was not going anywhere.

5. Do not measure yourself against Polycarp. Measure how easily circumstances talk you out of God's promises.

E. Paul's own answer

> *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* *(Romans 8:37-39)*

1. "Overwhelmingly conquer." The Holy Spirit did not settle for "conquer."

2. "I am convinced." The Amplified Bible renders it "I am persuaded and am sure."

3. Paul lists death first, the thing we call the end.

4. Then he lists life.

a. Death is an event you memorialize and move past.

b. Life is the slow passing of hours into days and seasons into years with no visible change.

c. The clock has talked more people out of God's promises than the grave ever has.

5. "Any other created thing" closes every loophole, including things not yet invented.

Application Questions

Which of the three small separations (offense, unexpected turn, attractive opportunity) is most dangerous for you right now?

Has the clock been talking to you? What promise has time tempted you to release?

Write one sentence that begins with "I am convinced that" and finish it with the promise you are standing on.

Summary

God is for you. He did not spare Jesus. He delivered Him over for you. Because of that, no one can invent a circumstance that changes the outcome. Opposition will come. Victory is guaranteed. The only open question is what you are persuaded about.

Live From It This Week

1. When bad news arrives, name the "yes, but" before it names you. Say out loud, "That is my experience. It is not the truth."

2. Before you count who stands against you, count who stands for you. Speak Romans 8:31 over the situation by name.

3. Look at the cross until your problem shrinks to its true size.

4. Settle what you are persuaded about. Write down the promise you are standing on and the date you decided it was settled.

5. If the clock has been talking to you, answer it. Time passing is not evidence that God has changed His mind.

6. Refuse the small separations. Forgive the offense, release the distress, and test every opportunity against the assignment God gave you.

Memory Verse

> *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?* *(Romans 8:31)*

Closing Prayer

Father, I thank You that You are for me. You did not spare Your Son but delivered Him over for me, and with Him You freely give me all things. I refuse to let my experience outweigh Your word. I am convinced that nothing created can separate me from Your love in Christ Jesus. I will not be talked out of Your promises by opposition, by offense, or by the clock. In Jesus' name. Amen.

References

Holmes, M. W. (Ed. & Trans.). (2007). *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (3rd ed.). Baker Academic.

Holy Bible: New American Standard Bible. (1995). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Adapted from a message preached at GoChurch Beirut. Watch the full teaching at youtu.be/2XRaJp-jenk. Published by Go Middle East, go-me.org.