



## The Epistle to the Romans

Lesson Number 28



# GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE

8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." <sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39 NKJV

## INTRODUCTION

From the human point of view, the situation of the believer is fragile, and the prospect of making it safely to glory impossible. That is precisely why the Spirit is opening to us the real condition of those who are in Christ Jesus. Although they are surrounded by opponents that are vastly superior to their natural abilities, yet they are safe and protected in the Lord. However, only faith can perceive this circumstance. Therefore, powerful affirmations of the protective aspect of salvation will now be declared.

The approach of the Spirit will be to fortify our faith, not clarify our obligation. This is not to be construed as a

minimization of duty or a license for laxness. God forbid that such thoughts should be entertained by those in whose hearts the Holy Spirit has shed abroad the love of God (5:5). Without exception, those who seek a way to glory that places no demands upon them are *"blind, and cannot see afar off"* (2 Pet 1:9). If the Savior Himself was required to enter wholeheartedly into His work, it is utterly absurd to imagine we are not to enter energetically into ours.

### ADDRESSED TO BELIEVERS

The passage before us is addressed to those who are in Christ Jesus. All of the glorious affirmations of their situation are

taken to be true. Allow me to reaffirm some of them.

- We have peace with God (5:1).
- Faith has given us access into the grace wherein we stand (5:2).
- We are rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (5:2).
- We glory in tribulations, knowing the effectual work they accomplish in us (5:3-4).
- We are not ashamed of our hope, because the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy spirit (5:5).
- We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:11).
- We are dead to sin (6:2).

## LESSON OUTLINE

- I. WHO CAN DO IT? (8:35a)
- II. SEPARATING CIRCUMSTANCES (8:35b)
- III. THIS IS HOW IT LOOKS (8:36)
- IV. CONQUERING IN CONFLICT (8:37)
- V. THE PERSUASION OF FAITH (8:38-39a)
- VI. THE LOVE OF GOD IS IN CHRIST JESUS (8:39b)

- We were baptized into Jesus Christ (6:3a).
- We were baptized in Christ's death (6:3b).
- We were raised by the Father to walk in the newness of life (6:4).
- We were planted together with Christ in the likeness of His death (6:5).
- Our old man is crucified with Him (6:6).
- We have been freed from sin (6:7).
- We are not under law, but under grace (6:14).
- We obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to us (6:17).
- We have become the servants of righteousness (6:18).
- We experience a struggle with inner influences we hate, and do not desire (7:15-20).
- We have a law within, that when we would do good, evil is present with us (7:21).
- We delight in the law of God in the inner man (7:22).
- A contrary law exists in us that wars

- against the law of our mind (7:23).
- With our minds we ourselves serve the law of God (7:25).
- We are not condemned (8:1).
- The law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death (8:2).
- The Spirit of God dwells within us (8:9).
- Our bodies are dead because of sin (8:10).
- The Spirit quickens our mortal bodies (8:11).
- As the sons of God, we are led by the Spirit of God to mortify the deeds of the body (8:13-14).
- We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear (8:125a).
- We have received the Spirit of adoption (8:15b).
- The Holy Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are the children of God (8:16).
- We are heirs of God (8:17a).
- We are joint heirs with Christ (8:17b).
- We have the first fruits of the Spirit (8:23a).
- We are groaning in anticipation of the redemption of our bodies (8:23).
- The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought (8:26).
- God is working everything together for our good (8:28).
- God has predetermined the glorification of those who are justified (8:29-30).
- God is for us, not against us (8:31).
- Through Christ, God will freely give us all things (8:32).
- No one can effectively accuse us (8:33).

- No one can condemn us (8:34a).
- From God's right hand, Christ is making intercession for us (8:34b).

There are FORTY-TWO affirmations of the condition of the children of God. Our text is a further elaboration of our status. It is not a cold and calculating doctrine to be propagated as a lifeless dogma. Further, it is not intended to build confidence in those who are living in the flesh, or neglecting "so great salvation" (Heb 2:3). Those who approach this section of Scripture to justify themselves in sin or slothfulness are wicked. We have no time to hear their miserable explanations of this passage.

The affirmations of our text are for those who are fighting the good fight of faith, endeavoring to lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim 6:12). These are words addressed to those who are living in hope, in anxious anticipation of being forever with the Lord (5:24-25). These are words for those who are patiently running the race that has been set before them (Heb 12:1-2), resisting the devil (1 Pet 5:8-9), and have put on the whole armor of God (Eph 6:10). They will offer no "everlasting consolation" to anyone else!

To the degree we are able to identify with the declarations of the status of the redeemed, we will receive great comfort and encouragement from the promises of the text before us. The Holy Spirit freely declares who we are, and the provisions that are made for us. There is no revealed limit to the involvement with God that is possible through our faith.

## WHO CAN DO IT?

<sup>8:35a</sup> **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Some versions provide varied readings, all with the same essential meaning. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" <sup>Douay-Rheims</sup> "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" <sup>Revised Webster</sup> "Who will come between us and the love of Christ?"<sup>BBE</sup> "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love?" <sup>NLT</sup> and "Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ?" <sup>NJB</sup> This is a question addressed to the heart!

The question is a rhetorical one. The Spirit is not asking for an answer, or even suggesting that there is something or someone who CAN separate us from the love of Christ. This is like a challenge to the sceptic or the faint-hearted to ponder the greatness of the salvation that is "in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10). We will find that the love of God is strong as well as tender.

### Erroneous Questions

It is vital to perceive how this question

is asked. We are living at a juncture in human history when the effects of false teaching have saturated the theologies of men. In defense of their dogmas, they pose questions that are NOT submitted in Scripture. Some examples will suffice to acquaint us with their nature. (1) "Can we lose our salvation?" (2) "Once a person is saved, can they ever be lost?" (3) "Once we are in God's grace, can we ever fall out of His grace?" (4) "IS it possible to fall away?" All such questions come from the mind, not the heart.

Men enter the theological battleground to resolve these questions. Debates and lengthy disquisitions are developed to answer them. Yet, all of them miss the mark. They are not stated acceptably, and thus answers to them are not found in Scripture. To put it another way, God does not approach salvation in this manner. There is only one reason for these questions. The Christian community is plagued with members who do not reflect the spiritual life described in Scripture. Thus these doctrines have been concocted to justify the conclusion they are still Christians, even though any evidences of such a conclusion are sadly lacking.

Our text presumes involvement and fervent desire. It postulates a longing for the redemption of the body, and an aggressive discontent with “*the law of sin*” that is resident in our members (7:23,25; 8:2). **Where these are lacking, a discussion of the safety of the believer is out of order!** Those who are not living by faith have no right to indulge in either thoughts or discussions about Divine safety. If they are living in the flesh, they are enemies of God (8:8:7; James 4:4). The wrath of God is abiding upon them (John 3:36), and they are “*condemned already*” (John 3:18). What the worldly church calls “carnal Christians” are a flagrant contradiction of the Spirit’s affirmation of life in Christ. They are not “*dead to sin*” or “*alive unto God*” (6:11). They are not walking in the Spirit (8:4), mortifying the deeds of the body (8:13), or waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. No doctrines must be presented to such people that would only serve to complicate their situation. Our text is comforting the faithful, not salving the conscience of the unfaithful!

### SEPARATE US

Having been reconciled to God, and possessing peace with God, is there any inimical influence that can negate what we have received, or put us beyond its reach? Who can thrust from the presence of the Lord those who have been brought near to Him?

The question is NOT whether or not

we can leave our “*first love*” – we can (Rev 2:4). Here, the focus is on influences outside of ourselves. The point here is that those who are convinced of this truth will “*stand against the wiles of the devil*” confidently and boldly. When the dark night of affliction surrounds the saints of God, the brightness of Divine love bursts through that darkness to warm their hearts and produce the “*full assurance of understanding*” (Col 2:2).

The word “*separate*” means to divide, be separate from, or be at a distance from. The question is whether or not anything can drive a wedge between the saved and the love of Christ. Are there any personalities or influences that can put a distance between the “*saved of the Lord*” and His love?

**When the dark night of affliction surrounds the saints of God, the brightness of Divine love bursts through that darkness to warm their hearts and produce the “full assurance of understanding” (Col 2:2).**

This is not a question regarding temptation. Can our relationship to the Redeemer be altered by personal or impersonal influences outside of ourselves?

### THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Prior to this, we have read of “*the love of God*,” which is “*poured out within our hearts by the Holy Spirit*” <sup>NASB</sup> (5:5). Later, we will read of the “*love of the Spirit*,” which has a powerful influence upon the people of God (15:30). Now, for the first time in the book of Romans, we read of “*the love of Christ*.” **In all three cases, the love is toward the believer.** It is not speaking of the believers love for God, the Spirit, or Christ—even though all three are found in the redeemed. Here, the reference is to Christ’s love for us. His love is the stronger and more effective love! Our love derives its effectiveness from His.

“*The love of Christ*” for the saved is mentioned five other places in Scripture.

- ❑ “*For the **love of Christ** compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again*” <sup>NKJV</sup> (2 Cor 5:14-15).
- ❑ “*That He [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know **the love of Christ** which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*” <sup>NKJV</sup> (Eph 3:16-19).
- ❑ “***Christ also loved** the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish*” <sup>NKJV</sup> (Eph 5:25-27).
- ❑ “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in **the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me***” <sup>NKJV</sup> (Gal 2:20).

- ❑ “*And walk in love, as **Christ also hath loved us**, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor*” (Eph 5:2).

### Christ and the Church

Christ’s love is exclusively related to His children, or brethren—the church. It was in this sense that He said to His disciples, “*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and **I will love him** and manifest Myself to him*” <sup>NKJV</sup> (John 14:21). While God’s love is said to have been focused on the world in Christ (John 3:16), this is never said of Jesus

Christ. There is an exclusive relationship He holds with the saved, and His love focuses upon that.

**The Reason for this Representation**

There is a reason for this representation, and we do well to consider it. No one should conclude from these remarks that Christ has no interest in the world, or that His atoning death was not for them. This is not, however, how Christ's love is proclaimed.

In the Divine economy, God turns the saved over to Jesus. They are referred to as those whom God has given to Christ. He trusts His Son to bring them home.

- "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has **given them to Me**, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).
- "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all **He has given Me** I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6:39).

- "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom **You have given Me**, for they are Yours" (John 17:9).
- "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name **those whom You have given Me**, that they may be one as We are" (John 17:11).
- "Father, I desire that they also whom **You gave Me** may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).
- "And again: 'I will put My trust in Him.' And again: 'Here am I and the children **whom God has given Me**'" (Heb 2:13).

These are the people Christ shepherds (John 10:11,14), leads (John 10:3), teaches (Eph 4:20-21), and for whom He faithfully intercedes (Heb 7:25). His mediatorship is exclusively for them (Heb 12:24), and He is bringing them alone "to glory" (Heb 2:10). He is the "Captain of their salvation" (Heb 2:10), and ministers

in "the true tabernacle" exclusively for them (Heb 8:2). He is actually ruling the entire world with them in mind, marshaling favorable forces for them.

**Separated from the Love of Christ**

To be separated from the love of Christ is to be pushed beyond His loving care as the "good Shepherd." It is to be moved where His intercession is ineffectual, and where He no longer teaches. To be separated from the "love of Christ" is to be no longer led to glory, or taste of the benefits of His heavenly ministry.

For any person interested in this "great salvation," this is a pertinent question, indeed! Is there something in earth's battle zone that can cut off the heavenly supplies? Is there an enemy that can suffocate our spirits by shutting off communication with the Lord of glory? Can circumstance separate us from God's love? That is what it means to be separated from the love of Christ! It is essential that we know if we can face any adversary or circumstance that can effectively move us beyond the perimeter of Christ's loving care, thus separating us from it.

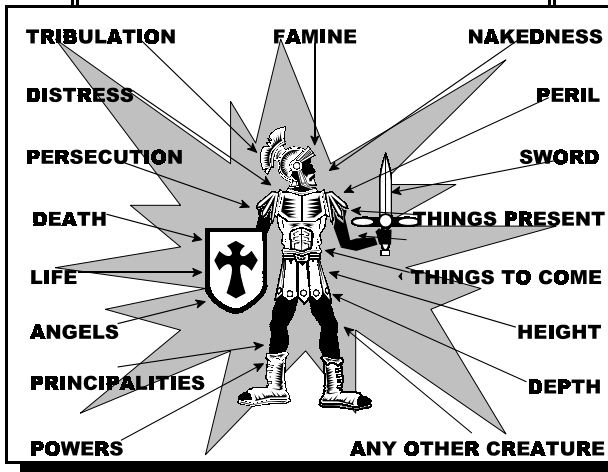
**SEPARATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

<sup>4:35b</sup> **Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"**

There are at least two reasons why men philosophize about the safety of God's people. First, they do not recognize the essentiality of faith. Second, they are blissfully unaware of the forces that are aligned against us. The knowledge of either or both of these realities will move us away from philosophizing, to a fervent quest to lay hold on the hope that is set before us (Heb 6:18). Any approach to life in Christ that imagines there is no danger, has been foisted upon men by the devil himself. It is a doctrine of demons, and is to be thrust from us with zeal.

flesh. If you remove Divine protection from the picture, any of these experiences

natural fear of all of these experiences. The believer is given the peace of God that is able to "rule in your hearts," and "keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Col 3:15; Phil 4:7).



**Why Are They Mentioned?**

Why are these oppositions mentioned? To some, they seem to contradict, what is called, "the victorious life." Others perceive Divine protection as prohibiting the experience of such things. These misconceptions are particularly prevalent in the Western world, where opposition to the faith is not as aggressive as other places in the world. The passage before us is more readily received in places like China and Sudan than in our own country. Nevertheless, saints everywhere, whether enjoying quietness from the Lord, or fierce and open opposition from the "old serpent," must embrace this

The Spirit will first draw our attention to general circumstances that are designed by the enemy to lure us away from believing, and into trusting in the

are sufficient to move us from "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." They all have the ability to so distract the heart that fear and doubt will rush in like a torrential flood. Further, there is a

passage by faith. In some way, and to some degree, these are matters that we all will face. Here is the truth about them.

### TRIBULATION

The word “*tribulation*” means anguish, burden, affliction, oppression, or trouble. The literal meaning is “a pressing together, or pressure.” It is being pressed down under the weight of opposing influences.

This word is used seven times in Scripture, and is always accompanied with a most somber tone.

- ❑ “For then shall be great ***tribulation***, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt 24:21).
- ❑ “For in those days shall be ***affliction***, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be” (Mark 13:19).
- ❑ “Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great ***affliction***: and our fathers found no sustenance” (Acts 7:11).
- ❑ “***Tribulation*** and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Rom 2:9).
- ❑ “And not only so, but we glory in ***tribulations*** also: knowing that ***tribulation*** worketh patience” (Rom 5:11).
- ❑ “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye ***burdened***” (2 Cor 8:13).

Tribulation is a weight upon the soul that exceeds the natural capacity of the individual. It is an experience in which the person must be sustained by a power outside of himself.

Faith does not exempt us from “*tribulation*.” Whatever you may think of resisting the devil (1 Pet 5:8) and overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5), they cannot put you beyond the experience of “*tribulation*.” If that were the case, the verse before us would have no meaning, and could certainly bring no comfort to the believer. The question before us now is if “*tribulation*” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

### DISTRESS

“*Distress*” emphasizes a different aspect of living by faith. Whereas “*tribulation*” stresses what puts pressure upon us, “*distress*” underscores the effect it has upon our spirits. This word means “anguish.” It is the result of being put into a narrow place where we have no mobility – a sort of spiritual claustrophobia. “*Distress*” takes place when all of our own resources run out, and no alternatives are placed before us. It is like Paul spending “*a day and a night in the deep*” (2 Cor 11:25), or Joseph being in the pit (Gen 37:28-29). Do not think that such an experience cannot happen to you! David once said, “*In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and He heard me*” (Psa 120:1). The question put

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before us is whether or not “*distress*” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

### PERSECUTION

“*Persecution*” occurs when the enemy pursues and chases us with aggression, inflicting pain and sorrow upon us. It can come from oppressive words spoken against us, like the people said against Jeremiah (Jer 18:18). It can be the flogging of Paul (2 Cor 11:24-25), the imprisonment of Peter (Acts 12:5), or the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58).

In persecution, the enemy seems invincible, gaining the advantage over the saints. He makes them flee like David and Paul (1 Sam 19:10; Acts 14:6), hide like Israel (1 Sam 13:6), and suffer like John

the Baptist (Mark 6:25-27). There is no question about whether or not the saints **will** suffer persecution, for “*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (2 Tim 3:12). The question before us now is if “*persecution*” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

### FAMINE

A famine is a dearth, a scarcity of food. Sometimes there is no food at all during a famine. In a famine, there is no harvest, no reaping, no replenishment of the food supply.

