



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

A Grace That Leads to Worship

February 2, 2020

Romans 8:31-34

Clint Pressley

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 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.

(Pastor prays)

Romans Chapter 8 has been described as the most joyful chapter in the Bible. It starts with the promise of no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and ends with the promise of no separation from the love of God for those who are in Christ Jesus. And in between those two promises is this anchoring truth in verse 28 that tells us that we can know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose. I hope you have been holding onto that passage and will keep holding onto it. Now, we've come to the close of this chapter, and as we look at the first part of the closing, Paul hurls five questions into space almost defiantly, as if to say there's no answer, and gives us a triumphant and dramatic hymn of praise.

And it starts off with the over-arching grand questions. What shall we say to these things? That God is working all things for good. That He loves and predestines, calls and justifies us in Jesus. How does that make you feel? What does that grace do to your heart and your desire to worship this good God? I think this whole passage celebrates real grace.

Real Grace Makes Us Joyfully Worship

Grace should lead us to worship and *more* grace should lead us to worship *more*. There are four questions here that give us four answers about God. Here's the first beautiful truth.

In Christ, God is *for* us

There it is right there in verse 31. If God is for us, who can be against us? Kent Hughes says that is one of the greatest encouraging truths that a Christian can ever get a hold of. God is for us. In fact, He says if you are in Christ, you can put your name where us is. God is for (my wife) “Connie.” Paul is saying that if God is for us, then it makes no difference who is against us. No enemy can prevail against a woman who is supported by God like that. Let’s push it further.

Verse 31 says that God the father is for us and verse 34 says that God the son is for us and back in verse 23 we saw that God the Spirit is for us. The power of our triune God coming to your aid, that right there is a formidable source of protection. The full sufficiency of divine power is actively engaged in your direction.

If God is for us, who can be against us? Well, it can feel like there is plenty coming up against us. My own sin is a powerful enemy. Death is an enemy; it is defeated but not destroyed. Satan is prowling around. That’s the world, the flesh and the devil. Honestly, sometimes it can feel like the whole universe is against us. But this passage says that God is for us! Since He foreknew and predestined and called and justified and glorified, all the powers of Hell can set themselves against us but they cannot prevail because God is for us. For anything to get to you, for any power to rob you of your salvation, it would have to be greater than God Himself and His golden chain of grace. He is the giver and sustainer of salvation, and when you are in Christ, God is for you. Be encouraged, write it down. In Christ, God is *for* us.

In Christ, God loves us

Let’s go to verse 32 and take the whole verse. Let’s read it and see the supreme act of love.

³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? This is the greater to lesser argument. Paul takes us directly to the cross and says to us, “Look! Do you see the Holy son of God being tortured on the cross for you? He did that to purchase you!” He has already given the most profound and costliest gift of them all, so, how can he fail to lavish every other gift on us?

Here’s the supreme act of love and the very heart of the Gospel message – that God so loved the world that He gave His precious gift, His perfect, holy son to take what we deserve. And He did that while we were still sinners. The cross is our guarantee that God does love us. Every time we take The Lord’s Supper and tangibly remember His sacrifice, we celebrate God’s love given to us in Jesus.

With that Gospel truth in place, Paul asks, If God loved you enough to do that, don't you know He is going to take care of you? You're going to be ok. The cross is God's promise of security. When you get anxious, depressed, lonely, convicted, hurt and worried, come to the cross, preach the Gospel to yourself and know that in Christ, God is for us and God loves us.

In Christ, God defends us

Go with me to verse 33 and listen as Paul now drops us into a courtroom setting. ³³ *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* Get the setting in your mind. It's the future and final judgment and Paul has taken us into this court of divine law, and he makes a very straightforward and simple argument and here it is: No prosecutor can actually succeed against us because God, who is our judge, has already justified us at the cross. The gavel has fallen, and the verdict is that, in Jesus, you are declared innocent. We can never be condemned because Jesus Christ, our advocate, has already died for our sins. But the fact remains that guilt and shame have a way of getting in. There are three primary accusers. Our conscience accuses us and reminds us of what we have done or thought or said and that feeling of guilt, if not taken to the cross, can be debilitating. The Devil – *diabolos* – is called “the accuser of the brethren” in Revelation 12. He remembers the sins we have forgotten. And we have human enemies, or people you may have sinned against, they can point a truthful finger at what you've done. But none of those hold up when we come to the cross. According to verse 33, none of that accusation can be sustained because, in Christ, God has chosen us and in Christ, God has justified us. So let the Devil throw all His fiery darts at you. They're like BB's bouncing off a battleship. He is pelting you with cotton balls because in Christ, God is for us. In Christ, God loves us. And in Christ, God defends us.

And finally – this may be the best one...

In Christ, God accepts us

Verse 34 is the longest verse in this passage, and it is packed with great doctrine and devotion. It shows great theology of Jesus and how the Gospel works. In verse 34, you have four realities about Christ that protect us and make it so God accepts us. Here is grace. Here is how you are accepted by God and here is why you should worship.

There are four truths that guarantee our acceptance. The first is that...

Christ's death is final and sufficient. The question is who can condemn us? And the answer is “no one” and here is why. Christ is the one who died. There is Jesus, our substitution, dying on

the cross in my place. His death is the accepted payment. He has met every one of the requirements and conditions for all who will believe. And because of the cross, you can be justified by faith. Christ Jesus is the one who died. Maybe you wonder, why did He die? He gave His life for the ungodly. Romans 5 says, while we were still His enemies, Christ gave His life so our sins would be forgiven. Ephesians 1:7 says, *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*, Jesus died and became a curse for us. Galatians 3:13 tells us, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—* Christ died to remove the wrath of God. In Romans 5:1 we see, *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. I want you to know Jesus as the one who died for you. Death, it's final and sufficient.

His Resurrection guarantees our acceptance. Verse 34 - *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—* The resurrection of Jesus is visible, historical evidence of our justification. The text says He was raised. God the father raised God the son demonstrating the Father's acceptance of His Son Jesus as the basis of our salvation. John Piper said, "The father was so once and for all satisfied with the atoning death of Jesus on the cross that He vindicated Christ's suffering and His accomplishment by raising Him from the dead. By His resurrection we are accepted. Paul goes on.

His position guarantees our acceptance. Verse 34, *—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us*. He is at the right hand of God! Let's look at 1 Peter 3:22. *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him*. He's not in a tomb – He is on a throne!

His intercession guarantees our acceptance. He is now and forever our go-between. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, And John tells us if anyone does sin we have an advocate with the father – Jesus Christ, the righteous.

That's real grace and real grace makes you want to worship. In Christ, God is for us. God loves us. God defends us. God accepts us. Come to Jesus and receive the grace that leads to joyful worship. God is for you, loves you, defends you and accepts you.

(Pastor prays)