

If He Gave His Best, He'll Give the Rest **Romans 8:31-32**

May 12, 2019
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If someone asked you, what is your favorite verse in the Bible, which verse would you pick? Today I have the privilege of speaking from what may be my favorite verse in the Bible. It's certainly a top five for me. I hope when I'm done, it is for you as well.

We have been on a journey through the book of Romans. Highlights include:

- Romans 1:16 – The gospel is the power of God unto salvation
- Romans 1:18 – The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against sinners who worship created things rather than the Creator
- Romans 3:21 – Now a righteousness apart from the law has been revealed
- Romans 5:1 – Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God
- Romans 8:1 – There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

With many, many other vistas like these. But what is the highest vista? The summit of all Romans? There's no doubt that the Mt. Everest of Romans is Romans 8 and the true peak is Romans 8:31-39. Allow me to read the whole thing.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:31–39, ESV)

All God's people said, *amen!*

Our attention is on verses 31-32 today. It flows out of the massive assurance of God's eternal love to us starting in eternity past in predestination and eternity future in glorification. All of it in the past tense signaling that to God, our entire salvation is a done deal.

Both these verses are questions. Both are rhetorical, meaning the answer is assumed to be obvious. *"What then shall we say to these things?"* (v. 31) That's apostle-speak for, so what does all this mean for us? What's the bottom line of bottom lines?

Then we get the famous statement, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

If God is For Us, Who Can be Against Us?

OK, class, what is the assumed answer? *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Answer? No one. *If* God is for us. "If" is not insinuating uncertainty. Verse 32 addresses that. *If* here is like *since* or *because* God is for us. The only question is, am I a Romans 1-8 Christian? Am I justified by the faith in Jesus? Am I an object of the grace and mercy of God and not the wrath and judgment of God? Romans 1-8 has explained all humanity as being one or the other. For the "if" here to be "because God is for you," you have to be a genuine Christian. Which is it for you?

Does this verse mean that if God is for us then nobody is contending with us, persecuting us, or harming us? Certainly not. In some ways to be a Christian is to have more significant opposition. To be a Christian is to contend against my old sinful nature. Satan is no longer our master, now he is our enemy. The whole superstructure of the world's values are set against the Christian in a way not true prior to our salvation. Becoming a Christian doesn't make all your problems or enemies go away; in many ways it creates more problems and enemies. So, this is not saying that the Christian life is free from opposition or that nobody stands against us. What is it saying?

It is saying that if our relationship with God is one where God is exerting his divine power unto salvation in our lives, who or what can possibly win against us? If God is for us, who can beat us? If God is for us, who can defeat us?

The silent answer to the rhetorical question is, no one. Why?

Christianity is not getting God on my side, but me by his grace and mercy getting on his side. To be on God's side is to have God "for us." We are in the favor of God. We are under the promises of God. It's not that our enemies can't stand against us. They can, and on our own we wilt before them. But you add God to the equation and now we can't lose. There's no way we can ultimately lose.

I tried to think of a good sports analogy. None do this justice, but the Pepsi commercials with Uncle Drew may help. Have you seen these? They were supposedly secretly filmed. Uncle Drew is this old guy who goes to the urban park where a bunch of young guys are playing basketball. He's old. He's hunched over. But they let him play. Very soon Uncle Drew is dominating. Old Uncle Drew is hitting threes. He's blocking shots. He's doing reverse dunks. Everyone is astonished to see a grey haired overweight old man doing what he's doing. If you've seen them, you know Uncle Drew is actually NBA All-Star Kyrie Irving. He's dominating. His team can't lose. To help the analogy, imagine Uncle Drew is not at a serious urban basketball court but at recess at a local elementary school. But even that doesn't get it. It's actually a preschool. An all-girls' preschool. Preschool chess team recess. How does Uncle Drew's team fare? Those on his team can't lose.

We are the preschool girls' chess team playing with Uncle Drew on our team. How do we do? We never ultimately lose. We might think our victory is because we are awesome, but what's the truth? If Uncle Drew is for us, who at recess can stand against us?

Our victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil are no indicators of our awesomeness. We win because God is for us. We win eternally because God is eternally for us.

Christian, God is for you. More for you than your Mom is for you. Let that sit on your soul this morning. Almighty God is for me. [Your salvation is secure. All things work together for good for those who love Him. Greater is he that is in me than He that is in the world.]

In terms of Romans, it's an astonishing place to find ourselves in chapter 8 when we began in chapter 1 not with God neutral toward us but with God angrily against us. Oh, the terror to stand someday before Almighty God and to feel in our souls what Jesus felt on the cross—judgment, wrath. Almighty God set against us. God is not only against the sinner someday, but he stands against the sinner today. The sinner experiences his common grace, but that is no indication of divine favor. Romans tells us God is merely storing up his wrath, piling it up and waiting for justice against every sinner NOT under his grace.

If God is against you, who can be for you? Someday it won't matter who you were, who your friends were, what you accomplished, how rich you were, how in shape or beautiful you were, how educated you were, how powerful you were. If God is against you, who can be for you? Or as Jesus said, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

This verse cuts both ways, which side are you on? If God is for me then, *"No power of hell, no scheme of man/Could ever pluck me from his hand/Til he returns or calls me home/Here, in the power of Christ, I stand."*¹

Isn't that verse fantastic? Perhaps the next Romans verse is even better,

"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?" (Romans 8:32)

The verse begins with a statement of fact upon which an argument is made from the greater to the lesser. If this greater thing is true than this lesser must be as well. What is the greater truth? *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all."* This is trinitarian salvation narrative. It resembles many, many others in the Bible that tell how God saved us from our sins. See the trinitarian relationships here. It could say, *God did not spare God*, but it goes deeper into the trinitarian relationships and roles.