The first famine of Scriptural record took place when Abraham first entered into Canaan. Not only was “*the Canaanite in the land*,” but “there was a ***famine*** in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the ***famine was grievous in the land***” (Gen 12:6,10). About the time Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, “there was a ***famine in the land***” (Gen 26:1). Joseph was exalted to the throne of Egypt because God had revealed to him how the land could be sustained during a grievous famine that lasted seven years (Gen 41:27-36). In the land of promise, where Jacob and his sons resided while Joseph was in Egypt, “*the famine was sore in the land*” (Gen 43:1). The record of Ruth is couched in as time when “there was a ***famine in the land***” (Ruth 1:1). In the days of David,

there was a famine for three consecutive years (2 Sam 21:1). When Elijah confronted wicked Ahab, “there was a ***sore famine in Samaria***” (1 Kgs 18:2). A similar one rose in the same country during the time of Elisha (2 Kgs 6:25). Elisha told of a famine God called for, which lasted seven years (2 Kgs 8:1). All of these famines touched the saints of God. Some had to seek means by which they could be sustained, while God miraculously supplied the needs of others.

The question before us now is if “*famine*” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

### NAKEDNESS

Nakedness is destitution that erupts in a lack of adequate clothing, or a state of

poverty. This is the condition of Lazarus, who was daily placed at the gate of “a certain rich man” (Lk 16:20). It was the state of many faithful saints of old, of whom it is said, “they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb 11:37).

Paul once told of the pathway into which faith led him. In carrying out his ministry, he did so “in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Cor 11:27). Again Paul writes, “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace” (1 Cor 4:11). On one occasion, while in prison, Paul wrote to Timothy, “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come” (2 Tim 4:13). The question before us now is if “nakedness” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

**PERIL**

Peril is danger, risk, jeopardy, or hazard. There is a note of uncertainty in “peril,” as the danger is not always seen. It rather lurks in the darkness of uncertainty, thus promoting fear in those who are in peril. Paul once testified of the many perils to which he was subjected. “In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren” (2 Cor 11:26).

The Spirit also testified of the last days when “perilous times shall come,” endangering the souls of believers (2 Tim 3:1). Indeed, the Lord can make His people “dwell in safety” (Psa 4:8), and “safety is of the Lord” (Prov 21:31). But let no soul imagine this means there is no peril, no danger, no jeopardy to which the saints are subjected. The question put before us is whether or not “peril” can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

**SWORD**

The “sword” speaks of more than a mere weapon wielded by some despot. It

stands as a symbol of violent death, often carried out by political powers. The word is used in this manner in the thirteenth chapter of Romans, where the principle of governmental power is said to come from God. Of the ruler it is said, “he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil” (Rom 13:4).

However, many despots have turned their sword against the saints of God. Wicked Herod “killed James the brother of John with the sword” (Acts 12:2). Other saints, of old time, “were slain with the sword” (Heb 11:37). Thus wicked Jezebel “cut off the prophets of the Lord” (1 Kgs 18:4), and by the sword some of the very chosen people “devoured” the prophets like a “destroying lion” (Jer 2:29). One of the “sins of the people” that

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Jeremiah declared was that they had “shed the blood of the just in the midst of her” (Lam 4:13).

It is quite true that it is written, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper” (Isa 54:17). However, no person must conclude from this that absolute safety is guaranteed to all who trust the Lord, or that such a conclusion is to be drawn from that text. Should they do so, a host of righteous men will rise in refutation of such a naive conclusion – men like Abel, Isaiah, Zechariah, John the Baptist, James, Stephen, Antipas, Peter, and Paul. The meaning of Isaiah’s statement is that the intentions of the godless against the righteous will not be realized. God’s purposes will be fulfilled in spite of the opposition of the wicked.

The question put before us is whether or not “the sword can separate us from

the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

**THE LIFE OF EASE IS A DELUSION**

The text before us declares the nature of spiritual life. Life in Christ Jesus does not involve exclusion from hardship and difficulty. There are texts that seem to indicate saints are exempted from the type of difficulties mentioned in our text. “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psa 37:25). “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD” (Isa 54:17). Jesus said, “And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” (Matt 6:28-30). It is vital that we comprehend these texts.

These texts do not mean John the Baptist cannot be killed by Herod, or that the Apostles cannot be beaten by the Jews, or that Stephen cannot be stoned by the Jewish council. They do not mean Paul and Silas cannot be beaten and thrown in the inner prison, or that Joseph cannot suffer because of the false accusation of Potiphar’s wife. Our Lord’s words do not mean Lazarus will never be a “beggar,” or that Paul cannot experience “nakedness.” Often God is glorified by sustaining His people in such grievous circumstances, rather than delivering them from them.

The text in Psalms does not say the righteous will never beg bread, but that their “seed,” or offspring, will not do so. The text in Isaiah is affirming that nothing shall abort the purpose of God for His people. Our Lord’s words in Matthew confirm that we are in the care of the Lord. The lilies of the field are not always robust and beautifully attired, and those who imagine they are do greatly err. Christ’s words assure us we are not left to

the power of circumstance, and that no situation is capable of putting us beyond the loving care of God. The love of God is powerful as well as tender. It is never abrasive, and always effective.

The power of this text is seen in the experience of the things mentioned, not in being exempted from them. If such things could not occur to the people of God, the text would have no meaning. God has

designed to save them “in” these things. The comforting power of this affirmation is found in the total inability of such things to effectively separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.

## THIS IS HOW IT LOOKS

<sup>46</sup> ***As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’*** Other versions read, “Just as it is written, ‘For thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”<sup>NASB</sup> “As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”<sup>NIV</sup> “As scripture says: For your sake we are being massacred all day long, treated as sheep to be slaughtered.”<sup>NJB</sup> This is a confirmation of why grievous circumstances cannot separate us from the love of God.

The reference is found in Psalm 44:22. “Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.” A similar expression is found in Psalm 141:7. “Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.” It was even prophesied of our blessed Lord, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa 53:7). Why do such things occur?

Let it be clear that this is not a mere complaint because of difficult and unpleasing circumstances. This is an expression of spiritual insight, not one of Satanic delusion. It is not an insightful cry of the flesh, but of the spirit. It confirms the commonality of trouble among the faithful, and the extreme difficulties to which they are subjected in this world.

### FOR YOUR SAKE

While sufferings are common to all of humanity, and man is “born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7), our text speaks of a special category of sufferings. These are sufferings for the sake of the Lord, or because we have

embraced Him and His promises by faith. When we take hold of the Lord and His Word, the world at once begins to oppose us. It is driven by hatred (John 15:18; 1 John 3:13). It is animated by the prince of the power of the air, who has focused all

**Make no mistake about this, God does not overlook such wicked treatment of His people. Rather, it furnishes Him with a justifiable reason for repaying the wicked.**

of his wrath against the remnant of the “seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 12:17).

Here are severe sufferings that have NOT come because of a departure from the Lord, as with Israel. Rather, they have come because of a close and productive affiliation with Him—“For YOUR sake.”<sup>NIV</sup> Make no mistake about this, God does not overlook such wicked treatment of His people. Rather, it furnishes Him with a justifiable reason for repaying the wicked. As it is written, “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you” (2 Thess 1:6). And again, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye” (Zech 2:8).

In these difficult sufferings, the present possession of the saints of God is

confirmed. As our Lord said, “Blessed are they which are persecuted **for righteousness’ sake**: for theirs **IS** the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you **falsely, for my sake**. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for **great IS your reward in heaven**: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt 5:10-12).

### KILLED ALL THE DAY LONG

To be “killed all the day long” is to be undeservedly subjected to the brutality and inhumanity of the ungodly. It is to live under the threat of the worst dangers possible to men in the body. It is for Abel to be subjected to the hatred of his own brother while in the field of labor (1 John 3:12). It is for David to live under the aggressive and malicious quest of king Saul (1 Sam 23:14). It is for Elijah to be subjected to the evil intents of Jezebel (1 Kgs 19:2). It is for Paul to receive “stripes above measure,” be “in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.” It is for him to receive “forty stripes save one” five times from the Jews, be thrice “beaten with rods,” and “stoned” (2 Cor 11:24-26).

