**Sermon 3/17/19**

**Romans 8:1-8, 31-39**

During World War II, a passenger ship set sail from Great Britain,

        headed for port in New York City.

The Captain of the ship, being afraid of enemy vessels,

        sought the advice and guidance of the British Admiral.

The Admiral calmly assured the captain that no matter what happens,

      he should be sure to sail his ship straight ahead.

The Admiral insisted: "Do not take any detours -- sail the ship straight ahead --

          continue on-ward, heading straight towards the intended mark."

After several days of sailing across the Atlantic Ocean,

          which was undeniably filled with submarines and enemy vessels of all kinds,

          the Captain spotted an enemy destroyer off his forward bow.

Nervously he grasped the radio handset and called for assistance.

The Admiral's calm voice replied:

        "Keep on straight, do not detour, just sail the ship straight ahead.

        Everything will be just fine. Just keep on going - straight ahead."

The Captain followed the Admiral's advice, in spite of his concern for the safety

        of his ship and the passengers on board.

Finally, after a several more days,

        the ship pulled safely into the harbor of New York City.

Shortly after docking, the great British battleship "Man-of-War"

         pulled into port behind the passenger vessel.

The Captain realized that while he did not see the British Battleship, she was there,

          always with him, always standing by ready to come to his defense,

          should it prove necessary.

His crossing had always been secure,

        because of the presence and protection of the battleship.

We face many difficulties, and problems, and dangers throughout our lives.

But living within God's love and protection, we are secure in his presence,

Even when we cannot see him, or feel him with us.

One day, Charles Spurgeon was walking through the English countryside

        with a friend.

As they strolled along, the evangelist noticed a barn with a weather vane on its roof.

At the top of the vane were the words: GOD IS LOVE.

Spurgeon remarked to his companion that he thought

         this was a rather inappropriate place for such a message.

“Weather vanes are changeable," he said, "but God's love is constant.”

"I don't agree with you about those words, Charles," replied his friend.

"You misunderstood the meaning.

That sign is indicating a great truth:

           Regardless of which way the wind blows, God is love."

Jesus is unchanging.

His love has not changed.

His love for us will never change, no matter what happens in our lives.

When God is for us, it makes all the difference.

We humans can easily become discouraged.

We can even feel as if God is against us.

We often suffer from feelings of rejection and condemnation.

But in Jesus all that changes.

Living in God's Love and forgiveness we discover God really is for us.

There was a teacher who made a great difference in the lives of her students.

It wasn't because she was the smartest teacher, although she was very intelligent.

It wasn't because she was the most fun and entertaining teacher,

        although she had a good sense of humor.

The reason she was so successful was because her students knew she was "for them".

She expected a lot from her students.

She could be hard on them when they didn't live up to their potential.

But she let them know all the time it was because she wanted the very best for them.

Because she was for them.

The students knew no matter how difficult the subject was, she was rooting for them,

          and she would stick with them, and keep teaching them,

          until they grasped the subject.

She wouldn't quit until they understood completely.

If God is for us, who can be against us?

No matter what or who comes against us, God is still for us.

He never abandons us, or leaves us on our own.

He never quits or gives up on us.

When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, they were new Christians.

However, some thought their lives were going to be a path of ease and luxury.

Very quickly they learned the opposite, due to the persecution of Christians by Rome.

Paul pointed out to them that we are all more than conquerors

        because Jesus loves us so much.

He has won the battle against sin and death.

His love for us will never fail.

He is always with us. And he is always for us.

And if God is for us, who can be against us?

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

No one can separate us from his love.

Persecution, or trouble, or hardships, or dangers, cannot change that.

Nothing and no one can separate us

        from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

No matter what, God is for us, and with us.

Since we have been justified through faith,

         we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God keeps no record of wrongs.

Jesus died for us. While we were still sinners he died for us.

And He was raised to life for us.

Nothing can ever separate us from God's love.

God is for us, and his love will never end.

Robert Ingersoll and Lew Wallace were friends.

They both scoffed at the Bible as being the inspired Word of God.

They both insisted it was only a human creation, full of mistakes and myths.

One day Wallace said to Ingersoll,

       “I'm going to study the Bible and write a book that will destroy it.”

Ingersoll agreed that would be a good idea.

But as he read the Bible, and studied the Bible, Wallace discovered Jesus.

He found Jesus as his Savior.

He discovered God's love, and forgiveness, and a peace he had never known before.

Instead of writing a book which would destroy the Bible,

         he wrote the book entitled Ben Hur,

        a book which has led many to faith in Christ.

Wallace learned the Bible was not a book which was difficult to read and understand.

It was not simply a human creation, full of mistakes and myths.

The Bible revealed God's love and plan for humanity.

Its central message is: GOD LOVES YOU!

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If we could simply remember every day God loves us,

          and God is for us, and no matter which way the wind blows,

          God loves and cares for us.

In a Gospel meeting a lost and hurting woman was looking for help.

The evangelist leading the meeting quoted many Bible verses

       and assured her of God's love and forgiveness.

He led her to simply take God at His Word,

       and to depend upon Christ for the remission of sin.

She went home rejoicing, and at peace.

But the next morning she came downstairs uneasy and anxious.

Her son, who had been with her in the meeting the night before,

         asked, "Mom, what is troubling you?"

His mother wiped tears from her eyes and said:

       "Last night I felt that I was saved. But now it seems like a dream.

        I don't feel God's love, and strength, and forgiveness, anymore."

He asked, " Why not? Has the Bible changed since last night?"

“No, of course not," She answered. "But I guess I have.”

"Well, maybe we should read the Bible some more," He said.

The mother saw the wisdom of her son.

She did read the Bible more. Often with her son.

Gradually she was able to believe God's Word without regard to her feelings.

Together she and her son, realized the Bible never changed.

God's love and forgiveness never changed.

Even our feelings, and doubts cannot separate us from God's love.

AMEN