

# God is for us sermon

## April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31***

We're in the third installment of the preaching series, "God is..." and this morning we're going to be exploring the amazing truth that "*God is for us*" or more personally "*God is for YOU*".

Paul states this truth in one of the most power packed chapters in all of Scripture – Romans 8.

But how do you know that God is for YOU?

- I'm sure that if we took a poll, just within this room today, some of you, while looking at your life, could easily arrive at the conclusion that **God is certainly with you** because your life has the signs of God's many blessings all over it. Your life, so far, has pretty much gone the way you'd hoped it would.
- Others of you would **struggle to arrive at the conclusion that God is with you** because your life has not at all gone the way you'd hoped it would. Growing up you had a dream how it would go, and the way it's turned out is not in the least bit look anything like that dream.
- And in between those two extremes are the rest of us, who upon reflecting on their lives would fluctuate between **God is sometimes for them and other times He's against them**. There are some days or weeks that things seem to be going according to a good plan and God seems to be blessing you. But then there's other weeks that would seem to indicate that God is not for you and in fact He may be against you or maybe even there's very little evidence, from your life, that God even exists.

That introduction should have covered pretty much everyone in the room this morning.

So, let me back up and ask a very important question in our consideration of "*If God is for You.*" **Is how your life has turned out a good determination of whether God is for you or not?**

As you're considering that let me draw a parallel analogy.

For just a moment let me take you back to your teenage years. Let's assume, for the sake of example, that you weren't a perfectly behaved teenager.

- Let's say you lied to your parents, you snuck out of the house while they were sleeping, stole the family car, went to a party and got drunk and on the way home you got in an accident and ended up in jail. It's safe to say that your evening didn't turn out exactly as you had hoped for – based on that result would you be able to claim that your parents weren't for you?
- Or let's say you got sick while a teenager or your broke your leg, (let's say jumping off a cliff), or you failed several tests because you didn't take the time to study – is that a reflection that your parents weren't for you?

I would say that most of would agree that the way my life turned out, based on my choices, can't be a reflection of whether my parents were for you or against you. But then we ask what about things that weren't under my control? What if someone ran a red light and totaled my car and I've struggled with injuries from that ever since or my spouse chose to divorce me or I contracted an illness that continues to affect my functioning in life are those things a reflection of whether your parents are for you or against you? Of course not – those things were beyond even the best parents control.

And yet when we turn toward God we often have these expectations that if we give our lives to following God and do that faithfully, then God is supposed to be "for Me" and that should clearly show up in the successes I have in life. If that's your expectation then let me recommend that you take the time to listen to my sermon on **Letting Go of Entitlement** that I preached this past February 25<sup>th</sup>.

If you listen to that you'll discover that many of the things we often believe we're entitled to as followers of Jesus Christ simply are not true. In fact Jesus promised that in this life we will have problems, but then He said, "*Take heart, for I have overcome the world.*"

So, let's go back to our text and my original question – **Is God for You or not?** **Let me point out that what initially appears as a question isn't really one at all.** Paul isn't questioning whether God is for us, He's assuming that God is for each and every one of us. His real question is: **"If God is for us (which He is) then who can be against us?"** Or, in other words – does it really matter who comes against us when God is on our side? That was little shepherd boy David's attitude when He came up against Goliath. And you also see that same perspective in **Psalm 56:9-11** In the beginning of this psalm, David is calling out for God's mercy because His enemies are conspiring against him in order to kill him. The heading of the psalm reveals that not only is he running from the murderous king Saul and his army but now he's also being threatened by the Philistines. As the anointed king, it would have been easy to conclude that God is certainly not with me. But David consistently doesn't arrive at that conclusion. He knows that God is with Him and that makes a huge difference in the way he lives his life, even while on the run. In the midst of the running he calls out to God and is confident that God will deliver him once again.

**Psalms 56:9-11 (NIV)** *Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?*

So, David is a great example that looking at the present condition of your life, on any given day, is not a reliable criterion by which to determine if God is for us or against us. David knows that God is for him because of displays of His goodness in the past and His ongoing relationship with God, His Heavenly Father and Good Shepherd.

When we turn back to our original text in Romans 8 we should note that this verse begins with:  
*What, then, shall we say in response to these things?*

I take "these things" to refer to what Paul has said previously to this. And if we quickly peruse through the first 31 verses we'll discover plenty truths that prove that God is for us. I want to quickly suggest 10 solid reasons for believing God is for you.

**1. As followers of Christ we no longer live under God's condemnation (vs. 1)** Which is great news after Paul's personal struggles with sin expressed at the close of chapter 7.

**2. We've been given the empowering presence of God living within us. (vs. 9)**

- a. The Holy Spirit will convict us of our sins when we need to be
- b. The Holy Spirit will share with us God's plans for our lives
- c. The Holy Spirit will comfort us and bring us peace when we're troubled
- d. The Holy Spirit will provide a foretaste of heaven
- e. The Holy Spirit will continually exalt Jesus
- f. The Holy Spirit empower and equips us to live a God glorifying life

**3. We've been adopted into God's family and the Spirit confirms that to us (vs. 14-16)** This is important to remember when Satan attacks you and tries to sow seeds of doubt in your mind on whether God will still love you after what you've done or are doing.

