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[0 : 00] I would ask you to take your Bibles and turn with me to Romans chapter 8. When I talked to Pastor Wiseman on the phone, he might have sensed my trepidation.

He's been here a long time. You've probably heard it all. And so I wondered, what could I possibly say that they haven't heard before? And I decided, nothing.

Because it's all here, isn't it? It's all in the book. And if you've been doing your job, you have heard it before. But perhaps we can give just a little different perspective on it that might encourage you and challenge you.

And we're going to start in verse number 31 of Romans chapter 8. And let's just pray before we begin. Father, thank you that the Lord Jesus was willing to come and suffer and die for each and every one of us.

And that each of us has the opportunity to go free by faith in his wonderful finished work on the cross. And we thank you now for what happens because of that in our lives as believers.

[1 : 29] And I pray that we might understand it better as we study the word in Christ's name. Amen. How many of you have ever served on jury duty? I was going to ask how many of you have ever been in a courtroom, but I thought that could be taken, you know, more ways than one.

And you may not want to admit it. But if you study the scripture, you'll find that the courtrooms, even in America, are patterned pretty much after what we find in the word of God.

The whole idea of a judge, obviously, comes out of scripture. The idea of calling witnesses is a very biblical thing. The whole idea of a prosecutor.

The idea of an advocate. All of these things come right out of the Bible. And we're going to see in our text in Romans chapter 8 that the believer is on trial in heaven's court.

In verse number 31, the Apostle Paul begins asking a series of questions. And he says, What shall we say then to these things?

[2 : 49] Now, obviously, when you jump into the middle of the book of Romans, you've skipped a lot. And when he says, What shall we say to these things? We might ask, What things? And the answer, of course, is all of those things he has spoken of thus far in the book of Romans.

The fact that all of mankind is under sin. And that Christ has paid for that sin. In the first three chapters, Paul indicts the whole world.

He indicts the Jews. He indicts the Gentiles. He indicts the religious man. He indicts the upstanding moral man.

Who art thou that judges another? And he concludes that they are all under sin. Now, that, of course, is the bad news. The good news is that he shows that there is one who came to pay for that sin.

And that, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ. And Romans chapter 3 transitions over to talking about how the Lord Jesus Christ became the propitiation, or literally the satisfaction for the sins that are past.

[4 : 07] And to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. And then in Romans chapter 4 and 5, he develops this doctrine of justification, which literally means to be declared righteous.

And that's going to be very important in Paul's argument as we come to chapter 8 at the end of the chapter. And then in chapter 6, 7, and 8, he goes on to talk about, he moves from the subject of salvation to the subject of sanctification.

And in chapter 6, he shows that our sanctification is based on the fact that when you put your faith in Christ, you are now dead to sin. That is, sin no longer has a claim on you.

And by the way, that doesn't mean you're incapable of sinning. As I have noticed over the years, Christians are very, very capable of sinning. In fact, sometimes they're better at it than the world. But we are not under obligation to sin.

You see, the world has no choice. In the Old Testament, God said even the plowing of the wicked is sin. So you had no choice before you trusted in Christ. But after you trust in Christ, you now have a choice.

[5 : 20] And you are not under the slavery of sin anymore. That's very important to Paul's case that he's going to build. And then in chapter 7, he shows that you cannot be sanctified by trying to keep the law.

And that's really what Paul's demonstrating when he uses those words that sometimes confuse us. You know, that which I would, I do not, and that which I do not, I would. He's not talking about the normal Christian life there, folks.

And I hope you don't use that text as an excuse to be lax in your walk with the Lord. He's talking about a person who's trying to be sanctified by keeping the law.

And what he's saying is the harder you try, the less you will find yourself victorious in that attempt to be sanctified. And then in chapter 8, he moves on to the real source of sanctification.

And that is the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which has made you free from the law of sin and death. Just like the laws of aerodynamics free you from the laws of gravity.

[6 : 29] We went and visited the Air Force Museum. And we only got about halfway through. We didn't allot enough time. And the laws of aerodynamics teach us that when you have the right shape of a wing and you create a vacuum above it and you're going at the right speed and so forth, you can actually rise above the law of gravity.

And that's how it is with the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It's when we recognize who we are in Christ and what the Holy Spirit is doing in us, and we're allowing him to work through the members of our body, we can rise above that gravity sin effect that tends to pull us down.

Now, with all of that, that's what he's talking about in verse 31 when he says, what shall we say to these things? And the answer that he comes up with is another question. That's like the guy that says, why do you always answer my questions with questions?

And the other guy says, do I? Well, he's asking another question in verse 31. He says, if God be for us, who can be against us?

