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Sermon Notes

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Faith's Reasons for Absolute Assurance

Romans 8:31-34

I. Building Up to Total Assurance

A. Paul's Purpose in Romans 8

B. Paul's Method in Romans 8: step by step unfolding of the eternal purposes of God

1. Constant clarification: those who are in Christ Jesus

2. Centrality of the Spirit

“indwelling Spirit” the focus: vss. 1-27

We are “in the Spirit” (new realm)... The Spirit is “in us”

Spirit ministers assurance

- transforms mind
- works out lawful obedience in us step by step
- testifies to our spirits that we are children of God
- causes us to cry “Abba, Father”
- empowers us to have hope even in the midst of trials
- helps us in prayer

3. Now, Paul looks to the Father and the Son to complete His assurance

a. the work of the Father specifically in view in vss. 28-33

i) God the Father's eternal purposes unveiled... providence and predestination

God the Father causing all things to work together for good for His chosen children

God the Father **foreknowing** His chosen children

God the Father **predestining** His chosen children

God the Father **calling** His chosen children

God the Father **justifying** His chosen children

God the Father **glorifying** His chosen children

ii) TODAY: God the Father's commitment to us, His generosity to us, His final authority for us... these give absolute assurance of salvation

b. the work of the Son in view in vss. 34-37

The Son's four-fold ministry as our Great High Priest in view... also gives us total assurance

c. the love of God completes hymn of assurance in vss. 38-39

C. Six Questions:

- 1) What shall we say in response to this? (vs. 31)
- 2) If God is for us, who can be against us? (vs. 31)
- 3) He who did not spare His own Son, how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things? (vs. 32)
- 4) Who shall lay any charge against God's elect? (vs. 33)
- 5) It is Christ Jesus who died... who is He that condemns? (vs. 34)
- 6) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Note: four of the questions focus on possible adversaries: Who can be against us? Who can accuse us? Who can condemn us? Who can separate us from Christ?

II. God's Omnipotent Commitment as King (vs. 31)

vs. 31 "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Scene: Command center of the mighty fortress of heaven

God is saying: No foe can touch you as long as I command the hosts of heaven!!

A. "God For Us" = God in Covenant Relationship With Us

1. Because of our faith in Christ, God has made a covenant with us
2. Because we have called on His name, God has sworn on oath to save us
3. "God for us" most clearly seen in sending Christ to be "God with us"

Matthew 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us."

Christ is God's pledge to us of covenant faithfulness... God is the mighty King saying "Your enemies are my enemies... anything that threatens you will have to deal with me!!"

And what threatened us? Our sins! His own wrath!

Matthew 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

B. "God For Us" = God Putting Full Power to Protect Us and Fulfill His Covenant Promises

- To Israel, His chosen ones

Isaiah 43:2-3 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ³ For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

C. THEREFORE: What Enemy Can Defeat Us?

1. Not at all saying that we have no enemies!
2. Mighty enemies!!

a. human enemies: the "world"

i) antichristian governments & authorities

Communist China... imprisoning and killing house church leaders

Hindu priests in India... burning to death a missionary and his son: found embracing each other

ii) persecutors

Sudan: Muslim bands of men roving around at night terrorizing Christians

iii) unbelieving neighbors & co-workers

America: you share the gospel with your boss, and he rejects the gospel... then sets himself to make your life miserable... poor reviews, low or no raises, criticism of your work, slander against your name

iv) resistant family

Perhaps even an unbelieving spouse... a constant temptation to give up on your faith

b. Satan himself

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. YOUR ENEMY the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour

You have a personal Savior, Jesus Christ

You also have a personal enemy, Satan... he seeks to destroy your witness and your life!!!

c. demonic enemies... Satan's system

3. BUT No enemy is powerful enough to destroy your soul

Jeremiah 1:18-19 Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land--against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

You may be spiritually injured, but you will never spiritually die!!!

Illus. Scales... your effort, one ounce; the world's power, 1 pound, Satan and his, 10 pounds... God a brick the weight of the universe...

If God is "for us", WHO CARES who is against us? They will fail!

D. BUT for the Unbeliever: God is AGAINST You... not for you

This is the most terrifying thought there is... that God could actually be my enemy! Then, no one would be powerful enough to save me!

