

## **Alan W. Gumm**

**Text: Romans 8:35-39**

**Theme: Forever In God's Love**

**Parts:**

- I. In the midst of trials we sometimes wonder**
- II. Christ's love is best seen in the cross**
- III. His love is with us in all our trials**

**Preached: 8/20/17 Bethany, North Fort Myers, FL  
Christ the King, Port Charlotte, FL**

**The Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost**

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39**

A certain medieval monk announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on "The Love of God." As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk lighted a candle and carried it to the crucifix. It was one of those crucifixes that had an artist's rendition of Christ's body on the

cross on it. First of all, he illumined the crown of thorns, next, the two wounded hands, then the marks of the spear wound. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. There was nothing else to say.

My friends what Jesus did on the cross is pure love for you. In our text we are assured that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from God's love in Christ. Because of that love we are conquerors. Christ gives us strength to overcome all of our enemies.

God's love provides for all our needs. Out of His love God invites us to enter His everlasting covenant which He binds Himself to give freely all that we need spiritually. God will not allow anything in all creation to separate us from His love. Therefore we can find eternal security in knowing that we are.

## **THEME: FOREVER IN GOD'S LOVE**

- I. IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS WE SOMETIMES WONDER**
- II. CHRIST'S LOVE IS BEST SEEN IN THE CROSS**
- III. HIS LOVE IS WITH US IN ALL TRIALS**

If God is for us, who can be against us? God is for us all the way in Jesus Christ, who died, rose, ascended, and intercedes for us. No one can accuse us before God, who has chosen us to be His own and made us His own through faith in Jesus Christ. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* What Paul is asking is "Will anything ever make Christ stop loving us? In times of trouble you may have asked that question. "Where's God when I need Him?" "God must have stopped loving me because of all the bad things that are happening in my life."

Paul is writing about his own troubles as well as those of other Christians. Paul is listing the troubles and adversities that all Christians of all times experience, yet he affirms the impossibility of being cut off from Christ's love. The foundation of our confidence is the character and the constancy of Christ's love for each of us.

Paul mentions seven trials that we experience as we live our lives for our Savior, Jesus Christ. If you notice there is a progression of degree of difficulty

to be found in this listing. We can see each trial in our lives as we daily live our faith in Jesus in a wicked world.

1. Troubles: Everyone has them, even children. These are the aches and pains, the rubs and the irritations that cause stress. These troubles are not horrific, but nonetheless they cause our stress levels to rise. The car breaks down, the roof leaks, co-workers don't do what was expected of them, etc.
2. Hardship: This is an inward distress when the difficulties in life reduce us to such an extremity we don't know what to do. These are the serious illnesses and surgeries, the family problems, and financial burdens.
3. Persecution: This includes constant assaults upon our faith and trust in Jesus. It might be physical or it might be psychological. It might be a public upraising attacking the very teachings of Holy Scripture or it might be a co-worker, neighbor, relative or friend who constantly pokes fun at our trust and life in Jesus.
4. Famine: The unchristian attitude at our job might lead us to quit, thus eliminating our income, which could lead to hunger and the lack of food. Or a person loses a job and is no longer able to provide food and shelter for their family.
5. Nakedness: A lack of income would eliminate the ability to purchase clothes. I knew a woman and her son who owned maybe a couple pair of jeans, a couple of shirts/sweatshirts, underwear, socks and a pair of shoes. A lack of income led them to have very few clothes.
6. Danger: Physical dangers cause untold fears – assault, robbery, rape, etc.
7. Sword: In Paul's day this was the most lethal street weapon. We live today under the threat of everything from nuclear holocaust to terrorist attacks, and street thugs with loaded guns. Churches, schools, and most neighborhoods used to be safe and secure places, but not anymore.

When we suffer physical harm it outwardly seems as though Christ has separated Himself from us and has abandoned us. But ***As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be***

*slaughtered.*" Paul doesn't tell us that all those struggles and stress inducing events won't be part of our lives. He tells us that they will happen. Our situation is exactly like the one the psalmist wrote about in Psalm 44:22: We are like sheep being led to slaughter. Nor should that surprise us. Jesus told His disciples: ***"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*** The situation looks desperate, but will it separate us from our Savior-God? God does not remove all trials from our path. But we are able to overcome them because we find strength in Jesus and His power and love. Again, can anything separate us from the love of our Lord?

***No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*** We are the ones who will overcome and be the conquerors. In fact, Paul promises even more! Literally, he says that we will be "hyper-victorious" or "super-conquerors." That, however, is no credit to us, because it not will come about by anything we do. It will not be accomplished by our love and devotion for the Lord. Rather, it is entirely the other way around. We're conquerors through Him who loved us.

In every encounter with adversity, even when apparently overcome by death, we Christians are victorious. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. Christ's love for us is best seen in the cross. He loved us while we were still sinners. Listen to that again: He loved us while we were still sinners. He loved us even though we deserve eternal punishment in hell because of our sinfulness. This doesn't make sense yet that is exactly what we find in Romans 5:6-10: ***You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*** His love has won for us the greatest victories over sin, death, and the devil. His love has made us the beloved children of God. We are heirs of eternal life in heaven. Heaven is our home all because of Christ's love for us.

It remains true that Christ loves us with the same love He demonstrated on the cross. As risen, ascended, and interceding for us He continues to love us with the same love. His love is with us in our trials. And nothing can separate us from His love. By His love we are strengthened and comforted. By His love we are more than conquerors.

***For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Separation from the love of Christ is impossible. Again, St. Paul makes a list of things that will try to separate us from God's love but will fail.***

1. Neither death nor life: Death brings God's judgment and life brings the trials inflicted by human beings. The embrace, the hug of Christ's love is the same in both circumstances.
2. Neither angels nor demons: In the New Testament, angels are never referred to as evil spirits. Paul's thought seems to be the hypothetical possibility of an angel from heaven preaching a false gospel. Demons, of course, refer to Satan and his angels.
3. Neither the present nor the future: No dimension of time can affect Christ's love. As God is eternal and unchangeable so also is His love.
4. Nor any powers: A sign of the end times is that false prophets will perform such signs and miracles in the attempt to lead people away from Christ's love. Even such cannot separate us from Christ's love.
5. Neither height nor depth: No dimension of space has any effect upon Christ's love. He fills heaven and earth. All creation belongs to Him.
6. Nor anything else in all creation: No being or thing in the whole realm of creation can separate us from the love Jesus has for us.

***"The love of God that is in Christ Jesus."*** Paul expands the scope of Christ's love. It includes the love of the Father, the love which moved Him to send His Son. The love of Christ from which we cannot be separated is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the personification of God's love. Only in Christ Jesus can we know God's love.

Wherever we go and whatever our circumstances, God's love is there to protect us. Such is the love the triune God has lavished on us and continues to

lavish on us. He chose us from eternity. Now in time He calls us to faith in Jesus. He will keep us in that saving faith until we reach eternal glory.

Don't be afraid. Don't worry. Don't stress out. Nothing in this world is more constant and certain than God's love for you in Christ Jesus. Nothing in all creation can separate you from God's love in Christ Jesus. Rejoice in that fact and rely upon it in every time of trial and need.

Amen.