

Session 2

December 11, 2022

SECURITY IN PLACE OF FEAR

Romans 8:28-39

The Bible says, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).

Fear and doubt too often paralyze us in regard to our actions, because they plague us in regard to our thoughts. Once we are crippled by fear in both mind and body, the devil has us right where he wants us: anxious, worried, incapacitated, and ultimately useless for God’s kingdom work. This week’s lesson talks about replacing those fears and doubts with the rock-solid conviction that we belong to God. Paul makes his argument with three points.

Our security is decreed (vv. 28-30). Unfortunately, so many churches are caught up in the Calvinism vs. Arminianism debate (does “foreknow” mean to *know* in advance or to *determine* in advance?) that they miss the greater truths of this passage. God’s sovereignty and His predestination are both good and necessary. Our security is founded both on His perfect and determinate plan and His absolute ability to carry it out. We may not understand it all, but we can be certain that those who belong to Him (1) *will be* conformed to the image of His Son; (2) *will be* called, (3) *will be* justified, and (4) *will be* glorified. That’s not our plan...it’s God’s plan! So, whether we choose God or God chooses us (or both!), He *will* do it. Since He decreed it, we can count on it. For reflection: *Have you ever noticed that when it comes to predestination, people tend to dwell on how God saves rather than rejoice that God saves?*

Our security is unquestioned (vv. 31-3). “What then are we to say about these things?” As Paul’s great theological treatise, Romans is loaded with grand themes regarding our salvation. Whether or not verse 31 refers to the previous verses, the entire chapter, or even the entire letter thus far, it concludes one of the grandest (and most important) arguments made in all of Scripture. The series of questions and answers that follows silences the skeptic while giving security to the saved:

Q: If God is for us, who can be against us? A:
God provided His Son. He will stand up for us.

Q: Who can accuse God’s elect?
A: God justifies His elect. God will answer on our behalf.

Q: Who would condemn?
A: Jesus was already condemned. He died in our place, was raised again, and continues to intercede.

Q: Who can separate us from the love of Christ?
A: Nobody...and nothing. Christ has made us even more than conquerors over all the forces working against us.

For reflection: *Working through the questions and answers above, how does such an argument silence the skeptics? How does it secure the saved?*

Our security is complete (vv. 38-39). The grand argument of the previous verses is capped off by the grand conclusion to the matter. Paul's series of questions and answers is summarized by a series of affirmative statements. The finale the apostle offers is both poetic and comprehensive, meant to touch on every possible category of threat to man's security in Christ. There are temporal threats like *life and death*, and *things present or future*. He mentions supernatural threats, like *angels, principalities*, and *evil forces*. He mentions spatial threats, the *heights* and *depths* of human existence. And he summarizes with *any other created thing*. Notice the final two emphases Paul makes. First, none of the aforementioned threats, even if wanting to (which of course is insinuated) has the *power needed* to break God's grip on those who are His (see John 10: 28-29). Second, he emphasizes the foundation of our salvation to begin with, which is the unsurpassed love of God demonstrated to us in Christ. For reflection: *The end of verse 39 refers to "the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." In what ways does God demonstrate His love through Christ, to us?*