So I want to point out in the first place that the apostle is going to draw his first conclusion of the question, what shall we say to these things? And the first conclusion he draws is that for the believer, there is no effective opposition.

[7 : 56] Again, verse 31, if God be for us, who can be against us? Now, I think I told the folks in the first hour we're from the South, South Dakota.

Now, we've all heard stories about those Southern lawyers, right? And Southern judges. There's even songs about them. Try to visualize the scene.

The judge in this case is none other than God. Standing before the judge is you, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The prosecution, I don't know which direction they're on, but I haven't had to do that yet. But the prosecution is on one side. The defense is on the other.

And suddenly, the apostle Paul looks around the courtroom and asks the question, if God be for us, who can be against us?

[8 : 56] And of course, the answer is no one. But think about it. God is the judge and he's on our side.

How do you like that? The judge can look at us because of what Christ has done. And he can kind of wink at us and give us a thumbs up.

Because the judge, did you see it there in verse 31? If God be what? For us. Now, how would you like to stand in a courtroom like that where you know the judge is on your side?

That's the way to go. If you can swing that somehow. And that's how it is for the believer. And then to further emphasize that point, look at verse 32. 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?

You see, Paul's argument here is not to go from the lesser to the greater, but to go from the greater to the lesser. Think about it. What's the greatest thing that God ever did for us?

[10:08] Well, verse 32. He spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. And now he's saying, after God did all of that, you think he would turn around and not give you those lesser things that are promised along with salvation?

Those are nothing compared to what God gave us through the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the logic is, God's on our side. He's already proven that he's on our side.

By sending his own son to die and take our penalty, it's nothing for him to throw in a few more blessings on the side. What a wonderful statement of God's faithfulness towards us.

Now, that brings us to a second conclusion that Paul reaches in verse 33. And that is, for the believer, there is no valid accusation.

Verse number 33. He says, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? At this point, Paul is almost gloating.

[11:21] He once again stands up in the courtroom, looks out at the crowd, and he says, who's going to dare lay anything to the charge of this believer?

Now, we know Satan would love to do that. In fact, we know from the scriptures that he does. He's the what? The accuser of the brethren. So we know there is someone out there accusing us, but the point Paul is making, there is no valid accusation that can be leveled against a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, again, he forgets about the lesser. He goes to the greater. And look at verse 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Now, you notice there, the words it is are italicized. They are not in the original text. And as you know, I'm sure, the original text has no punctuation.

And so I believe he's continuing to ask a series of questions. In verse 33, Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth?

[12:33] You see, he's saying there's really only one person in the courtroom who would have any basis whatsoever of bringing any charge against God's elect.

And that would be God himself. And so he's asking the question, Would the very God who declared you righteous turn around and then suddenly condemn you?

And the obvious answer again is, No! Of course not! He's the God who justifieth. Would he lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

And really, he's throwing in here another aspect of American law, and that is the principle of double jeopardy. And once you've stood trial once and been declared righteous, you can never stand trial for that again.

All right? And that's another principle here that Paul is pointing to. He's saying, God has already given his judgment on your case.

[13:40] And because you put your faith in Christ, and because Christ is righteous, and because God put his righteousness on you, which is all part of what he's already talked about, what shall we say to these things?

Because God has already judged you once, in that sense, by judging the sin at the cross, now you're declared righteous through faith in Christ.

Would that same God turn around and charge you again? And again, the answer is, no, of course he would not. And so Paul can reach the conclusion, for the believer, there is no effective accusation.

Now the next thing that Paul points out is that for the believer, there is no condemnation.

And we see that in verse number 34. Who is he that condemneth? And again, we see the same construction. The it is italicized.

[14:45] He's asking a series of questions. And so what he's asking is, Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died? Yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us?

Who has the right to condemn us? If anyone had the right to condemn us, wouldn't it be the person who took our place for the punishment that we should have taken?

Wouldn't that person have a right to condemn us? And so he brings up that question, and he answers in four ways. Number one, who is he that condemneth?

Christ that died? You see, Christ loved us enough to die for us. What did the Lord say even while he was on the earth?

The Son of Man did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. That's always been God's heart, has it not?

[15:52] And so Paul asks, would the one who died to save you now turn around and condemn you once you've believed? Obviously not.

Secondly, he says, yea, rather, that is risen again. You see, why does Paul bring that up?

The resurrection is proof that God accepted what Christ did on the cross. And we see that in Romans chapter 4 and verse number 24 and 25.

He says, But unto us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification or because of or through our justification.

And the point there is when God looked at what Christ did on the cross, he was satisfied that the penalty of sin was paid.

[16:56] He was thoroughly propitiated. That's the word that's used. And that comes out of the Old Testament. As the offerings were brought, they were brought to the mercy seat.

