

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

5. THE INSEPARABLE LOVE OF GOD (ROMANS 8:38-39)

I. Introduction

II. Boundless Love

- A. In verse 35, the apostle Paul had given us a list of things that could cause us to be afraid: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword, etc.
- B. Since trusting in God does not come easily to us, we need plenty of reminders.
- C. If there are any lingering doubts, Paul gives us an even broader list of potential fear factors to consider. These encompass every conceivable power of creation.
- D. The apostle is leading us to the grand conclusion that we do not have to be afraid, because there is absolutely nothing in all creation that can ever tear us away from “the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v 39).
- E. Let us take a look at this list. And as we read each item on the list, we reassure ourselves that God will always love us, that God will not remove his love from us—and so we live in faith in his love.

III. Death and Life Can't

- A. The apostle begins with the most obvious fear that we meet in our day to day existence: *death*, the great dark Enemy of the human race (Heb 2:15).
- B. The opposite of death is *life*. While life is good, life in a fallen world is also hard and fraught with difficulty and heartache.
- C. Together, death and life are the two great non-negotiable powers of the world, the two great extremes of all creation, shadow and light, sadness and happiness, *yin* and *yang*.
- D. Since the two extremes are here, everything in between is also implied (e.g., accusations, condemnations, criticisms, tribulation, persecution, nakedness, sword, disease, etc.)

- E. By the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul declares “No!”: “*Neither death nor life...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”
 - 1. Death cannot separate us from God’s love because Christ Jesus our Lord has risen.
 - 2. Eternal life is the great gift of God’s love in Christ Jesus.
- F. To say that neither death nor life can separate us from God’s love means that there is absolutely no power in the universe that can ever cut us off from God.

IV. Angels and Rulers Can’t

- A. If Paul had stopped with death and life, it would be enough to comfort our frightened souls.
- B. But it seems the Lord really wants to press his encouragement upon us. So we come to the next group on the list on the list: *angels* and the *rulers*.
- C. Given how death and life are two opposing or contrasting powers, it seems natural to understand angels and rulers in a similar way, as opposing or contrasting powers.
 - 1. Angels are the heavenly spirits who serve God and his people.
 - 2. Rulers here may refer to evil spirits.
 - Eph 6:12: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”
- D. No matter how powerful the angels and rulers may be, none of these things can separate us from the love of God.
 - 1. Angels already serve God. They cannot wait until the children of God are revealed (Rom 8:19).
 - 2. While demons can accuse, discourage, tempt believers, God has already forgiven the sins of his children and justified them in Christ. Even the demonic rulers have no power over God’s children.
- E. We are led to the conclusion: “[*neither*] *angels nor rulers...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

V. The Present and Future Can’t

- A. While neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers can cut us off from God, we might still be afraid of some unforeseen possibility. So Paul brings up the next group: *things present* and *things to come*—there is nothing in the present or in the future that can sever us from the love of God.

- B. Paul does not specify what “things” he has in mind. These are open categories.
- C. What is the issue that troubles you today? Or what are some of the issues that might trouble you in the future?
- A present illness? An anticipated illness?
 - Examination results?
 - The fear of being alone?
 - The fear of not being fulfilled?
 - The fear of your dreams not being attained?
 - Some other vague, unnameable fear?
- Whatever “It” is that you fear, “It” cannot separate you from God.
- D. You may *feel* that God does not love you, because your situation is bleak. But when those feelings come, recognize that your feelings are not the same as objective reality. In this case, your feelings do not tell you the truth!
- E. When your feelings accuse you and/or cause you to think hard thoughts about God—do not trust them! Instead, trust all the good words that God has already given to you in Christ.
- F. So if neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons can do it, then we must also say “[*neither*] things present nor things to come...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v 39).

