

# Sermon Notes

## INSEPARABLE:

REVELING IN THE INSEPARABLE, UNAVOIDABLE, INDESTRUCTIBLE, UNDYING, INESCAPABLE, UNBENDING,  
IRRESISTIBLE, UNCOMPROMISING, INFLEXIBLE, UNYIELDING, INEXORABLE, UNINTERRUPTED LOVE  
THAT GOD HAS FOR US IN  
CHRIST JESUS

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### 4. THE INSEPARABLE LOVE OF CHRIST (ROMANS 8:35-37)

#### I. “Love Makes Little Things Grow”

#### II. Who Shall Separate Us from Christ’s Love?

- A. The apostle Paul has been helping Christians to respond to the haters of our souls by asking and answering some questions that reflect our deepest fears. The answers are all designed to get us flee to Christ for our salvation and defense from the haters.
- Rom 8:31: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”
  - Rom 8:33: “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”
  - Rom 8:34: “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”
- B. The truth that binds all those facts together is that *God and Christ are for us*.
- C. But Paul raises a new question. While the previous questions address the fear of condemnation, the new question addresses the fear that somehow, someone or something could sever us from the love of our Lord Jesus: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

#### III. The Hydra of Fears

- A. Paul gives us a list of possible things that cause us to fear: “Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” Think of each of these as a head of the mythical hydra monster:
1. “Tribulation” (*thlipsis*) = to press together, to come under pressure.
  2. “Distress” (*stenochōria*) = extreme affliction, dire calamity
  3. “Persecution” (*diōgmos*) = attacking believers for their faith
  4. “Famine” (*limos*) = scarcity of food
  5. “Nakedness” (*gymnotēs*) = deprivation of clothing, carries the sense of humiliation
  6. “Danger” (*kindunos*) = every conceivable threat to our bodies and our souls.

7. “Sword” (*machaira*) = a reference to physical violence.
- B. This list of troubles in verse 35 comes *after* a lengthy section on suffering in general.
- Rom 8:18: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”  
—“The sufferings of this present time” seems big enough to cover all the evil and pain that believers face along with the rest of the world.
  - Rom 8:19-20: “For the *creation* waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the *creation* was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the *creation* itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God”  
—The entire creation, not just one segment of it, is groaning in pain.
- C. How do verses 18-20 shape our application of verse 35?
1. When the Scripture talks about “tribulation,” “distress,” “persecution,” “famine,” etc., God’s intention is to cover every form of suffering, because all suffering is part of a creation that has been “subjected to futility” (v 20).
- D. And yet, persecution is emphasized, because that’s when the Accuser screams his loudest. Persecuted believers need our especial care.
1. In verse 36, Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22, which gives voice to the suffering of persecuted believers in every generation.
    - Rom 8:36: “<sup>36</sup> As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’”
- E. God’s intention is to comfort his children who are in *any* form of tribulation.
- F. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”  
Can any of these things listed here be able to do that?  
Can “tribulation,” or “distress,” or “persecution,” or any act of psychological abuse, or physical violence cut us off from the love of Christ?

#### IV. More than Conquerors

- A. The answer comes in verse 37: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors...”
1. When suffering comes, whether it’s persecution or the general trials of life in a broken-down world, we must not believe what the Accuser wants us to believe, which is that Christ has abandoned us.
  2. Instead, we must echo what our own Lord Jesus has taught us to say: “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors...”
- B. “More than conquerors” is triumphant, yet not “triumphalistic.”
1. Being “more than conquerors,” as the apostle envisions it, does not mean that we feel no sadness, doubt, fear, or grief on our Christian journey.
  2. Being “more than conquerors” means that *we will endure* whatever comes at us.

3. We will look at the dreaded things that are troubling us through tear-stained eyes and we will say with a quiet smile: “This too shall pass. But I will endure.”
  - 2 Cor 4:8-9: “<sup>8</sup> We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;”

## V. Through Him Who Loved Us

- A. How do we endure the force of the fallen world?
  1. Just as Paul got us to look to Christ when we face condemnation, Paul gets us to do the same thing in the face of suffering.
  2. We become “more than conquerors *through him who loved us.*”
  3. Paul calls us to find our courage in the fact that we are forever loved by Jesus.
- B. There is no mention here of any kind of self-will, self-determination.
  1. Paul does not envision growing in resilience the way the world often teaches us to do, which is by...
    - hardening our hearts,
    - growing a thicker skin,
    - acting tough,
    - never shedding a tear,
    - talking boastfully,
    - not caring,
    - becoming the toughest guy (or bigger bully) on the block, etc.
  2. The world has its own strengthening program. But if we follow it, we might become as cruel, heartless, and apathetic as the world is.
- C. Instead, there is another way, a better way—a *Gospel* way. We find our strength in being loved by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of God, and is even now interceding for us (v 34).
- D. The Gospel way of growing in strength is not about defending yourself.
  1. It is about knowing that you are already defended and protected by Christ.
  2. It is about knowing ourselves to be loved and then walking persistently and stubbornly in the awareness of that love no matter what others tell us.

## VI. The First Love

- A. But how can we know what love is, unless we ourselves know that we are loved?
- B. We cannot repent of our lovelessness unless we have first been loved.
- C. Even the ability to grow in love and maintain that love in the face of evil is dependent on the love of Christ. It is nourished by resting in the love of Christ.
  - 1 Jn 4:19: “We love because he first loved us.”

D. The love of Christ grows strong Christians.

**Brothers and sisters, you *are* loved. You are loved by a kind, good, gentle, and faithful Lord who will never abandon you, no matter what. This Lord Jesus Christ has taken upon himself all the punishment and condemnation you deserve. This Lord Jesus then rose from the dead with you in mind in order to secure your justification. This Lord Jesus is now in heaven standing in for you, securing your place before the Father. This Lord Jesus has claimed you as his child. And because of that, there is absolutely nothing in the whole wide world that can separate you from his love (v 35). Not persecution. Not tribulation. Not distress. Not famine. Not illness. Not joblessness. Not failure in your studies or your career. Nothing. The love of Jesus Christ is yours forever—and this love will make you more than a conqueror.**

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
3. What is the big truth that runs through vv 31-34?
4. How do Rom 8:18-20 shape our understanding of these items in v 35?
5. Based on v 37, how should our attitude toward the trials of life be?
6. What does it mean and what does it not mean to be "more than conquerors"? (v 37) What light does 2 Cor 4:8-9 shed on this?
7. What is the Gospel way of developing the courage and inner resilience to stand up to the world and its darkness and pain? What is the difference between the Gospel way and the worldly/secular way?
8. How does knowing that you are loved by Christ strengthen you in your trials today?
9. Memorize Rom 8:37. Pray it and speak it to yourself often.