

GOD OUR PROTECTOR AND PROVIDER

Romans 8:31-32

Musically speaking, we could say that the eighth chapter of Romans begins with the great hymn, "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine." It continues on to "Amazing Grace" and "Holy Spirit, Breathe on Me." Then it moves on to the great hymn, "It is well with my Soul." Finally, it climaxes with "The Hallelujah Chorus" or the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Today we are in the section of the "Hallelujah Chorus" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Listen to the great words of the text in Romans 8:31-32. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

In these two verses, Paul is asserting three tremendous things which I want us to consider.

I. Paul is laying down a glorious foundation. He is saying in no uncertain language that God is for, not against, all His children. No matter who you are today, if you are a child of God, He has placed himself and all that He has on your side. Paul says, "If God be for us, who can be against us." There is no thought of uncertainty in Paul's mind. The force of his statement is really, "Since God, or because God is for us - because He has placed himself on our side in the person of Jesus Christ - who would dare be against us?" Paul does not mean that there will not be enemies who will oppose us, but he is showing how ridiculous and how futile it would be for any enemy to raise his head against the child of God even in this life. He ransacks heaven and the things beneath heaven and the things under the earth, things in time and eternity, and ^{even} in outer space ~~and~~ in verses 35-39 and says, "There are absolutely no hostile forces that can ultimately harm or destroy the child of God."

The Psalmist said it very well in Psalm 118:6, "The Lord is on my side. I will not fear. What can man do unto me?" We read in II Kings 6 that the army of Syria came down to Dothan to apprehend the prophet, Elisha. The servant of the prophet was terrified. He turned to Elisha and said, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" Elisha said, "Fear not. Those who are with us are more than those who are against us." After the prophet had prayed, the servant opened his eyes and saw in the mountain many horses and many chariots of fire round about Elisha. "Those who are for us are more than those who are against us." One, plus God, always assures a majority in every case. We read in II Chronicles 32 that King Sennacharib of Assyria was besieging Jerusalem. Hezekiah was King. He encouraged his officers with the words, "Fear not. Be not dismayed. There is one with us greater than those who are with them. With them they have the arm of the flesh, but with us we have the Lord our God who will fight our battle." There are many hostile forces trying to destroy the Christian and trying to cast him down, but the only time this could ever occur in your life is when you fail to believe the Gospel. If you are claiming your rights stated in Romans 8, you know assuredly that there is no hostile force - neither the devil, nor the unbelieving world, nor indwelling sin, nor wicked men - ^{that can} ~~they cannot~~ prevail because God will handle them and has already handled them in His great plan.

II. How can we be absolutely sure without a shadow of a doubt that God is with us, that God is on our side, that God is fighting the battle of the believer? The proof goes back 2,000 years ago - something which God did. It goes back to the Old Rugged Cross! It goes back to the sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary. That is the proof - that God is for His people and He wants to be for the lost man. The cross is the proof. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the supreme, indisputable proof that God is for His people to the highest and everlasting degree. Paul says in verse 32, "He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" There is really not a question in the mind of Paul. Paul is saying that if God would give the greater gift, the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ for us, certainly He would not fail

to supply our basic needs in life. He will not fail to answer our prayers, He will not fail to comfort us in the hour of trial and temptation, He will not fail in life nor in death because when He gave His Son He gave the greatest that He had. He certainly will not hold back the lesser. If you study the text closely you have one of scripture's greatest pictures of the sacrifice of Christ:

(1) Paul says in verse 32 that God withheld not His Son. Could God have withheld His Son? He certainly could have. God was not forced to do it. It was not our goodness which caused Him to do it but it was because of His great love which cannot be described, that He withheld not His Son. These words bring to mind the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. Scripture says that the Lord commanded Abraham to offer his son, his only son whom he loved, as a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. In obedience to the command of God, Abraham offered Isaac and except for the divine intervention of God, Isaac would have been slain. But after he had offered him, God turned to Abraham and said, "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, the son whom thou didst love. Because thou hast not withheld him I will bless you and I will bless all the nations through you" (Genesis 22).

This word "withheld" which occurs in Genesis 22:16 is exactly the same word found in Romans 8:32 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament - that is, the Septuagint. Just as Abraham did not withhold his son, Isaac, so God did not spare His only begotten Son, the second Person of the Trinity. He could have spared Him as Abraham could have spared Isaac, but He would not have wrought redemption. There is a difference though. The Son of God was really not spared. Isaac was spared and a substitute was offered, but there was no substitute for the Son of God. There could be no substitute. Only Jesus Christ could be the atonement for our sins. There was but one way and God gave that way in the person of His Son. Paul says that this should convince anyone that God is for us eternally and forever, in life, in death, in time, in eternity. He is with us because He withheld not His only Son.

(2) On the positive side he says, "He delivered Him up for us all." Who delivered Jesus Christ ~~up~~ to die? It was not Pilate, for fear; it was not the Jews, for envy; it was not Judas, for money. The Scriptures plainly say over and over again that it was God the Father who delivered up His only begotten Son. This was all in the hands of God. ~~the~~ Peter said on the day of Pentecost that all of it had been done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In the eternal counsels of God, God offered up His only begotten Son. Isaiah 53:10 is an amazing verse of Scripture. It says, "It pleased the Lord, it pleased the Father to bruise Him." This does not mean that God took pleasure in the suffering of Jesus, but it does mean that He chose the shameful death of the cross because it was the only way that you and I can be saved. There is no other way. He withheld Him not, but He delivered Him.