And the New Testament uses that same word for propitiation, for the mercy seat. And that's where the blood was sprinkled. But we have something even better than the mercy seat now. We have the finished work of Christ.

We have the blood of Christ, which was taken not into the earthly temple, but was taken into the heavenly sanctuary, according to the book of Hebrews, and offered there before God. And do you suppose God accepted that offering?

You know, I like to tell the story and some of it might be fictitious, so be a Berean and search it out. But we do know from Scripture that when the priest went in to the holiest of holies, or even the holy place, his garment was bordered by pomegranates and bells.

Have you ever wondered why there were pomegranates and bells on the border, the hem of his garment? That's so you can tell if the guy is still moving. That's so you can tell if he's still alive. Because what happens if you would go in without the right sacrifice?

[18:05] You'd drop dead. What happened to Nadab and Abihu when they offered strange fire before the Lord? They were dead. And so, that's true. That's all true. The possibly fictitious part is, according to tradition, they would tie a rope around the priest's leg just in case.

So they'd get him back out of there in case he falls over. Now, who's going to go in after him? So we don't know about that. But if his offering wasn't accepted, he was not accepted either.

But was Christ accepted? Absolutely. Absolutely. And that's why Paul can say in Ephesians 1.6, we are accepted in the beloved. You know, I heard a preacher say once, and it's very true, the question isn't whether we accept the gift.

The question is whether God accepted the gift. That's the real question. And the fact is, God did accept the gift. And then what do we do? We believe it. We believe that God accepted Christ's sacrifice.

And that's what faith is. Faith is believing. Now, I know we talk about accepting Christ. I understand that. But we need to realize that God accepted what Christ did. That's the most important point.

[19:15] And then we believe it. We believe that God was satisfied. And the resurrection proves that. The third thing he points to is in verse number 34, who is even at the right hand of God.

And that puts him in a position of power and authority. It's a very interesting study to study the right hand of God. Because it's a place at his right hand are pleasures evermore.

It's a wonderful place to be. It's a place of authority. It's a place of power. And so, the fact that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God illustrates that if anybody would have the authority to condemn us, it would be Christ.

And yet, is he using his authority for that purpose? And the answer is no. Not only is he not using that authority to condemn us, the fourth thing Paul points out, he is making intercession for us.

Wow! Do you see the point Paul is making? Christ is not condemning us. He's our defense attorney. So, now you've got the judge on our side and you have the Lord Jesus Christ who is one with the judge who is our defense attorney.

[20:28] You think we're in pretty good shape as believers? Absolutely! As Satan attempts to bring charges against us, Christ himself steps in to our defense and says, yes, that person sinned, but I took that sin and I paid for it personally and I set them free.

who are you to bring charges? For the believer, there is no condemnation. And that leads to Paul's fourth conclusion in verse number 35 and following.

For the believer, there is no separation. Verse number 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

What jailer, what soldier would dare carry us off prisoner in the light of God's defense of us? And again, the answer is no one.

Absolutely no one. But Paul realizes that even with all that God has done on our behalf, we sometimes feel separated from God.

[21 : 43] We sometimes lose sight of that because of the circumstances we are in. And so he starts listing some of the times when we might just feel as though God is not there.

He asks in verse 35, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Anybody here ever have any troubles? Or am I the only one?

Shall tribulation? No, he's not talking about the tribulation period. But don't we all have tribulations? Don't we all have problems? Don't we all have troubles? Does that ever make you feel a little distant from the Lord?

It can. Or distress? Or persecution? And you know, I know that we don't face perhaps the kind of persecution that many believers face.

That doesn't mean we never will. But when you stand up for the Lord, when someone tells that off-color joke at work, when someone uses the Lord's name in vain and you come to his defense, don't you just feel that persecution that people want to heap on you?

[22 : 55] Or just living a godly life causes you to sometimes feel persecution? Does that separate you? Of course not.

Or famine. You know, again, that's another blessing we have in our land. Not too many of us have ever missed many meals, have we? You know how I know that?

Oh, I won't go into that. And we're going to get a good one here in a few minutes. But some people have. Does that mean that God has left them just because they're suffering famine?

Of course not. Or nakedness, you ever not had enough clothes? Or peril? Or sword? And of course none of these can separate us.

But then Paul does an interesting thing. He quotes a verse out of the Old Testament. He says, As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

[23 : 58] That verse talks about the Old Testament prophets. It talks about the fact that almost to a man they were persecuted. Many times killed because of their testimony for the Lord.

Again, tradition says, now scripture does say that some of them were sawn asunder. Tradition says that Isaiah had sought refuge in a hollow tree and the king ordered the tree cut down with him in it.