VI. The Powers Can’t

- A. The next category comprises the *powers*.
- B. The powers may include:
1. spiritual powers, both good and evil.
 2. human powers: governments, laws, regulations, courts, armies, etc.
 3. powers of nature: the laws of gravity, laws of the weather, laws that govern the behavior of solids, and liquids, and gases, etc.
- C. If even death cannot separate us from God, neither can these powers!
1. The most repressive government cannot cut a believer off from God.
 2. The most abusive spouse cannot stand between his wife and God.
 3. The worst grade on an exam will not make God think any less of you.
 4. The worst prognosis cannot cancel God’s declaration of love for you in Jesus Christ.
- D. There is no illness, famine, financial downturn, act of malice, or natural disaster that can remove a believer from God’s love.
- E. So if neither death nor life, nor things present nor things future, can do it, then “[*neither can*] powers...be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

VII. Height and Depth Can't

- A. There is yet another category of possibilities that might stir up fear in the hearts of people: *height* and *depth* (v 39).
- B. In pagan societies...
 - 1. “height” denotes the celestial realms, the planets, the stars, the zodiac, the heavenly bodies, the astrological powers etc.
 - 2. “depth” is associated with the grave, hades, the underworld, hell, ghosts, demons, etc.
- C. But none of these can undo what God has already determined to do. If neither death nor life, nor present nor future can do it, then “*neither height nor depth...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”
 - 1. In Christ Jesus, we have already gone through death, hell, and the grave—and come out triumphant!
 - 2. Therefore, neither the depths of hell nor the most terrifying powers in the celestial realms can claim us, because we have already been claimed by God himself.
 - 3. We are in Christ Jesus our Lord who is seated at the right hand of God, far above all the powers of the depths and the heights.
 - Eph 2:4-6: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”

VIII. “Anything Else in All Creation” Can't

- A. If there are any more lingering doubts, Paul uses one more phrase to help set our hearts at ease: “nor anything else in all creation” (v 39).
- B. “Anything else in all creation” can contain all our lingering doubts and fears.
- C. If even death, and demons, and the depths of hell, and the most precarious movements of stars cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, then there is nothing else in all creation that can do that.
- D. God’s love for you and for me is unending. His goodness toward you and me is boundless!
- E. So if neither death nor life, nor present nor future can do it, then “[*not*] anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

IX. The Love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord

- A. God's boundless love is found "in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- B. Christ Jesus is the God-Man.
 - 1. He is the eternal and infinite God and the holy and perfectly obedient Human Being.
 - 2. Messiah Jesus is the new Temple of God.
 - 3. In him, both God and humanity are reconciled in one person.
 - 4. If we believe in Jesus, if we trust him to save us from our sins and reconcile us to God, he will join us to himself and cause us to share in the boundless love of God that is in him.
- C. The Lord Jesus himself is the Blessing. In him, we are embraced by God forever. In him, we are saved from all our sins and from all the dark things that make us afraid. In him, we can never be lost to God.

God is for us. God has justified us. Christ Jesus has died for us, was raised for us, is at the right hand of God for us, and is now interceding for us. Christ loves us forever. God loves us forever. You and I are surrounded at every moment by the boundless love of God and Christ. That is the Father's word to us.

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. According to v 35, what are some things that could sow fear in our hearts?
- 4. The list in v 35 is pretty good. Why another list in vv 38-39?
- 5. What is the grand conclusion to which Paul is taking us?
- 6. *Death and life*. What is included in this category? (v 38)
- 7. *Angels and rulers*. What is entailed in this group?
- 8. *Present and future*. What in your present or future make you doubt God's love for you?
- 9. *Powers*. What powers do you fear? What powers make you feel helpless?
- 10. *Height and depth*. What powers in the heights or depths were you taught to fear?
- 11. "*Anything else in all creation*" (v 39). What lingering doubts and fears will you think of here?
- 12. Acknowledge the love of God: "Abba Father, I am loved by you. That is who I am forever."
- 13. Memorize Rom 8:39. Pray it and speak it to yourself often.