(3) Not only does Scripture say that God delivered Him, but it also says that Jesus Christ delivered ~~himself~~ ^{He} - or He did it willingly. Over and over the Scripture says that Jesus Christ gave himself gladly. Had He not done this, there would have been no salvation. Galatians 2:20 says, "He gave himself for us." Titus 2:14 says that "He gave himself for us." Mark 10:45 says, "Jesus Christ gave himself for us." Not only did the Father deliver Him, but Jesus Christ of His own will - without coercion - gave himself for us all.

To what did He deliver Him? He delivered Him to that which is unspeakable and indescribable. I have three sons. I do not love anyone enough to deliver any one of my three sons to what God delivered His Son, ~~to show us that He loved us and that He cared.~~ He delivered Him to death, but not mere death - the death of the cross. No Roman ever died on a cross. He delivered Him to mockery and scourging and spitting and nakedness before the public, ^{the latter being} ~~which I have always declared to be~~ the worst thing of all. I would rather anything would happen to me than to be stripped off naked before the public. He delivered Him to the full wrath of God. Jesus took your hell and He took my hell on the cross. He

delivered Him to Satan. Jesus knew this, for in the garden of Gethsemane, according to Luke 22:53 He says, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (speaking to those who had come to take Him). God delivered His Son to the powers of hell, to the powers of the devil, to the powers of destruction and darkness for you and me. People hear the message and then say, "I do not believe that God, a loving God, is really going to send me to hell if I do not believe in this message." If there would be any fairness in the universe it would be at this point. If God withheld not His only Son and if God offered Him to the cross, if He offered Him to the wrath of God and even to Satan and powers of hell and we refuse that offer, do we deserve any mercy? Do you deserve any mercy today if you refuse the great offer of Christ on the cross?

I read that King *Zalencus* of ancient Greece had the problem of immorality in his kingdom, and he made a rule that the next guilty person would have both his eyes put out. The next person who was guilty was his own son. He was faced with a real problem. As a father he loved his son and as king he had to uphold the law of the land. What would he do? He came upon this solution: He put out one of the eyes of his son and then he put out one of his own eyes. In so doing he said, "I establish both my love and my justice." That looks like a great act of sacrifice, but if he had come anywhere near approaching the sacrifice on the cross, he would have had both of his eyes plucked out and allowed his son to go scott-free. Scripture says you and I are the ones who should have our eyes plucked out. We deserve no justice and no mercy with God because all have sinned and all have come short of the glory of God. Paul says that this is the proff that God cares - the cross. This is the proof that He loves His people and will not withhold from them any blessing that they need. The cross also says in an even greater way that God cares about the lost man, the lonely man, the man who has lost his way in life. God cares and man often cannot see that. Coming from the marvelous proof of that statement Paul draws the conclusion that I have already anticipated in things I have mentioned. Paul says, "If God would offer His son, surely He will not withhold anything that His people need from Him. If He would give the greater, unspeakable, indescribable gift of the Son, certainly He will give us the lesser gifts that we need."

How can we say we are Christians and yet not believe that God will answer our prayers? How can we feel we are in such a bad condition in our home or in our business or in any situation that God cannot really solve the problem? He can! There may be family problems worrying you. I am saying that Christ who died for you will solve that problem in your home if you will let Him. There is nothing beyond God. God is with His people and He is with them to solve the "impossible situations" of life and to provide a way out and a way through.

Paul says in Philippians 4:19, "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory through Jesus." In II Corinthians 9:8 he says, "But He is able to make all grace abound toward you that you have an all-sufficiency and all things shall abound unto every good work." In II Corinthians 8:9 he says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich," meaning rich in the things that count, the things that are eternal. The most sublime statement of all of God's great provision is in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." You cannot conceive what God can do for you as a Christian or you as a lost man. It cannot be expressed. It is beyond human comprehension.

I read that the emperor, Maximilian, had inscribed on his dining table the words of Romans 8:31, "If God be for us who can be against us?" He had those words put there to remind him of the spiritual resources in the Lord. But there is something that reminds us far more of the spiritual resources of the Lord. That is the cross, the sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross, the unspeakable love that God has for the lost man, the lonely man, the man without hope, as well as His unspeakable love for His family in His grace and goodness.

I read that Tigranese, the King of Armenia, was defeated by the Roman army. The defeated king and his wife and children were brought before the Roman General for sentence of death. Tigranese fell down before the Roman General and said, "Do anything

you want to with me but spare my wife and my children." The pagan General was so moved he released the whole family. As they were going home, Tigranese turned to his wife and said, "What did you think of the Roman General, how did you think he looked?" She said, "I never saw him." Tigranese said, "How did you keep from seeing him, you were in his presence." She replied, "I never saw him because I had eyes only for the man who was willing to die for me."

I say to you, have eyes only for Him who died for you. If you are a Christian, look at that cross. Lift up your head and overcome that problem in your home, on your job, in your heart and life. He has given all to you that you might live abundantly and not be defeated.

To the person without Christ I say, take a long look at the cross where the Savior died. He died for you! He wants to save you from your sin if you will repent, and believe and confess.