



ROMANS 8:35-39

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* 36 *As it is written:*

*'For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'*

37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

38 *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.*

NOTES FOR LEADERS

- This is our last LifeGroup Resource for 2023. The next LifeGroup Resource will follow part 1 of our Engage Series in January 2024. Thank you for leading your group so faithfully this year!
- Upcoming Christmas dates to diarise:
 - Carols Service: 17 December at 6pm. Festive food court open from 5pm.
 - Christmas Services: 24 December at 6pm and 25 December at 8:30am (these two services will be identical).

START TALKING

- What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
- What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

- How What is one of your biggest takeaways from our Romans 8 series? (Below is a list of what we covered over the last 5 weeks).
 Week 1 (Romans 8:1-5) - What Christ achieved for me at the cross.
 Week 2 (Romans 8:6-11 - One obligation (life of the Spirit vs life of the flesh)
 Week 3 (Romans 8:14-17) - What it means to be a child of God
 Week 4 (Romans 8:28) - The fortress of Romans 8:28.
 Week 5 (Romans 8:35-39 - The inseparable Love of Christ
- Read Romans 8:35-39. Paul lists several things that the Roman Christians thought indicated they had been separated from Christ's love. What are some current day examples of things that can tempt us to

think we are no longer loved by Christ?

- Reflect on Dr Karl Barth's response, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so" (see notes below).
 (a) How does the simplicity of this truth contrast with the complexities we sometimes introduce into our understanding of God's love?
 (b) In what ways can we embrace and live out the profound simplicity of the statement "Jesus loves me"?

START SHARING

- Doubt shows up in different ways for different people.
 (a) If you have doubted God's love, when does it tend to show up?
 (b) What thoughts, emotions, or responses show up when this happens?
 (c) How do you remind yourself of God's love during these times?
- Read Romans 8:38-39. How have you seen this promise to be true in your life? Are there any areas in your life where you are feeling 'low' at the moment and need to be reminded of God's inseparable love?
- Share about a time in your life when you've felt the tangible presence of God's inseparable love. How can we actively remind ourselves of God's love during both ordinary and challenging moments in our lives?

START PRAYING

Spend some time giving thanks to God for what you are grateful for this year.

START DOING

The Love of God is an incredible gift - one we should naturally want to share with our friends, family and neighbours. With that in mind, who are you going to invite to our Carols service on the 17th of December?

This Sunday, in the final part of our Romans 8 series, Steve shared a powerful message on the inseparable love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39).

Over the last four weeks, we have covered:

- Week 1 (Romans 8:1-5) - What Christ achieved for me at the cross.
- Week 2 (Romans 8:6-11) - One Obligation (life of the Spirit vs life of the flesh)
- Week 3 (Romans 8:14-17) - What it means to be a child of God
- Week 4 (Romans 8:28) - The Fortress of 8:28.

One of the difficulties we have when arriving at Romans 8:35-39 is the way in which we use the English word 'love' to describe a variety of relationships e.g. I love ice cream; I love my dog; I love my children/parents; I love my spouse; God loves me

The Greek of Bible times had at least 4 different words for "love". But no matter how many different words for love you can find - it is so difficult to fully understand the immense LOVE of God towards us. In the same English word 'love', we also use to say, God loves me. That word love is spelled the same, but it has such different meanings. The Greek of the New Testament had a few more words to describe different kinds of love, but whatever language we use, all of it falls far short of trying to express this amazing concept that God loves us!

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:*

'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'

37 *No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him who loved us.*

38 *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.*
 Romans 8:35-39

This is the big crescendo of Romans 8 (which is such a big and important chapter of the Bible). Paul has been talking about all these things, and then he lands with this crescendo on the love of God.

He starts by asking this question: "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

1. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

35 *Who shall **separate** us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* Romans 8:35

The idea that Paul is working with here is the word 'separate'. To separate means to be taken apart from, to be torn away from, or to have a wedge driven between you and that other thing.

Paul is asking, what in the world could take us away from God's love? What in the world could be a wedge that comes between us and the love of God? Or, to put it another way, what is a force more powerful than God's love for us? He then lists seven things: trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword.

Then Paul answers his question with something we wouldn't expect; he answers it with this phrase, 'more than conquerors'.

2. More Than Conquerors

*No, in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him who loved us.* Romans 8:37

What "things" is Paul referring to? Everything we just read about (trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness,

danger, or sword). He says we are more than conquerors in all these things - in all the danger, the difficulty, the trouble that we will ever experience.

What does it mean to be "more than a conqueror"? The Roman Empire of the day lasted for more than 1000 years. Part of what made this empire so strong was that they would first conquer a nation, then they would add it to the empire and rebuild it - adding roads, water infrastructure, postal system - and then govern it. They would then also give some of those people an opportunity to become Roman citizens. The people who were enemies in Rome's past became the building blocks of Rome's future.

To conquer is to win great victories over an enemy. To be more than a conqueror is to make those enemies serve your own purposes. In Christ, we are more than conquerors. Not only has He won great victories, but He takes those things that are out to harm us and uses them for His own purposes. We are more than conquerors because He takes all things and uses them for the good of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28).

3. I am convinced ...

38 *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.*
 Romans 8:38,39

Paul is taking the most powerful forces in the universe and, one by one, naming them to show that nothing else is more powerful than the force of God's love for us.

- Neither death nor life
- Neither angels nor demons
- Neither the present nor the future
- Nor any powers
- Neither height nor depth
- Nor anything else in all creation ...

And he starts this final verse: "I am convinced ..." Are we convinced?

One of our great problems is being personally convinced of God's inseparable love. Sadly, for many of us, our understanding of God is so small that at the slightest hint of pain, difficulty, loss or hardship, we begin to question His love for us. That's how unconvinced we are of His love!

Our starting point should be: I am convinced that in spite of everything, I am more than a conqueror, and nothing can separate me from God's love. We may still experience pain and difficulty; we may not understand, but in spite of the mystery, we lean into the even bigger mystery: that God loves us more than we could ever know.

The Swiss theologian, Dr. Karl Barth was arguably the greatest theologian of his generation. While he was in the US, a student at one of the seminaries said, "Dr. Barth, what is the greatest truth that ever crossed your mind?" All the seminary students sat on the edge of their seats to hear some great, profound, deep, complicated answer. Dr. Barth slowly raised his great shaggy grey head, looked at the student, and said, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

We are loved more than we will ever know.

We are treasured more than we could ever understand. No matter what expression of earthly love we have or haven't experienced - there is a love that far outweighs them all: the inseparable love of Christ for us.

The Father loved us so much that He was willing to give His One & Only Son that if we believed in Him, we would not perish but gain eternal life.

Jesus Christ loved us so much that He was willing to go to the cross and take the punishment for our wrongdoings. He was willing to be separated momentarily from the love of God so that we never would.

Nothing in all of our lives so far has been able to stop God from loving us.