By saying “we,” both David and Paul refer to the host of the godly. Every day, to this day, some of them are escorted by holy angels from this world to the unseen world. Somewhere today, our brethren are being “killed” and persecuted by the ungodly.

This is the result of faith – of receiving the atonement, and walking in the Spirit. And what is the reason for it all? Why are the people of God subjected to such maltreatment? The answer is shouted back to us by the Holy Spirit: “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, **that we should not trust in ourselves**, but

in God which raiseth the dead" (2 Cor 1:9). That is the reason for our afflictions—to remove any tendency to imagine that we are sufficient of ourselves!

**ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER**

From the standpoint of appearance, it seems as though the righteous have been raised up to be slaughtered, maligned, and subjected to the evil intentions of the godless. How else can we account for the heartless and undeserved death of the holy prophets (1 Thess 2:15) and those who were "stoned, they were sawn asunder [and] slain with the sword" (Heb 11:37).

One of the purposes of this passage is to encourage the hearts of the saints not to balk at suffering, or faint when they are exposed to the harsh treatment of the ungodly. Too, we must not overemphasize our sufferings, failing to accent the love of God. Our faith will be strengthened and confirmed in the crucible of suffering.

Often that suffering has come in the harshest and most severe forms. The Spirit informs us that this is according to Divine appointment. Of the Apostles Paul says, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were **appointed to death**: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men" (1

Cor 4:9). Of the general body of the redeemed it is written, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know" (1 Thess 3:3-4).

The point of our text is that nothing appointed by God is capable of separating us from His love. This includes the most grievous of circumstances, all of which are designed to wean us away from this present evil world, while promoting faith in God. How blessed to see this truth! This is needful and profitable instruction.

**CONQUERING IN CONFLICT**

*"<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."*

**YET**

The KJV reads more appropriately, "Nay . . ." instead of "Yet." The NIV and NRSV read, "No . . ." This verse is given in answer to the interrogation of verse 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" It is given in view of the overriding advantages that are given us in Christ Jesus.

- God is working everything together for our good (v 28).
- God has predestinated that those who are justified will be glorified (v 30).
- If God is for us, no one can effectively be against us (v 31).
- Through Christ, God will freely give us all things, even in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances (v 32).
- No one can lay an effective accusation against those God has justified (v 33).
- No one can condemn those for whom Christ has died (v 34a).
- No one can condemn those for whom Jesus is presently interceding (v 34b).
- No earthly circumstance, regardless of its intensity and duration, can cause

God to cease to love us through Christ (v 35).

The words that follow are declared in the midst of an oppressive battlefield. These words are not spoken to those reclining on "beds of ivory," and reposing on "couches" of ease (Amos 6:4).

opposition and hardship meant they had been abandoned by God. It is one thing for Job, without the Law and without a Bible, to conclude such (Job 23:3-5). It is quite another thing for those who have been "illuminated" and "tasted of the heavenly gift" to assume such things (Heb 6:4-6; 10:32).

**We must not allow the devil to deceive us into thinking God's greatest and most productive work only takes place in peaceful environs, where all is going well for the believer. Many a soul has stumbled at this, imaging that opposition and hardship meant they had been abandoned by God.**

What will now be affirmed takes place **IN** tribulation! It is experienced **IN** distress! It is something that occurs **IN** persecution! This is our heritage **IN** famine! Here is what God gives His people **IN** nakedness. It is what happens to them **IN** peril. It is their lot **IN** opposition by the sword! "**IN ALL THESE THINGS!**"

"**ALL**" these things must be seen as meaning every one of them, and in every kind of them. It is all of them, whether experienced one at a time or all at once. It is true of each individual difficulty, or all of them collectively.

**IN THESE THINGS**

Here is a facet of salvation that is essential to see. We must not allow the devil to deceive us into thinking God's greatest and most productive work only takes place in peaceful environs, where all is going well for the believer. Many a soul has stumbled at this, imaging that

**MORE THAN CONQUERORS**

" . . . we are more than conquerors." Other versions read, "we overwhelmingly conquer,"<sup>NASB</sup> "we overcome,"<sup>DUOAY-RHEIMS</sup> "we are able to overcome all these things,"<sup>BEBE</sup> "we conquer overwhelmingly,"<sup>NAB</sup> "overwhelming victory is ours,"<sup>NLT</sup> and "we come



*through all these things triumphantly victorious.*"<sup>NJB</sup>

The phrase "more than conquerors" comes from a single compound Greek word (ὑπερνικῶμεν). It means to gain a surpassing victory, be completely victorious, or completely win out over something. It means the purpose of the adversary was thoroughly frustrated, and the intentions of the Lord completely dominated the circumstance.

Someone who is "more than a conqueror" overcomes the devil, principalities and powers, and trying circumstances. They are the better for their tribulation, even glorying in it because of their insight into the purpose of God (Rom 5:2ff). Their faith and their joy have only increased because of these hardships, thereby testifying to the greatness of God's salvation. They have gotten the victory over their adversaries "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev 12:11).

Such marvelous victory is not common in our day. However, that is not owing to any deficiency in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If men will embrace the Gospel by faith, they will become "more than conquerors" in THEIR AFFLICTION. Any other result comes from unbelief, and is unsatisfactory before the Lord.

Well did Solomon say, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Prov 24:10). Again, Jeremiah challenges the people of God, "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer 12:5).

**Hasty Conclusions Must Be Avoided**

Those who cannot bear up under difficulty have reason to be concerned. But care must be taken not to arrive at a false conclusion. It is certainly not that they are condemned, and no one should allow themselves to think that is the case. What is revealed in such weakness,

however, is a need for stronger faith. This can only be accomplished by taking a firmer grip on the Good News of Christ, and laboring to uproot trust from the soil of self and humanity.

**THROUGH HIM**

In Christ Jesus, full provision is made for the obtaining and sustaining of faith. Neither of them are found in the flesh. Both of them can be realized in the midst of adversity, and even while seemingly alone. There are times when the only consolation is this: "we may boldly say, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Heb 13:6). In loneliness and seeming despair, faith can shout out, "The LORD is on my side; *I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*"

**In Christ Jesus, full provision is made for the obtaining and sustaining of faith. Neither of them are found in the flesh. Both of them can be realized in the midst of adversity, and even while seemingly alone.**

*The LORD taketh my part with them that help me*" (Psa 118:6-7).

The words "through Him" declare the appointed means through which the saints gain the victory. Faith, strength, and determination are given to them by God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are never close enough to God to receive His blessings apart from Christ Jesus. Even though they are forgiven of all sin, enough of old nature remains in them that a Mediator is still required.

Faith is like a conduit between the saints and Jesus, through which Divine power sustains them in ever increasing measures. God gives nothing to His people that does not come through Christ Jesus. He is the "One Mediator between God and man" (1 Tim 2:5).

**THAT LOVED US**

"... through Him that loved us." Note, the text does NOT say "Him that

loves us," but "Him that loved us." This is a vital distinction, for it takes us back to the Gospel of Christ, wherein the love of God was demonstrated. As it is written, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). Our perception of God's love for us must not rest upon our feelings, or the assessment of our circumstances. It must firmly rest in the revelation of His love, not the experience of it!

This does not mean God's love is not experienced. It DOES mean that circumstances sometime make it appear as though He does not love us. Flesh will reason, "If God really loved us, He would not allow us to go through such grief." But faith reasons upon the basis of Christ's atoning death, not present circumstances.

The love that is mentioned is God's. Thus it is written, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us . . . Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we

ought also to love one another" (Eph 2:4; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 John 4:10-11). That indefatigable love is always sufficient and effective to "cause us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor 2:14). Blessed is the person who can see these things.

**A FINAL WORD OF WARNING**

The saints of God must take care to avoid the tendency to base conclusions upon appearance, or even upon personal experience. **Sound reasoning is always based upon Divine affirmation.** By that, I mean a "thus saith the Lord," as found in the Scriptures. When rationale begins with human experience, it always leads away from God. Man does not live by personal views or even exalted feelings and persuasions. Rather, he lives "by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). When Jesus successfully repelled the attacks of the wicked one, He did it by quoting from the Scripture—even though He Himself was in constant communion with the Father. It

is foolish indeed to assume that God would sustain us by some other means. || Those who are persuaded of the truth of the Word can use it as a sword! This is particularly applicable in regards to the text we are considering.

