

God's Love Is Always with Us

Westlake VBS 2017

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor present things, nor coming things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38–39).

Context: The larger context of Rom 8:38–39 addresses the internal conflicts we experience living by the Spirit, and the immediate context addresses the external conflicts.

1. As Christians, we continue to struggle with temptation and sin, yet we ultimately find freedom from these things in God through Jesus Christ – 7:14–25.
2. Yet, there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ, because our identity and lifestyle are bound up in the Spirit – 8:1–17.
3. As we live in the Spirit, however, external conflicts will arise, specifically persecution and suffering from those who reject Jesus Christ – 8:17; see 2 Tim 3:12.
4. There are several assurances that make the present conflicts bearable—the hope of glory, the intercession of the Spirit, and the providence of God – Rom 8:17–30.
5. The word *then* (Gr *oun*) is a conjunction indicating a conclusion based on a previous statement, and the phrase *these things* connects to the preceding context – v. 31.
6. *These things* probably refers to either our sufferings or the blessings God gives—or both.

(If the phrase refers to our sufferings, the implied answer to the question is that we need not be disheartened. If the blessings, we can add nothing to what God has done.)

7. God has overwhelmingly demonstrated that he wants what is best for us, giving his son Jesus for us as well as all good things – vv. 31–32. (See below.)

8. The theme of this study is that “God’s love is always with us”—that nothing can separate us from his love and that we can be victorious over all obstacles by his love.

Formidable Foes: Paul enumerates in poetic, not logical order the various categories of foes that threaten to take away our assurance of God’s love – Rom 8:38–39.

1. The foes listed in Rom 8:38–39 include states of being, spiritual powers, present and future realities, spatial dimensions, and all other created things.
2. As Christians, there are physical and spiritual enemies who try to strip us of our confidence and cause us to doubt God’s love for us – 1 Pet 5:8; Jude 17–19; Eph 6:12.
3. Some of the schemes used by our foes include physical suffering, emotional distress, and personal doubt, but these cannot truly separate us from God’s love – Job 1:1–2:13; Jas 5:11; Ps 73:1–28; Rom 8:37.
4. Though our enemies are fearsome, the love of God encourages and strengthens us to resist them and obtain spiritual victory – Rom 8:31, 37; Eph 6:10–11; 1 Pet 5:6–10; 2 Tim 4:7–8.

Unstoppable Love: Regardless of the foes and circumstances that array themselves against us, God assures us that he will never stop loving us!

1. God aligns himself with those of us whom he has foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified; he is on our side – Rom 8:31; see vv. 29–30; Pss 118:6; 124:1–8.
2. God has proven his love for us—and that he will provide all good things to us—in the giving of his son Jesus for us – Rom 8:32; 5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10.
3. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God; he loves us regardless of our physical or spiritual condition; and if we abide in his love, we will experience salvation – Rom 8:35, 38–39; John 15:9–10.

(This does not mean, however, that once we are saved we can never do anything to lose our salvation – see 2 Pet 2:20–22; Heb 6:4–8; Gal 5:4–6.)

Absolute Conviction: God wants us to be fully convinced of his love, not constantly doubting his affection for us or our relationship with him.

1. The apostle Paul was confident in the love of God, as evidenced by the phrase *I am convinced* (Gr *pepeismai*)—the perfect passive indicative of *peitho* – Rom 8:38.
2. God desires that we, like Paul, be assured that he is and that he loves us, lest we be overcome with doubt and discouragement – 2 Tim 1:12; 1 John 5:13; Heb 12:1–3.

Conclusion: The love of God is, however, found only in Jesus Christ. To truly experience God's love and be confident of it, we must be in Christ, which occurs at the point of faith and baptism – Gal 3:26–27; Rom 6:3–5.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness
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1. Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!
2. Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!