



YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Summer 2018 Midweek Sermon Starter

Unit 2: No Doubt About It
Sermon Series Title: Biblical Answers for Basic Questions
Sermon 4 Title: Enduring Salvation
Bible Passage: Romans 8:31-39

Background/Context

The question of the day: How can I know I won't lose my salvation? Volumes have been written through the ages arguing both sides of the doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints." Yet the Bible is clear that we can neither earn our salvation, nor can we maintain our salvation. What began as completely God's work to bring us to salvation continues to be God's work to sustain that salvation until we reach heaven.

In Romans 8, Paul outlines several other powerful doctrines that offer great encouragement to the believer. In this great chapter, Paul states that believers are: free from the power of the law (v. 1), free from condemnation through Christ (v. 1), sons of God and co-heirs with Christ (vv. 12-17) and interceded for by the Spirit (vv. 26-27). In verse 28, Paul also reminds believers "all things work together for the good of those who love God." As the chapter comes to a close, Paul continues to encourage both his readers and us with the fact that nothing is more powerful than God's love for us and that nothing—not even our own sin—can separate us from Him after we've been made His child.

**A. God Is for Us
(Rom. 8:31-33)**

If it were up to you and me to maintain our salvation, we would have great reason to be afraid and concerned. Imagine if you made a concerted effort one day not to sin at all. Through strict self-discipline in your words, your actions, and your thoughts you may be able to avoid sin for just one day. But you can guarantee that you would be exhausted at the end (and would probably fall prey to the sin of pride)! Now imagine if you had to live with that pressure everyday just to make sure that you didn't lose your salvation. If God's salvation operated like that, it wouldn't be much of a blessing, would it?

Thankfully, God did not design our salvation that way. Once He has claimed us as His children, nothing can separate us from Him. Paul reminds us that it doesn't matter who might accuse us or lay blame on us because Christ has already paid for us. This isn't a license to sin by any means, but it should encourage us to know that our salvation is not fragile or flimsy, merely held together by our best efforts to behave. No, our salvation is a strong foundation supported by God's great grace and mercy. By arguing from the lesser to the greater, Paul contends that if God gave us His perfect Son before we were His children, then there is nothing that He won't give us now that we are His children. What other security do we need?

Application Point: Read Psalm 23:4, 27:1, and 56:9. What do these passages say about God's love for us and our reasons not to fear? Shouldn't our salvation apply to these truths as well?

B. Jesus Intercedes for You

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(Rom. 8:34)

When a friend was applying for his first job after college, he benefited greatly by having someone with influence on the inside. A long-time family friend was able to go to John's future boss and speak highly of him before he read John's resume. With that friend's help, John's resume made it to the top of the pile and he couldn't have been more grateful.

Aren't you grateful that Christ does the same for you and me? I don't understand how it all works completely, but I do know that God our Father is *not* some stuffy CEO in a heavenly office unaware of what's going on around Him. He is loving, watchful, and fully in-the-know concerning His children. Still, you and I have an advocate in the person of Christ who "is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us" (v. 34). Along with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26-27), Jesus represents us before God so that we don't have to represent ourselves. I don't know about you, but the only reason I would want to stand before God is with Jesus beside me, vouching for me based on His righteous life. The only other option would be me standing before God alone, hoping that my works were good enough to meet God's standard of approval. I know all too well how that would go, and so do you. How good it is to have a Friend in High Places!

Application Point: Read Hebrews 7:25. One of the great things about Jesus is that He lives eternally and is interceding for us eternally. That means that after salvation, we won't see a day in which He won't be our advocate before God. That's why He is able to "save completely." What difference does that make for you?

**C. Nothing Can Separate Us
(Rom. 8:35-39)**

What would it take to break up relationships with your friends and family? Some friendships break easily due to a harsh word or an indifferent attitude. Family bonds are more difficult to break, but sadly we know it is possible. Neglect of your children, rebellion against your parents, unfaithfulness towards your spouse—none of these things guarantee that the love of your family members will grow cold. But, it might. Your spouse may love you deeply, but if you engaged in one affair after another, would it surprise you if he or she wanted to call it quits?

This is what makes God's love for us almost scandalous. From an earthly perspective, we would call a person weak and even misguided for returning time and again to a relationship that only causes heartache. But God is not weak. His passionate love for us is so deep that Paul declared that no circumstance in life "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 39). Yes, sin will surely bring us His conviction and even stern discipline, but it will never extinguish His love for us. That's why Paul says that we are "more than conquerors" (v. 37) even in the worst of circumstances. Knowing that His love is so strong, is there any risk I am not willing to take for Him? Is there any effort I am not willing to make to serve Him?

Application Point: Are you able to say that there is *nothing* that could ever end your love for another person? Only God can claim this and actually follow through. Don't give in to the feeble argument that says God's love is somehow limited by your actions. He is far too big for that.