**4. The Holy Spirit communicates our deepest thoughts and feelings to the Father (vs. 26)**

**5. We are co-heirs, with Christ, of our inheritance as children of God (vs. 17)**

Now, the interesting part of this is that in order for heirs to receive their inheritance, the Father needs to pass away. However, God is eternal, which implies He will never die. This process of receiving our inheritance began when the Father's one and only son died. And the fullest extent of our inheritance will be given out when we die, or Christ physically returns to take us to live with Him. But in between now and then, God has already begun giving us pieces of our inheritance. For instance, the Holy Spirit is described elsewhere as a down payment of our future fuller inheritance. That means that we get to experience a preview of what it will be like to live in God's physical presence as we currently live with

the resident presence of His Spirit living inside of us. Also the Holy Spirit grants us peace, in the midst of our troubles – and in heaven we will live in constant perfect peace.

## **6. God is working in every situation for our greatest good – which is conformity into the image of Jesus (vs. 28-29)**

So, in light of all of this is what prompts Paul to write our original statement:

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31***  
Oh, and I intentionally skipped over one very important section in all of this and that's **verse 18** where Paul declares: *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18 (NIV))*

I intentionally skipped over that because I wanted to show you that Paul isn't basing his conclusion that God is for us on how his life is going right now or in the recent past. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul details the challenges he's had in his life. In case you think your life is tough and God isn't for you, get a fresh dose of reality and read what he went through and it will likely give you a fresh perspective on your troubles and whether God's for you. Paul went through all of that and yet saw God's hand all around him and before him at the close of his life and he's excited. In fact, at the conclusion of Paul's talk about all the troubles he's encountered in his life he talks about boasting in these challenges and in his weaknesses because when I am weak then God appears stronger because of what God can accomplish through our troubles and weaknesses. You see that premise takes us all the way back to the book of Job when Satan challenged God that the only reason Job was praising God was because God had blessed him so richly. And so God allowed Satan to take everything away to see if Job would still remain faithful to God. And while Job wasn't just praising and glorifying God in the midst of his devastation, he never turned his back on God and remained faithful to God. You see when you go through difficulties in your life and you continue to praise God for His faithfulness and goodness, your testimony for God shines so much brighter because people don't expect that. The world generally expects that when we encounter difficulties that we'll complain about them. But when we thank God for His goodness and faithfulness in the midst of them it gives you a format that you didn't have previous to that.

So, even with a life filled with hardships and beatings and imprisonments, Paul is overwhelmed at the core of His being with the goodness of God and he can't help but arrive at the conclusion that God is for him. And then notice what happens after this statement. Paul can't stop boasting about more ways that God has proven that He's so for him and so for you.

## **7. God gave up His own son for our sins – so why wouldn't He give us more gifts? (vs. 32-33)**

### **8. Christ is seated at God's right hand and is interceding for You!! (vs. 34)**

Why is Christ interceding for us? Because Satan, the great accuser likes to try to discount us to God. Did you see what Brian just did? How can you continue to love him and forgive him. And Jesus simply says, *"He's one of ours"* and the case is dismissed. About 2,000 years ago, Jesus died for every sin you'd ever commit, both before you accepted Jesus as well as after. He knew you'd blow it and He loved you enough to willingly give up His life on the cross for your sins.

## **9. Nothing can separate us from God's love for you (vs. 35-39)**

### **10. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (vs. 37)**

**Note:** not just conquerors but *more than conquerors* – a super conqueror. And not just *through Jesus* but *through Him who loved us* .

If you ever question whether God loves you and is for you, then pull out this list and remind yourself of these 10 ways that are convincing evidence that God loves you and is for you. Or reread over and over again Romans 8 until you have these truths imbedded deep within your heart and mind.



I want to close by standing and reading together Paul's concluding thoughts in this passage.

But before we do that I want to share with you some thoughts I found quite inspirational based on our text this morning from a preacher by the name of Andy Cook.

Your family may have turned their backs on you, your child may have disappointed you, your job may have disappeared into the thin air of layoffs and cutbacks ... **but the maker of the mountains is for you.** The One who laid the floor of the oceans is **for you.** The one who scattered the more than 100 billion stars over 100 billion galaxies, in what scientists say is a length of more than 30 million light years with a playful toss of his hand, **is for you!**

**God is for you.** Not was, not will be or might be, but is, right now. There is no waiting. There will be no probationary period. There is no small print to wade through. Right now, **God is for you.** His availability to you is not dependent on whether or not you've been good or bad, he's not some kind of Santa Claus deity checking his list twice, and frowning at what you did last week. **No, this God is for you, right now!**

**God is for you.** He's the one racing down the sideline, cheering your touchdown run. He's the one coming to the mound just before you pitch to the best player on the other team, and he's encouraging you, telling you that he knows you can do it ... and when he heads back to the dugout, you really believe you can, because **God is for you.** He knows your favorite food, your favorite way to spend an afternoon, and He wants to overwhelm you with good things. **He is for you!**

**God is for you.** He's got your photograph on His refrigerator. That's your birthday on His calendar. If God has a bumper sticker on some kind of heavenly car, you're the kid who's made the honor roll, you're the kid He's bragging on. From **Isaiah 49:16** comes this amazing statement: "*I have written your name on my hand!*" Your name, your details, your heart.

**God is for you!**

Let's close this sermon by standing and reading together Paul's final remarks to the fact that God is for YOU!!

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... 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, 39 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.*

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  - e. The Holy Spirit will continually exalt Jesus
  - f. The Holy Spirit will empower and equip us to live a God glorifying life.
3. We've been \_\_\_\_\_ into God's family and the Spirit confirms that to us (vs. 14-16)
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