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Jeremiah 50:31 "See, I am against you, O arrogant one," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty, "for your day has come, the time for you to be punished.

Even if the whole world is on your side, and thinks well of you, if God is against you, it will do you no good on Judgment Day! **“What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?”**

BUT even if the whole world is against you, attacking you, it matters not one whit... if God is FOR YOU!

III. God’s Infinite Generosity as Father (vs. 32)

vs. 32 “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things?”

Scene: Storehouses of the mighty fortress of heaven

God is saying: No blessing that will help you to glory will be withheld from you as long as I am your Father!!

A. Central Idea: Infinite Value of Christ to God

1. Nothing in all the universe is as precious to God as His Own Son

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

2. Not a million universes is equal in value to the Only Begotten
3. Precious

1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Illus. Shah Jahan, the wealthiest Moghul leader in India, built a mausoleum to honor the memory of his wife who died in childbirth; it took the labors of 20,000 expert craftsmen and common workers to build, culled from all over India, as well as from Asia and Europe... it was built mostly of white marble from Makrana 250 miles away. He intricately inlaid the walls with all the most precious gems in the world; one flower, carved in its walls and only one inch square, was inlaid with sixty different materials

This incredible building took 22 years to complete, and he called it the “Taj Mahal”

What a precious gift! But it doesn't remotely compare with the gift of the Son for a wretched, rebellious world!

B. Shocking Decision: God Did Not Spare His Only Son

Question: How many of you would give up one of your own children to death to save someone else? Would you sacrifice your own child if it meant you could save someone else? If so, would you do it for a total stranger? If so, would you do it for an enemy?

1. "Spare" means to say "Not him! My Son will not die!"
2. Spare means to withhold... to refuse to hand Him over
3. God DID NOT spare His own Son

C. Amazing Love: Delivered Up for Us All

1. "Delivered" means "handed over for judgment"

delivered to his enemies
 delivered to humiliation
 delivered to scourging
 delivered to torment
 delivered to shame
 delivered to darkness
 delivered to Satan's power
 delivered to the cross
 delivered to death

God did not spare any punishment from Jesus... He gave His own Son the full cup of wrath to drink on the cross, and He drank it to the bottom

2. Amazing question: WHO DELIVERED JESUS TO THIS??
 - a. Was it Judas, the betrayer? YES!

Matthew 26:14-16 "What will you give me if I deliver Him over to you?" So they measured out thirty pieces of silver and Judas watched for an opportunity to deliver Him over.

- b. was it the Jewish leaders: scribes, Pharisees, elders, chief priests? YES!

Matthew 27:1-2 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. ² They bound him, led him away and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor.

c. was it the Jewish people themselves? YES!

[Peter to the Jewish people] Acts 3:13 You delivered Jesus over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

d. was it Pilate, the Roman governor? YES!

Matthew 27:26 Then Pilate released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and delivered him over to be crucified.

All these human actors, however, were merely acting out God's predestined plan

Acts 2:23 This man [Jesus of Nazareth] was delivered over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

So our verse makes it abundantly clear: God planned to deliver over His own Son to death before the foundation of the world... it was really GOD the FATHER who delivered Jesus up for death

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer

3. For whom was He delivered over? FOR US ALL

- a. substitution... He died in our place!
- b. "us all" = the very ones God has been speaking of, His chosen ones
- c. wide variety...

men and women, boys and girls, from every tribe, language, people and nation

All of us deserved the wrath and curse of God's Judgment... God delivered His own Son in our place

D. Logical Conclusion: All Lesser Blessings Will Not Be Withheld

vs. 32 "... how will he not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?"

- 1. Argument from greater to lesser
- 2. The greatest gift has already been given... nothing else is worth as much
- 3. Why in the world would God say, "You can have my Son, but you can't have spiritual protection though this world?" "You can have my Son, but you can't have my forgiveness?" "You can have my Son, but you can't have food and shelter and provision

enough to do my work in this world"? You can have my Son, but I won't give you a place in heaven"?

The greatest gift is Jesus dead on the cross, and Jesus risen from the dead

Christ dead instead of us... Christ alive inside of us... NO GREATER GIFT EXISTS... all lesser gifts will follow as well

NOTE: predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, even glorification are all LESSER gifts than Jesus dead and Jesus alive!