These prophets suffered much. They were counted as sheep for the slaughter. And I think what Paul was trying to do is remind us that when we face persecution we're in pretty good company.

we're in the company of those who stood firm to the end and God was faithful and they stood firm. Nay, verse 37, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

I like the original language here that Paul uses. The word conqueror is found over in the book of Revelation. It's actually translated overcomers. Over in that text he says to him that overcomes will I give a white stone.

[25 : 14] To him that overcomes will I not blot his name out of the book of life and so forth. It's interesting to me however that the apostle Paul takes that word overcomer and he adds a prefix to it.

The prefix hooper from which we get our word hyper. Have you ever been called a hyper something? Well, Paul was a, I like to call him a hyper dispensationalist, right?

He was a dispensationalist, we know that. But he wasn't hyper in the sense we often are accused of. But, he says we are hyper overcomers.

We are super overcomers. You know, I like that for a couple of reasons. Number one, we're not under the kingdom program. As those people in the book of Revelation will be. Who will be required to overcome.

What did Christ say? He that endures to the end shall be saved. And I'll tell you what, that's going to be a challenge, to endure to the end when the antichrist is after you, if you don't have that mark on your right hand or forehead.

[26 : 15] And many will be beheaded for their faith, the scripture tells us. You know, we used to think that was kind of a barbaric thing, people don't do that anymore, until a terrorist came along. Yeah, they still do that sort of thing, don't they?

And it will happen in the tribulation period, and many believers will be killed for their faith. They will overcome. But you know what Paul says? We are overcomers.

In fact, we're not just any old garden variety overcomers. We're super overcomers. And how can he say that? Because of who we are in Christ. Because Christ is a super overcomer.

And we are a part of him. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come mission.

We used to live out. How many of you know what things to come mission is? Yeah. We used to live out in Colorado where things to come mission, which is a grace mission was located. And Eldred Sidebottom's children, who are now older than me, but we're taught this passage.

[27 : 25] And whenever they come to this, they would say, things to come mission. But things to come or height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You know, like the way he ends it in verse 39 as he gives this list, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, the Arminian says, well, God won't take away your salvation, but you yourself can walk away from it.

You can remove yourself from it through your disobedience and unbelief and rebellion. Well, just wait a minute. If you've truly been saved, this verse says, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature.

How many of you are a creature? You see, a creature is a created thing. We're all creatures. You can't even get out of salvation if you've truly trusted Christ.

God will drag you kicking and screaming into heaven if he has to, if you put your faith in Christ. Now, I'm not sure why you would kick and scream on your way to heaven. But, you know, this just reminds us, and I'm not recommending that you turn on the Lord, by the way.

[28 : 42] because I don't know your heart. It just may be that if you turn from the Lord that you didn't trust him, and that's always a possibility. But, if you have trusted Christ, if you put your faith in his finished work, the Bible tells us you're sealed until the day of redemption.

And, that's what this verse also reminds us. No other creature, even including yourself, shall ever be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

we are daily standing in heaven's court as the accuser of the brethren attempts to somehow change God's mind about us.

And yet, as far as we're concerned, the judge's verdict stands the same as it was the moment you trusted Christ.

Justified, righteous in him. Now, it's interesting how carefully God chooses his words. He never tells us we're pardoned, although the hymn book does.

[30 : 01] Have you ever had to rightly divide the hymn book? You see, to be pardoned would mean that the criminal was set free without the penalty being paid.

That's not what has happened for us. Christ paid the penalty. He doesn't say we're acquitted. That would mean we were found not guilty.

But if the scripture is clear on anything, it's clear we're guilty. We're as guilty as can be. That's what the first part of Romans is all about. You see, the only word that will work here is justified, declared righteous.

It's a judicial declaration based on what Christ did on our behalf. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

God and this tells us many things. It tells us that no longer do we as believers have to plead and beg for God to forgive us.

[31 : 14] Even as many believers still think they must do. We ought to thank God daily for the full forgiveness we have in Christ.

If you've never trusted Christ, trust him today and be saved for eternity. God gives us the best deal. He offers the best deal that's ever been offered. He offers to give you eternal salvation through no doing of your own, only through what Christ has done by faith.

disbelieve what he did on your behalf through the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. And when you do that, then God rewards you for allowing him to work through your life. What a deal. You won't get a better offer here or anywhere else than that. Trust Christ today. Let's pray.

[32 : 14] Father, we thank you for the word of God that gives us such assurance such a solid foundation based on the work of Christ on our behalf at Calvary.

Thank you for what he did and that we can be saved simply by believing in him. Thank you, Lord, and we pray that our time of fellowship this morning yet and this afternoon would reflect the joy that we share in Christ.

In his name we pray. Amen.