## THE PERSUASION OF FAITH

“<sup>38</sup> **For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God . . .**” The power of faith is revealed in these words. The declaration of Divine intent has been made, and faith has taken hold of that word.

### I AM PERSUADED

“For I am persuaded . . .” Other versions read, “For I am convinced,”<sup>NASE,NIV</sup> “For I am sure,”<sup>DOUAY-RHEIMS</sup> “For I am certain,”<sup>BBE</sup> and “For I am certain of this.”<sup>NJB</sup>

First of all, let it be clear that Paul is not merely speaking for himself. This is the reasoning of faith, and is something available to all the children of God. If this were not the case, the text would be nothing more than the boast of a sort of hero. But that is not the case. This is a response that belongs to all who are in Christ Jesus.

And what is it that brought such a strong persuasion to the Apostle. It certainly was not the experiences of life! If he were to look at them alone, this is what he would see: “we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears . . . we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life . . . We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed . . . after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus . . . and there are many adversaries . . . Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the

heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness” (2 Cor 7:5; 1:8; 4:8-9;

**The ONLY way we can be persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God is to believe what God has said. That is the sole proof of the matter! Appearance seems to contradict the affirmation.**

1 Cor 15:32; 16:9; 2 Cor 11:24-27). Of themselves, such experiences do not bring a powerful persuasion of the keeping power of God.

### An Aspect of Faith

Persuasion is the aspect of faith described in the words, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). **One in possession of “substance” and “evidence” cannot be ruled by doubt.**

In this regard, our father Abraham is a noble example. It is written of Him, “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being **fully persuaded** that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom 4:19-21).

And what was it that enabled Abraham to be “fully persuaded” of God’s ability? Ponder the circumstances in which he found himself.

He had no children.

- His own body, when it came to reproduction, was “dead.”
- He was about a hundred years old.
- Sarah’s womb was dead.

What wise man upon earth could have confirmed the possibility of the Divine promise that he would “become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be” (4:18). What archaeological find could have supported such a commitment? Was there some ancient manuscript that could confirm what was said? What form of human logic could confirm the promise? Was there a human feeling that could do it? Could our father Abraham find some hermeneutical principle that could console his heart, and persuade him he could have offspring as multitudinous as the stars of the heavens and the sand of the sea shore?

Indeed, the ONLY way he could be fully persuaded is to believe what God had promised. That was the ONLY evidence He possessed that the promise was true. God said it! However, this fully satisfies faith. It needs no more than God’s word.

So it is with our text. The ONLY way we can be persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God is to believe what God has said. That is the sole proof of the matter! Appearance seems to contradict the affirmation. Abel died. Joseph was unjustly imprisoned. The prophets were slain. John the Baptist was beheaded. James was killed by Herod. Stephen was killed. The early church was scattered abroad by a vicious persecution. Paul was imprisoned. On and on we could go. Such circumstances do not appear to justify a persuasion that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God. Flesh erroneously reasons, “If God loves me, why does He allow such things to happen to me?” Such questions are foolish, and unworthy of any attention from the child

of God. The described circumstances are the lower view. They are very real, and have very real affects upon us. In Christ, however, we are given to rise higher, and perceive things from a loftier and more comforting perspective. The Holy Spirit is calling us up to that higher view.

We will find that faith does not gloss life. It does not ignore difficulties, or pretend they are not there. Rather, it looks them squarely in the face while taking hold of the promises of God.

What follows are very real. They are matters the saints of God will confront. Their magnitude is determined by God, not man, and not even the devil. **Not a single one of them has power to drive a wedge between the saved and the Savior, or the children and the Father!**

#### DEATH

Death is the necessary consequence of Adam's sin, and has been passed upon all men. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* (Rom 5:12). Again, *"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one . . ."* (5:17). The reality and inevitability of death, therefore, is not to be questioned. In order to attest to the factuality of the unseen world, two men were exempted from death: Enoch and Elijah (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5; 2 Kgs 2:1-11).

There will also be an entire generation that will not see death in the ordinary sense of the word—namely those who are *"alive and remain"* to the coming of the Lord (1 Thess 4:15-17). Even then, that generation will be *"changed,"* being given new bodies (1 Cor 15:51-52). Apart from these exceptions, *"it is appointed unto men once to die"* (Heb 9:27).

While the appointment to death is common for all men, the manner in which they die is not. Abel was murdered (Gen 4:8). Abraham died *"in a good old age"* and in peaceful circumstances (Gen 25:8). The mighty prophet Elisha died of a sickness (2 Kgs 13:14). Stephen died a prolonged death by being stoned (Acts 7:58-65). Some were *"sawn asunder"* and

*"slain with the sword"* (Heb 11:37). James the Apostle was killed with a sword by Herod (Acts 12:2). The *"prophets of the Lord"* were cut off by wicked Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4). Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, died of an extended illness (John 11:6,13). All experiences of death are certainly not the same, and we should not approach them as though they was.

Death separates us from the world. In it we are separated from our worldly possessions, and from our family and friends. Death separates the spirit and soul from the body. Yet, with all of that, it cannot separate us from the love of God!

In death, the promise of God holds true: *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but*

**The reference to death confirms that Satan will seek to work aggressively at that time to drive us from the Lord. He will try to constrain us to "curse God and die" (Job 2:9). He will promote despair, unbelief, and fear at that time.**

*God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it"* (1 Cor 10:13). It is true, and it is possible to be persuaded of it, that death cannot separate us from the love of God. It may be attended by unusual misery, but it cannot drive a wedge between you and God's love for you! **Death cannot bring us where God's love cannot reach us!**

Among other things, this confirms that the love of God does not necessarily exempt us from hard experiences. We should not allow the devil to deceive us on this matter. When it appears as though we have been counted as sheep for the slaughter, and when we are required to pass through circumstances that terminate in our death, we still have not

been separated from the love of God. God's love for Abel did not relieve him of a hard death, nor did it do this for John the Baptist and Stephen. Sometimes His great love is seen in supporting those who are in seemingly impossible circumstances.

Because of erroneous teaching and conceptions in this matter, I have known of people who have ceased to trust and serve God because a loved one died, whom they thought should not die. In their case, the death of someone whom they respected and relied upon took place. Yet, even in that circumstance, neither the ones who passed, nor those who dearly cared for them, were separated from the love of God. Faith can receive this.

Some of the greatest expressions of faith have occurred when people died. Jacob blessed his sons *"when he was dying"* (Heb 11:21). Stephen prayed for those who were killing him while he was dying (Acts 7:60). When his death drew near, Paul confessed, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Tim 4:7). Rather than separating us from the love of God, death can actually accentuate His love!

The reference to death confirms that Satan will seek to work aggressively at that time to drive us from the Lord. He will try to constrain us to *"curse God and die"* (Job 2:9). He will promote despair, unbelief, and fear at that time. Yet, in all of his efforts, he is absolutely impotent to separate us from the love of God in our death. Whatever may seem to pass from us while we are dying, the love of God will become more firm at that time.

#### LIFE

It is possible for life to become a burden. Our lives are frail and uncertain. As it is written, *"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (James 4:14). It passes *"swifter than a weaver's*

*shuttle*" (Job 7:6), being "of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). David said his life was "as an handbreadth" (Psa 39:5). Notwithstanding, the brevity and uncertainty of life, however burdensome they may become, are not capable of separating us from the love of God.

Sometimes life can be spent under the oppression of the enemy, like Israel in Egyptian bondage (Ex 1:14). Sometimes it can be lived amidst the hatred of your own brothers, like Joseph (Gen 37:8), or in a prison with fetters hurting your feet (Psa 105:17-19). Life can be lived "in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb 11:38). A lifetime can be filled with hardship, living as a beggar full of sores (Lk 16:20-21,25). Those who imagine that faith guarantees a pleasant life without hardship, do well to give heed to the Scriptural record of those who had no such life.

Life is not always fraught with hardship. Sometimes the Lord grants "rest" and comfort in the Holy Spirit, relieving men of stress and trouble (Acts 9:31). He can cause our enemies to be at peace with us (Prov 16:7), while we "dwell safely in the land" (Lev 26:5). Sometimes people move away from the Lord during these peaceful times (Lk 12:19). It is possible to "be full, and deny" the Lord (Prov 30:8).

Yet, whether life is lived in the crucible of difficulty, or in the domain of comfort and ease, life itself cannot separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Life does not have separating power. Therefore, whatever our lot in life, let faith be strong and unwavering.