E. BUT Not Every Material Blessing

1. Anxiety banished forever
2. If anything is withheld, its not from lack of love or lack of power
3. Its simply from God's wisdom in perfecting His church

Painful trials and sweet blessings will still be mixed together in a wise potion, suitable for God's ultimate purpose... the salvation of His entire people

If your child dies of leukemia, it's not because God lacked power or love for you... He's already given what was absolutely most precious to Him

IV. God's Final Authority as Judge (vs. 33-34)

vs. 33-34 "Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies, who is he that condemns?"

Scene: Courtroom of the mighty fortress of heaven

God is saying: No accuser can convict you as long as I am Judge of all the earth!!

A. Abundant Grounds for Accusation

1. Even after conversion, there is still sin

James 3:2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

2. Everything we do is tainted by self and sin in some way

3. There is ample ground for accusation

B. Satan Yearns to Do It

1. He is called the “accuser of the brothers”

Revelation 12:11 "... the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

2. Name “Satan” means one pressing charges in court

C. God Will Not Hear It!!

1. Christ’s blood a perfect ground for justification

2. God will not accept Christ’s blood AND allow an accusation

Zechariah 3:1-4 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. ² The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" ³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."

God actually REBUKES the devil if he tries to bring an accusation against the Lord’s elect

D. ONLY God’s Elect: The Focus of the Entire Chapter

1. Word means “Chosen Ones”

Ephesians 1:4 ...he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

[Jesus] *John 13:18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen."*

2. The very ones Paul referred to earlier in vss. 29-30

vs. 29-30 "For those whom God foreknew He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..."

3. The elect God will defend on Judgment Day... but the rest will have to face many accusations for which there is no answer

Job 9:2-3 "Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be righteous before God? ³ Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand.

Immense privilege: on Judgment Day, God will not accept a single accusation against you!

V. Christ's Perfect Ministry as Priest (vs. 34)

vs. 34 "Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is interceding for us."

Scene: Throne room of the mighty fortress of heaven

Christ is saying: My blood covers you, my life is in you, I stand at God's right hand, and I plead for you. And whatever I ask for I get!!

A. Christ's High Priestly Ministry

1. Not clearly mentioned here
2. Yet clearly in view
3. Blood atonement covers all sins, so no accusation can be accepted

Hebrews 9:28 Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people

B. Christ's Intercession

1. Earlier: Holy Spirit intercedes
2. Now also: Christ intercedes... focus: our final salvation, including our faith

Luke 22:31-32 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

3. PERFECT Intercession:

Romans 8:27 "...the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

So also Jesus only ever prays according to God's will

John 8:29 I always do what pleases him.

What that means is that EVERYTHING JESUS ASKS HIS FATHER FOR, HE GETS!!!!

4. PERMANENT Intercession:

Christ's resurrection means that He will never stop praying for you!! His priesthood is permanent

Hebrews 7:24-25 because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

VI. Application: "What Shall We Say in Response to This?"

vs. 31 "What, then, shall we say in response to this?"

A. Reasoning Out Assurance: From Facts through Faith to Assurance

1. FACT: God, the omnipotent King, is committed to protect us eternally...

Therefore: It is impossible that any enemy can prevail!

2. FACT: God, the generous Father, has given us His most precious Son, and nothing in all the universe is more valuable to Him.

Therefore: It is impossible that any true blessing will be withheld!

3. FACT: God has absolute final authority as Judge of all the earth, and He has justified you in Christ.

Therefore: It is impossible that any accusation will condemn God's elect!

4. FACT: Christ Jesus is a perfect priest for you: He died for you, rose again for you, sits in ultimate power for you, and is praying for you constantly.

Therefore: It is impossible that any elect will be lost!

B. What Do YOU Say in Response to This?

How about: "THANK YOU, GOD!!! You have been merciful to me, a sinner!!!"

1. Nothing but deepest gratitude to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit will do!

2. Your hearts should be overflowing with praise now!
3. Your wills should be steeled to live a life of holy obedience to Him by the Spirit!
4. Your pride should be dead forever! Nothing you have ever done deserves these blessings!
5. Your anxieties should be banished forever! No small blessing will be withheld... and if any are, realize it's just because God's wisdom thought it best for His entire church... His plan is infinitely wise, and no harm will come to you!