

The Relentless Love of God

Romans 8:31-32

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Many things can hold people back from trusting Jesus completely with their lives. Some are afraid of what they would have to give up for Jesus, whether it be some sin or the desire to maintain control of their lives. Some are hindered because they have gone through suffering, or because God has not given them the good things they asked for, such as being able to overcome certain sins. For all of us who struggle with our faith, we must remember that we can always rely on God's relentless love because He does indeed love us and wants us to be happy.

This might not be such a new lesson for us, but we need to go deeper into things we already know, and let them sink in. We can rely on God's love because He does love us. In Romans 8:31 Paul refers to all that he discussed starting from chapter 5 until this point, which is the life and the hope we have in Jesus. His conclusion is that if God is for us, then nothing can be against us. In other words, God loves us, and His love is stronger than anything we may face. It is important to appreciate this because our relationship with God was not always like this. In Romans 3 we learn that we were once enemies of God. In sinful and hostile rebellion we defiantly rejected God. We did what was against God, even if we didn't know God, because we sinned against our own consciences. Yet God always loved us. Romans 5:8 says that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. This is how God demonstrated His love for us. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself and reconciled us to the Father. Once we were enemies, now we are children of God. And God works everything for the good of His children (8:28). Nothing we did caused God to love us this way. It was God's own choice to love us because He is a loving God (Titus 3:5). Because He loved us when we were at our worst, we know He will love us forever. This is what it means for God to be for us.

And if He is for us, then nothing can stand against us (8:31). In this context we see that Satan is one of our main opponents, our adversary. One weapon he uses against us is unresolved guilt and shame. He appeals to our sense of religious piety to make us think we are too unworthy to approach God. He tricks us into focusing on ourselves and thinking our sin is more powerful than the cross, where all sin was accounted for. This twisted sense of pride makes us forget God's unconditional love, which is not like the conditional love we get from many of our

parents. When Satan tempts us to despair, upward we look and see Jesus at the right hand of the Father. We are through Jesus as close as He is to the Father.

Another weapon Satan uses is suffering, mentioned in v. 35. Every bit of suffering is a battle of faith. We are tested in how we will interpret the trials we endure. Don't put your feelings and circumstances before the truth of God's word by doubting His goodness. He has never stopped being good to you. But also don't tell those who are suffering that it will get better, because God never promises that. Don't place your hope in the improvement of your material circumstances, rather place your hope in Him. Jeremiah preached to Israel in order that they repent and avert the impending exile. Yet they didn't listen and the Babylonians came. But during the exile Jeremiah still has the faith to say that God's love never fails and that he puts his hope in Him (Lamentations 3:22-25). Let us not put our hope in anything else but Him, because His love overcomes all (Romans 8:39).

Finally, we can rely on God's love because He wants us to be happy (8:32). God doesn't withhold good things from His children. He already gave up that which was most precious, His Son. After that, to give up anything else would be nothing to Him. But this doesn't mean we will get whatever we want, but rather what He wants for us, which is what is good for us. And what is the best for us He has already given. Jesus is what's best for us. We should hope for the renewal of all things when we can be united with Jesus, yet right now we also already have Him. God is in us, and we are in Him. God wants us to be happy in Him. We think having all we want in this world will satisfy. But only He can satisfy, so be satisfied with Him. Philippians 3:8 says everything in this world is rubbish compared to Christ. Nothing can give us true joy like Jesus can. For those of you hesitant about what you have to give up for Christ, know that He is more than worth it. And for all of us who struggle with sin, know that through Jesus you already have access to the power of God to overcome all sin. Let us ask God to help us rejoice in His love every day.