"He who did not spare his own Son." The "he" here is God the Father. *"Did not spare his own Son."* "Son" here is the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. His human name is Jesus. God the Father did not spare God the Son.

Spare? What would it have looked like if God the Father HAD spared God the Son? Adam and Eve sin. All their descendants sin. Every single human being upon physical death would be rightly judged and immediately sent to eternal hell. God would have been completely just in doing that and Jesus would not have gone through the humiliation of the incarnation nor the sufferings of the cross. ***Sparing Jesus would have meant God the Father didn't spare us.*** In order to spare us hell, he had to NOT spare his Son Jesus.

This is the amazing love of God the Father and God the Son. They purposed to spare us by NOT sparing Jesus. It was either one or the other. Remember what Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his cross, *"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass*

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from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39) Was there any other way? Could this cup pass from Jesus? Yes, but it would mean sparing Jesus and damning us.

This is substitutionary atonement. *"But gave him up for us all."* (Romans 8:32) "Us all" here is clearly not every human but all those who fit into verse 30, *"Those whom he justified he also glorified."* This is the "those who love God" from verse 28. This is not universal salvation, but salvation for those who believe.

Christian, see the mercy of God from this amazing perspective. God sacrificed his Son for us. What parent, what mother could do such a thing? Doesn't it seem especially strange on Mother's Day? Yet many have sacrificed as sons and daughters go off to war or they give them up to God's ministry or other ways. We honor the sacrifices of moms and dads. Can you see the reflection in what God did for us? He didn't spare Jesus, he spared us.

You might think, well then that means we were worth more to God than Jesus. God gave up the less valuable (Jesus' life) to get the more valuable (our eternal life). That's not just wrong, it's blasphemy and it strips this verse of any meaning at all. This verse doesn't celebrate how valuable we are to God, it celebrates that Jesus is the most worthy, infinitely valuable treasure in the whole universe. To whom is Christ infinitely valuable? God. God the Father. God the Father cherishes the Son above all things.

Is the issue whether we realize the worth of Christ? Is Christ a treasure to you? If so, then we realize just what God gave up for us. Far beyond the wealth of this world, far beyond all the jewels and gold of the whole universe or a billion universes. God gave the single most valuable thing or person there is. Who did he give him to? Sin. Satan. Judas. Caiaphas. Pilate. Herod. Pharisees. He didn't spare him any of these atrocities or enemies. He gave him up completely, fully, unto death itself.

Hear this, God gave Jesus to us. God gives his righteousness to us. God will give his inheritance to us. God gives his eternal life to us.

If you don't think Jesus is that great a gift, then the rest of this verse will have no assurance or blessing to you at all. But if we begin to understand the treasure of Jesus given to us by God the Father, now the rest of the verse holds its sacred power for us.

"How will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32) This is a rhetorical question built on solid logic. If God gave us Christ, who is the most valuable gift anyone could ever receive, why would we doubt that along with Jesus God will give us everything else needed too?

It says, "all things." By this we shouldn't somehow think God is going to give us everything we could ever naturally or sinfully want or desire. That's Santa Claus. Get that out of your mind.

What "all things" is God promising? *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."* (2 Peter 1:3)

Here's what we can know, God will give us everything we need for his will and purpose to be accomplished in us. Everything that is needed for those whom he justified to be ultimately glorified. If God is for us and resourcing us with all things needed, who can be against us?

"If God gave his best, the Lord Jesus, he will give the least, everything else his children need. If he gave the best, he will give the rest."² (S. Lewis Johnson) This is where today's sermon title came from. That is the point. *If he gave his best, he'll give the rest.* If he gave us Christ, how can we doubt he'll give us everything else we need too?

How Christians Live on Romans 8:32

There is a way to live on Romans 8:32 and a way to make a mess of it. Honestly, ask yourself this question, which half of Romans 8:32 gets me most excited? Am I more excited about God giving me Christ or God giving me all things? Which is more thrilling to me? Many people engage with Christianity as a means to some other thing they really want. When they get a tough medical diagnosis, they start to pray. When they have a financial hardship, they start going to church. When they need God's help, they give money to the church. People get spiritual when they need something from God. Of course, what happens to the church going, praying, and giving once the crisis passes?

Their Christianity is not actually Christianity. It's just man trying to manipulate God, which is the core of all false religions. God is a means to an end instead of being the glorious end Himself.

Real Christianity starts with Christ. Real Christianity begins with Jesus as the greatest gift God could ever give. It is a kind of faith that believes in Jesus even if nothing else comes with him. What do we think of a person who marries for money, or power, or fame? We think, that's not love. That's just self-love.

Romans 8:32 offers reassurance for those who treasure Christ more than anything else. Those who look to Christ for his sake and glory. Love Christ for his amazing love. *If becoming a Christian meant all you got was Jesus, would you still choose to be a Christian?*

If the answer is yes, then Romans 8:32 is a promise to live by. Where do we struggle in life? On the "*all things*" side. Will my needs be met? Will I make it through this trial? This hard marriage? This health issue? Will God be good to me or to my loved ones? What about my children and grandchildren? What about my future? How about this: on my deathbed, should I be conscious, what do I think about that second after I die? How can I know?

Over and over Scripture points to the cross. See Jesus there. See him in all his divine glory and worth. See him as God's gift of infinite worth to you. If he gave you his best, he will give you the rest. And the greater my estimation of Jesus as a gift to me, the more confidence I have for all the other things needed in this life and the next. If God is for me, who can stand against me? If God gave me his best, will he not give me the rest?

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² S. Lewis Johnson, *Discovering Romans: Spiritual Revival for the Soul*, p. 145.