Here also we learn that Satan will work consistently to sever us from the love of God in life. He will do all within his power to cause life to obscure the love of God. He will foster bitterness and fear, or self-confidence and forgetfulness while we live in this present evil world. His efforts, however, have no power to separate us from the love of God in life's experiences. Whatever may be withheld from us in life, the love of God will not be included in that exclusion for those who live by faith.

### ANGELS

These are evil angels, not holy angels. The holy angels are not engaged in efforts to drive a wedge between us and the love of God. Instead, they are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14).

The devil also has angels. As it is written, everlasting fire has been "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41). These are "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their

**Life is not always fraught with hardship. Sometimes the Lord grants "rest" and comfort in the Holy Spirit, relieving men of stress and trouble. He can cause our enemies to be at peace with us, while we "dwell safely in the land."**

own habitation," and have been "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). These are "the angels that sinned," and have consequently been cast "down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" 2 Pet 2:4).

This category of spiritual beings include "lying spirits" (1 Kgs 22:22), "demons" (1 Cor 10:20; 1 Tim 4:1), "unclean spirits" (Acts 5:16), "evil spirits" (Lk 7:21), "seducing spirits" (1 Tim 4:1), "a spirit of infirmity" (Lk 13:11), and "a spirit of divination" (Acts 16:16). These beings are vastly superior to natural men. Scripture records the influence of these spirits upon people. For eighteen years, one woman was "bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself" (Lk 13:11). Another evil spirit harassed a young boy, frequently throwing "him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him" (Mk 9:22). Another made a man "dumb," and unable to speak (Mk 9:32). Another caused a man to be both "blind and dumb" (Matt 12:22). Still another

grievously "vexed" a young girl (Matt 15:22).

It will do no good for people to pretend as though these spirits do not exist. Nothing in God's word remotely suggests this is the case. These are very real personalities. However, they are all subordinate to the Lord Jesus, the "Captain of our salvation" (Heb 2:10). Their head, Satan, together with themselves, cannot "touch" the one who is born of God (1 John 5:18). With all of their cunning craftiness and superiority over nature, they are impotent to separate us from the love of God!

The chief wicked angel is Satan himself. He is called "the angel of the bottomless pit," and is set to destroy (Rev 9:11). He cannot change the fact that he is the primary fallen angel, but does transform himself "into an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14). On a person-to-person basis, you are no match for him! He is more subtle and more powerful than you are in yourself. Your ONLY protection against him is "in the Lord," "by the Spirit," and "through faith." Yet, he has no power whatsoever to separate you from the love of God.

Often, the people of God are tempted to oversimplify life in Christ Jesus. They do not see themselves as in a volatile and hostile environment, teeming with spiritual personalities who are set against them. Such poor souls view life from an academic viewpoint, imagining they have somehow become smart enough and powerful enough to stand against "the wiles of the devil." That is a delusion. The ONLY way to stand against him is to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and to "put on the whole armor of God" (Eph 6:10-11). Know that in such a stance, the wicked angelic order, from Satan himself down to the lowest demon, cannot separate you from the love of God!

### PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS

The unseen world has a sort of hierarchy. All personalities in the realm of the unseen are not the same. On the side of righteousness, for example, there are

not only angels, but “*arch angels*” (1 Thess 4:16; Jude 9), cherubim (Gen 3:24; Ezek 10:3), seraphim (Isa 6:2,6), and four living creatures (Rev 4:6-8). There are also “*principalities*” among this mighty and holy host (Eph 3:10; Col 1:16). All of **these** are for us, not against us. These are NOT the “*principalities*” of reference.

There are evil “*principalities*” – powerful spirits that have dominion over regions. While we are not provided a lot of information about them, sufficient is revealed to make us glory in Divine protection. Were we given to actually behold the forces that are aligned against us, our hearts would fail because of fear.

### The Testimony of Daniel

We are exposed to three these principalities in the book of Daniel. In the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, Daniel “*understood by books*” that the Babylonian captivity was about to come to an end (Dan 9:2). The books are said to be those of Jeremiah, in which the captivity was specified to be seventy years in duration (Jer 25:11,12; 29:10).

Some time later, during the third year of the reign of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel. The message concerned a great conflict that would occur in the unseen realms. Daniel understood the message, beginning a vigil of mourning that lasted three full weeks. During that entire period, he ate no tasty food, no meat or wine touched his lips, and he put no refreshing ointments on his body (10:1-3).

Following this twenty-day vigil, a heavenly messenger appeared to Daniel. He informed the prophet that as soon as Daniel had begun to pray, he had been dispatched from heaven in response, to bring an answer to him. However, a spiritual power had confronted and detained him for twenty-one days. His words concerning this occasion are certainly arresting. “*But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings*

*of Persia*”<sup>NJKV</sup> (10:13).

It is staggering to consider the magnitude of the opposing power this mighty angel confronted. Angels, we know, have no difficulty in their confrontations with mortal men. A single angel slew 185,000 of Sennacherib’s army in a single evening, with no difficulty whatsoever (2 Kgs 19:35). Yet, “*the prince of Persia*” successfully detained this angel for twenty-one days! Not only that, “*Michael, one of the chief princes*” came to “*help*” him, thereby freeing him to bring the message to Daniel!

**Here Daniel was told of three spiritual princes. One was “Michael,” who was holy. The other two were opposing forces who were apparently seeking the continued removal of Israel from their land. We know that one of Michael’s chief responsibilities is the people of Israel (Dan 12:1). He stands for them.**

That was not even the end of the matter. After delivering his message, the angel said to Daniel, “*And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come*” (10:20).

Here Daniel was told of three spiritual princes. One was “*Michael*,” who was holy. The other two were opposing forces who were apparently seeking the continued removal of Israel from their land. We know that one of Michael’s chief responsibilities is the people of Israel (Dan 12:1). He stands for them.

This record provides an explanation for the overthrow of the kingdom of Persia and the consequent dominance of the Grecian empire. It was not mere military power that overthrew Persia,

even though historians may imagine that to be the case. There was a wicked “*principality*” over Persia, as well as one over “*Greece*.” Considering them within the framework of the government of God, **they** were the real governors of those nations.

When the angel of the Lord came to Daniel with a message from heaven, it appears as though “*the prince of Persia*” knew the intent of the message, and thus sought to stop it from being delivered. It would, after all, announce his own demise. Later, another “*principality*,” “*the prince of Greece*,” would overthrow “*the prince of Persia*.” That overthrow was evidenced in the fall of Persia and the rise of Greece to military and political prominence.

We have no doubt witnessed a similar deposing of spiritual forces in our time. The fall of Japan, Germany, and Russia was not the result of military strength or political expertise. Those falls took place in the higher realms.

Now the question before us is whether or not these “*principalities*” can drive a wedge between the redeemed and the Redeemer! Can they push us beyond the reach of the love of God? **Emphatically, they cannot!** That is the persuasion of faith, and it is founded upon unalterable reality.

The fact that they cannot separate us from the love of God is not owing to their weakness, but to the greatness of God’s salvation, and the pressing nature of His remarkable love.

These “*principalities*” have all been plundered by the Lord Jesus. The plundering occurred in His atoning death. As it is written, “*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Col 2:15). Other translations say He “*disarmed*” the principalities and powers.

### We Now Wrestle Against Them

These “*principalities and powers*,” who once detained mighty angels, are now

engaged by the saints of the most high God. It is written, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but **against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places**”* (Eph 6:12). The spoiling of them by Jesus, therefore, does not mean they have been utterly removed. Rather, they have been so disarmed that we can now struggle against them for the freedom and enlightenment of the people.

To be sure, they cannot separate us from the love of God. However, the love of God can separate us from their malicious intents! How good it would be to have a revival of awareness in this area. Oh, that men would not only see the magnitude of the real foes we face, but that they are impotent to turn God against us!

### THINGS PRESENT

*“Things present”* are the circumstances we face today. They are the conditions of the here and now. This is what we are confronting at this time.

Trouble, sorrow, and affliction are challenges when they are *“things present.”* When we are of sound mind, the griefs of yesterday do not drag us down. Troubles and afflictions that are behind us have only become occasions for thanksgiving and praise. When we live by faith, we do not grapple with such things. But when they are *“things present,”* it is quite another story.

