

Romans 8:31-32

- Before we address these two powerful verses, let's look back at the immediate context from which these words came from Paul's pen. **Romans 8:18-30**
- After this, you get the sense that Paul is exhausted with wonder at the majesty of what he has just written, the almost incomprehensible truth that our God predestined us before anything else came to be, that he has chosen us to be conformed to the image of his Son. And that from eternity, we were called, from eternity we were justified, and from eternity we were glorified. Then Paul writes with perhaps a sense of terrific wonder two verses that, I believe, are two of the most powerful and life-changing truths in all of Scripture. Do you have Scripture verses or passages that you think of in that way, that after they truly entered into your mind and heart and soul, you were never the same again? I remember being 15 years old and at a youth camp, head full of rocks and heart made of stone, as the song goes. And God met me at that conference that week, and the lightbulb came on for me when I heard and understood for the first time, the message of Romans 5:8, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God loved me, even when I was his enemy. Since that day, I have never been the same. Even through some wilderness-wondering years as a college student, God kept whispering in my ear that I belonged to him, that Christ died for me, and that I was called to live for Christ.
- My prayer is that these two verses today will enter into our minds and hearts and souls, and will change our lives from this day forward. Let's look at them one at a time.
- **"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"**
- JB Phillips translates the first sentence, the first question, "In the face of all this, what is there left to say?" I think of Paul here as laying his pen down and whispering to himself, what else can I write? How can I go on from this point? But I know this is not the end, there's more to say. "What then shall we say to these things?"
- "If God is for us, who can be against us?" We might say, "What do you mean, God? Sometimes it feels like the whole world is against us! There are people at work who are against us, relatives that are against us, ISIS is against us." We know that is true, and Paul mentions tribulation, distress, persecution, danger, and the sword in verse 35. He even writes, quoting from Psalm 44, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." So, what can he possibly mean when he asks, who can be against us? This is a courtroom scene Paul is setting up here, where God is our advocate. He steps up to the witness stand and says that He is for us. He calls us by name, and says, "I am for you." And so who, Paul asks, would even dare to approach the witness stand to testify against us? God is for us. This is why he said in verse 28, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good." He is for us, so everything in our lives He uses for our good. For our eternal good. Yes, we have distresses, and trials, and heartbreaking losses, but those are momentary and temporal and when they are put on the scales against the other side, the eternal weight of God's glory, the eternal joy of God's advocacy for us, the eternal gift of adoption as sons and daughters, no, there is nothing that can be against us. Because God is for us.
- God is for us. This is a solid place to stand when everything else around you is giving way. This is eternal truth, solid rock, unchangeable, undeniable. God is for us. Though the mountains fall into the sea in your life or mine, God is for us. Though our hearts are broken or our finances are uncertain or our health is failing or our hope is almost gone: God is for us. If you have trouble believing that, then you have to look at the proof Paul offers. Next verse.
- **He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**

- Today is what the church refers to as Palm Sunday. It is the day we celebrate Christ's triumphal entry. He entered Jerusalem to the sound of cheers, as the people gathered on the streets and shouted his praises, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" But we know that the same people, just five days later, were shouting curses and yelling at Pilate to "crucify him!" Why did that happen? What went wrong? Nothing went wrong, because that was God's plan since before creation. We have to try and understand this, and we are limited in our understanding.
- In logical terms, this verse, verse 32, is an argument from the greater to the lesser. From the harder to the easier. Last week, and before that, Chris Davis was asking the church to come and help at work day. He appealed to our sense of ownership, this is our church building and land, and to our sense of stewardship, this is really God's church building and land, and we are called to take care of it. Some were willing to do the hard thing of giving up a few hours of their Saturday morning to come and work. (I did my work on Thursday, just FYI) 😊 So ,what if today one of you who came and worked yesterday were asked by Chris Davis to get him a cup of water from the kitchen. Would you do it? I think you would. Getting a cup of water is a lot easier than getting out of bed, putting on some work clothes, driving to the church property, and pulling weeds or cleaning tables for a couple of hours. Because you did the harder thing, you would surely do the easier thing and get Dr. D all the water he could drink. That's an argument from the greater to the lesser.
- He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. That's the hard thing. The greater thing. The greatest and hardest work ever done in all the universe. To understand this work, this sacrifice, we have to give human terms to it. I know God is God and nothing is impossible with God, but that doesn't mean that not sparing his own Son was easy. No! It was infinitely hard for an infinite God to sacrifice his only Son. Why did God do it? Because of your sin and mine. Because of his wrath against your sin and mine. Because of his desire to have your sin and mine, and his wrath against your sin and mine satisfied, so that you and I could be saved, so that you and I could be forever in his presence, happy and holy and without sin. Because there is nothing you or I can do to satisfy God's wrath against our sin. He had to do it for us. For that reason, God did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. He delivered his son to the executioner. When Judas asked the chief priests, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" it is the same word. When the Bible says that Pilate delivered Jesus over to be crucified, it is the same word. We think of Judas and Pilate as the ones who delivered Jesus to the cross, but ultimately they were not. It was God who delivered his Son up. Isaiah wrote, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds, we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5). And in verse 10, "...it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief."
- The agony of Christ on the cross was only matched by the agony of the Father who had to watch as his son suffered and died for sin. To watch him being spit on and mocked and beaten. To watch the Roman soldiers driving nails into his hands and feet. To watch this only Son thirst and struggle to breathe and suffer and die.
- He did not spare his own Son. He delivered him up for us all. He did the hardest thing. The unimaginable thing. Therefore, what do we know is true? What is God calling us to lean into and stand on and believe with every cell in our body? Because God did the hardest thing, he will do the easier thing.
- **How will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**
- Paul asks the question, and he does so perhaps because he knows this is almost too good and too glorious to be true. But Paul knew and we must know that it is too TRUE to be anything but good and

glorious! What is the promise? God will give us ALL things with Christ. What does this mean for you and for me?

- Since God didn't spare his own Son, the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Since God didn't spare his own Son, he will work all things together for eternal good in my life. Since God didn't spare his own Son, I am and will be justified. Since God didn't spare his own Son, I will be glorified. Since God didn't spare his own Son, there is therefore now no condemnation for me. Since God didn't spare his own Son, I have peace with God through Jesus.
- Because God has done the greatest thing of all, removing the sin and shame and judgment that stood against me and you, there is nothing that stands between God and his people now. There is no greater work to be done by God. It has all been done. "It is finished!" Jesus cried from the cross. And it was. It is. That means that for those who stand on the rock of salvation, purchased once and for all by the blood of the Son, there is nothing but glory and good coming to you. All the promises of God are yes in Christ Jesus. That means that Jesus will be with you until the end, and give you peace, and ultimately, bring you to be with Him forever. He promised, "I will never leave you or forsake you." He promised, "My peace I give to you." He promised, "I am going to prepare a place for you. And I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." These promises are true because God did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all.
- God is for us. Do you believe that? God gave up his Son for us. Do you believe that? God will give us, with Christ, all things. Do you believe that?
- Prayer