Right here is where many a soul needs to be strengthened – handling *“things present.”* Even when we endure chastening, it is the fact that it is *“present”* that makes it grievous. As it is written, *“Now no chastening **for the present** seemeth to be joyous, but grievous”* (Heb 12:11). There surely are *“the sufferings of **this present time**”* (Rom 8:18).

Rather than *“things present”* separating us from the love of God, we can take ownership of them, knowing our God is working all things together for our good. Do not the Scriptures say, *“things present . . . are yours”* (1 Cor 3:22)? There

are distresses that are *“present”* (1 Cor 7:26), and *“the present evil world”* (Gal 1:4).

Still, *“things present”* cannot separate from God’s love toward us! The things we are going through right now may appear difficult and strong, but they are powerless to shut off the supply of Divine love. Still, *“in the midst”* of our enemies, our loving God can still prepare a table for us, laded with sustaining dainties (Psa 23:5).

### THINGS TO COME

There have been generations who have been given grievous messages from God about *“things to come.”* Abraham was told that his offspring would be in bondage for 400 years (Gen 15:13). Gen Eli was told of the blotting out of his family name (1 Sam 3:12-14). Israel was told of the coming Babylonian captivity (Jer 25:11). Jesus told His disciples of the coming decimation of Jerusalem (Lk 21:24). Paul told of the days when *“seducing spirits and doctrines of demons”* would dominate the church (1 Tim 4:1), and times would be *“perilous”* (2 Tim 3:1-5). He spoke of a *“falling away”* (2 Thess 2:3).

**All such fears are neutralized, and will eventually flee from us, if we are persuaded “things to come” are incapable of separating us from God’s love. Anything that is to come, regardless of its power, intensity, or longevity, will be bearable if God continues to love us.**

Jesus spoke of a time when men’s hearts would fail *“them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth”* (Lk 21:26). The dread of coming things have struck fear into many a soul! Some have been gripped with fear at the possibility of what might occur in the future, even though there is no revealed basis for their fear.

All such fears are neutralized, and will eventually flee from us, if we are persuaded *“things to come”* are incapable of separating us from God’s love. Anything that is to come, regardless of its power, intensity, or longevity, will be bearable if God continues to love us.

### HEIGHT

There are several senses in which the word *“height”* can be taken, and all of them have merit. I understand these to involve things that are **not** sought. They are **not** aspirations, nor are they things for which the believer longs. These are matters into which we are led by Divine power and purpose.

### Lofty Circumstances

*“Height”* refers to lofty circumstances in which the individual is raised above the norm, and higher than his peers. It can include wealth, honor, or rank. It is possible to come into a situation where unusual honor is put upon us, or we are given responsibilities that far exceed the normal lot of believers. Some examples will suffice to illustrate the possibility of such occurrences.

**Moses** experienced unusual elevation in two ways. First, prior to being called of God, he *“was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds”* (Acts 7:22). Second, he was exalted above whole generations, for *“the Law came by Moses”* (John 1:17). Yet, his lofty positions did not separate him from the love of God. When in Egypt, he was faced with a decision. Of that time it is written, he *“refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward”* (Heb 11:24-26).

Later, after he had received the Law, was its mediator, and led the people of God, it was said of him, *“Moses was faithful in all his house”* (Heb 3:2). His faith kept him, and thus the heights to which he was raised did not separate him

from the love of God. These were not things to which he aspired, but things of which he was made a steward.

**Aaron** was chosen of God to be the first high priest of the people. This was a lofty position, indeed. Among the children of Israel, there was none higher, saving for Moses himself. Thus it is written, *“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron”* (Heb 5:1-4).

Later, in tribute to the faithful execution of the office of high priest, the Scriptures refer to *“Aaron the saint of the LORD”* (Psa 106:216). His exaltation did not separate him from the love of God.

**Joseph** was a rare person, indeed. No sin is recorded against him in Scripture. He was a person who experienced both height and depth in an unusual degree. From the prison of Pharaoh he was exalted to the second highest position in the land. His position was so significant that Pharaoh said to him, *“See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt . . . I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt”* (Gen 41:41-44). Yet, in humble faith, he gave the glory to God. *“God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”* (Gen 50:20). Height did not separate him from the love of God!

**Daniel** had high political influence under the reign of four different kings. **Nebuchadnezzar** made him *“a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon”* (Dan 2:48). **Belshazzar** *“clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a*

*proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom”* (Dan 5:29). Daniel continued to be a superior counselor *“even unto the first year of king Cyrus”* the Persian (Dan 10:1). During the reign of **Darius the Mede** Daniel *“stood to confirm and to strengthen him”* (Dan 11:1).

Yet, throughout this period of time Daniel was *“greatly beloved”* in heaven (Dan 10:11). High places did not separate him from the love of God.

**There are sublime spiritual experiences that can neither be accounted for nor expressed in human wisdom. Paul spoke of one such experience, declaring it to have been transcendent to all human ability.**

**Challenging Circumstances**  
*“Height”* can also be challenging circumstances that require more strength and ability than we have by nature. David spoke of his own determination not to exercise himself in *“matters too high for me”* (Psa 131:1). That was not his aspiration. He spoke of knowledge that was *“too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it”* (Psa 139:6).

Yet, when, as a mere boy, he faced the giant Goliath, faith made him equal to the occasion. Too, he was given to see aspects of the Lord and His will that few people have seen to this very day. *“Height”* did not separate him from the love of God.

**Sublime Experiences**  
There are sublime spiritual experiences that can neither be accounted for nor expressed in human wisdom. Paul spoke of one such experience, declaring it to have been transcendent to all human ability. *“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a*

*man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* 2 Cor 12:2-4). Yet, this lofty experience did not bring about a separation from God’s love, or contribute to pride. Of the occasion Paul said, *“Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities”* (2 Cor 12:5). Height did not separate him from the love of God.

Some people have drawn back from exalted spiritual experiences, or positions of great authority, thinking they will of themselves drive a wedge between them and God. However, when God leads people into such high places, they will not be able to separate them from the love of God.

**DEPTH**

There are human depths that stagger the imagination. Both in the body and in the soul, we can plummet to such depths as cause fear to rise in our hearts. David referred to these as *“the depths of the earth,”* and knew God could bring him back from them (Psa 71:20). Once he said, *“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD”* (Psa 130:1). Let no person doubt that such circumstances can arise. There are times when the depths of human contempt are felt. There are times of deprivation and destitution. No person of sound mind seeks these occasions, but God has led some us *“through the valley of the shadow of death”* (Psa 23:4).

Lazarus experienced the depth of being a beggar full of sores (Lk 16:20). Joseph was laid in fetters in prison (Psa 105:18). Daniel had to spend a night with the lions (Dan 6:16-17). Paul and Silas were beaten and left in the stocks of a cold and dark *“inner prison”* (Acts 16:23-24). Jeremiah was thrown into a pit, in which he sunk down into the mire (Jer 38:6).

David once said of one of his deliverances, *“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings”* (Psa 40:2). He knew **depth** could not separate him from the love of God. You must know it too!

**ANY OTHER CREATED THING**

Nothing opposes the believer that has not been created – that does not have a genesis, or beginning. For that very

overwhelmed. But to assure us that full provision has been made for us, He says “*any other created thing.*” Faith is willing to accept that, and rest in the Lord.

*loved us*” (1 John 4:19). **His love is the river, ours is the tributary.**

**This text presumes the superiority of God’s love. It is the manner of the New Covenant to place the highest priority on God’s love for us. It is what we prefer, long for, and fervently seek. It is generally known by the faithful that the love of God is powerful, sustaining the soul and standing between the believer and the forces aligned against him.**

This text presumes the superiority of God’s love. It is the manner of the New Covenant to place the highest priority on God’s love for us. It is what we prefer, long for, and fervently seek. It is generally known by the faithful that the love of God is powerful, sustaining the soul and standing between the believer and the forces aligned against him. That is precisely why the Holy Spirit pours out God’s love into our hearts. In so doing, our confidence is bolstered and our hearts made strong.

reason, such things will also have an end. The idea here is that anything beneath God cannot interfere with His love for us! Everything that is under Christ – and that is “*all things*” (Eph 1:22) – has any power to push us beyond the reach of Divine love. Whether it is a personality or a circumstance, it cannot diminish the love of God for us in Christ Jesus.

**ABLE TO SEPARATE**

In a sense, this text is a promise, but it is more than a promise. It is a declaration of the real situation right now. All of the things that have been mentioned **are** totally incapable of separating us from the love of God. They simply have no power to do so. If we begin to think they can separate us, then we have been deceived on the matter.

We know that if God loves us there is neither person nor circumstance that can turn Him against us. If God is for us, who CAN be against us? Faith confidently responds, “*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, shall be able to separate us from the love of God . . .*”<sup>NASB</sup> Any person convinced of that will have the victory! That is why faith is declared to be “*the victory*” that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5). See to it that you abide in God’s love, and the powers of darkness can do nothing about it.

There are no doubt opponents and circumstances confronted in the faith life

**THE LOVE OF GOD**

The love of reference is God’s love **for** us, not our love for God. Our love flows from His love, and not vice versa. As it is written, “*We love Him, because He first*

of which we are totally unaware. I gather the Spirit has only introduced us to our enemies, in order that we be not

**CONDITIONAL LOVE**

“ 8:39b . . . **which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” There is much talk these days about God’s unconditional love. But it has no substance in Scripture. I believe I know what honest people are trying to say, but when they use such flippant speech, they do not do well. At best, they are trying to say that the love of God can reach us where we are, and that life is never hopeless if we will believe. It is far better to speak of God’s love in the words of our text, namely that nothing is able to separate us from it.

whom his love was placed (Deut 23:5). The second is applied to “*a cheerful giver*” (2 Cor 9:7). The words “*the Lord loves*” are mentioned eight times in Scripture. (1) “*The Lord loves His people*” (2 Chron 2:11). (2) “*The Lord loves justice*” (Psa 37:28). (3) “*The Lord loves the gates of Zion*” (Psa 87:2). (4) “*The Lord loves the righteous*” (Psa 146:8). “*For whom the Lord loves He reproves*” (Prov 3:12). “*The Lord loves Him*” (Jacob, Isa 48:14). “*The Lord loves the sons of Israel*” (Hos 3:1).

- “*For the Father Himself loves you, **because** you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God.*” (John 16:27)
- “*The Father loves **the Son**, and has given all things into His hand.*” (John 3:35)
- “*For the Father loves **the Son**, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.*” (John 5:20).
- “*Therefore My Father loves Me, **because** I lay down My life that I may take it again*” (John 10:17).
- “*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me **will be loved by My Father**, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.*” (John 14:21)
- “*Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If*

None of the above texts are general, and all of them are selective.

**JESUS SPEAKS OF GOD’S LOVE**

The primary condition of God’s love is stated in our text: “*which is IN Christ Jesus.*” If you remove the Lord Jesus Christ from the picture, Divine love goes with Him. The words “*God loves*” appear only two times in any major translation of Scripture. The first applies to Israel, upon

The grand Expositor of God is the Lord Jesus Himself. If anyone can speak with clarity on the matter, it is the Son of God, the appointed Savior of the world.



anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and **My Father will love him**, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.” (John 14:23)

**Past Tense: “loved”**

Jesus also referred to the Father’s love in the past tense—a love perfected BEFORE experienced by us.

- ❑ “For God **so loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
- ❑ “As the Father **loved Me**, I also have **loved you**; abide in My love.” (John 15:9)
- ❑ “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You **loved Me** before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

**The Apostles Did the Same**

- ❑ “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ

Himself, and our God and Father, who **has loved us** and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace.” (2 Thess 2:16).

- ❑ “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He **loved us**.” (Eph 2:4)
- ❑ “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us** and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God **so loved us**, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:10-11)

While the love of God is directed toward all people in Christ Jesus, we are to understand it to be active **only** in those who are in Him. His “great love” made abundant provision for us “when we were enemies,” but that love was focused upon the Lord Jesus Himself. It is only as we are “in Him” that experience that love.

Apart from the Son of God, men can, indeed, be separated from the love of God. In fact, that will be the ultimate portion of all who refuse to believe the record God

had given of His Son (1 John 5:10-11).

God is pointed on this matter. It is His Son in whom He is “well pleased” (Matt 3:17; 17:52 Pet 1:17), and upon whom His love rests in a most unique way. Even then, Jesus affirmed the Father loved Him BECAUSE He laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:17). God’s love for Christ is so strong that He loves us BECAUSE we love Christ, believing He came from God (John 16:27). God “WILL love” any person who loves Christ (John 14:21,23).

This is why God’s love is said to be “in Christ Jesus.” He does not love us in a sentimental and tolerating sort of way, for such love is not strong and does not change the individual. However, because His love for us is “in Christ Jesus our Lord,” it is consistent, protective, and effective. Those who have faith in the Son and abide in His love will find there is no opposing force that can neutralize or void that love. It is invincible. It is both strong and gentle, firm and tender.

**CONCLUSION**

Every person who is living by faith finds this text to be of great consolation. It contributes to their confidence, and enables them to boldly approach to the throne of all grace. If the love of men fails, the love of God will not. If they are assaulted by supernatural powers, they will prove impotent to move them away from this love. When Christ is dwelling in our heart by faith (Eph 3:16-17), He secures the love of God to us. Because of Him we benefit from that love. The Father will send us wisdom from above (James 1:17). He will give grace and peace in copious measures (Rom 1:7). Love and faith will be given to us by Him (Eph 6:23), together with mercy (1 Tim 1:12). “Everlasting consolation and good hope” will be given to us when God’s love is upon us (2 Thess 2:16).

force to separate us from “the love of Christ” and “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” In a sense, both

us get to the heart of the matter.

**Now, what is there that can stop the flow of these benefits to us? Can tribulation stop the intercession of Jesus? Can distress cause God to cease to give us grace and peace? Will persecution, regardless of its intensity, stop the well of salvation from flowing into our hearts?**

Jesus is living for us (Rom 5:10). He is interceding for us, and mediating the New Covenant to us (Heb 7:25; 9:15). He is leading, feeding, and teaching us (Heb 2:10; John 10:4; Eph 4:20-21). His love is made known in these activities, and more. God the Father is blessing us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3). He is orchestrating our lives so that everything will work together for our ultimate good (Rom 8:28).

Now, what is there that can stop the flow of these benefits to us? Can tribulation stop the intercession of Jesus? Can distress cause God to cease to give us grace and peace? Will persecution, regardless of its intensity, stop the well of salvation from flowing into our hearts? Will famine effectively hinder us from receiving everlasting consolation and good hope? What of nakedness or

**TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER**  
The Spirit has challenged us to consider the impossibility of any opposing

are the same love. The point is that it is only realized in Christ Jesus. Lest that appear to be too cold and calculating, let

destitution? Cannot a beggar full of sores be carried by angels to Abraham's bosom? And what of peril and the sword? Can they take a single spiritual blessing in heavenly places from us? The answer should be obvious to you. These benefits are beyond the reach of our foes. What is more, they cannot no stop them from passing through their territory to us that Sihon could stop Israel from passing through his land (Num 21:23-26).

Can death of life stop Jesus from interceding for you? Can angels, principalities, or powers cause wisdom to cease to come to you from God? Is it

possible for the things of today or the prospects of tomorrow to make God stop working everything together for your good? Is there a place too high, or a circumstance too deep for grace and peace to be multiplied unto you? Is there any created thing that can blot out the Sun of righteousness, causing it to rise no longer with healing in His wings?

The resounding answer to all of these rhetorical questions is "NO!" That is what it means to remain unseparated from the love of God. It means no one can separate you from the benefits of that love. No one can stop God from blessing

and keeping you. No circumstance can put you in a place where Jesus does not work for and in you. It simply is not possible!

Now, let your faith take hold of what the Spirit has said. If you have ears to hear, hear what He is saying to the churches. You have every reason to be strong in faith, giving glory to God. You have no reason to be fainthearted and unbelieving. The Gospel has declared God is for you, and has provided for your "eternal salvation." If God be for you, who really can be against you! That is something you can heartily embrace without any fear of contradiction!

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/23/2001. Continuing in our overview of the book of Romans, we will be covering verses 1-5 of the ninth chapter. The theme will be, "ISRAEL'S NEGLECTED ADVANTAGE." The ninth chapter of Romans begins an extensive commentary on the Israelites, the fleshly offspring of Abraham. It will extend through the conclusion of the eleventh chapter. It is marvelous in perspective, glorious in intention, and edifying in content. It will confirm that God's love is truly everlasting, thereby confirming everlasting consolation and good hope to those who are in Christ Jesus. Our meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

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**COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>**

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*Assurance is brought to the hearts of those in Christ Jesus by knowing God's love is everlasting --by Given O. Blakely*