

London Justice House of Prayer - Donna Taylor

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Romans 8:31-35a

I. God's Everlasting Love

A. If God is For Us

In verses 31-35a, Paul begins here with five rhetorical questions. He has just gone through this whole chapter up to now, showing us the victory that is accessible to every born-again believer over the flesh through the resurrection power of the Spirit working within them (us).

In fact, in the last few statements, he has shown that the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf according to the will of God, resulting in the promise that 'God works all things together with us for our good.' We are being conformed to the image of Christ and justified and glorified, which leads to Paul's first question. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" He's wanting us to think deeply and come up with the answer ourselves. The obvious answer to this question is, "No one!" We are in the victorious position.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of God....?"
Romans 8:31-35a

In our response to this question, 'what shall we say to these things,' we know Paul is referring to what he has been teaching in the previous verses. All the promises of God we know are yes and amen, and we know that God who is the keeper of the covenant, will always be faithful in His commitment to us as believers.

In what would seem to be an impossible situation, we can look at the story in Numbers 14:6-9 when the 12 spies went to seek out the land in Canaan to bring back a report in what they saw. God who had promised them this land and assured them they could go in and take the land with His help, there were only two who came back with a positive response. The other 10 spies said 'we are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.' But, Joshua and Caleb had a very different response.

6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;

7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them."
Numbers 14:6-9

The bad report of the 10 spies was a faithless one that defamed Yahweh's delivering abilities. Moses then intercedes in behalf of the people because God was going to strike them with a pestilence and disinherit them. He reminded God of his long-suffering and abundant mercy in forgiving iniquity and transgression; so he asked God to pardon the iniquity of this people. The LORD said, "I have pardoned according to your word; but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. But they will not see the land I promised to their fathers."

Then, He says, "But My servant, Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it." Caleb's response to the rejection of his faithful report stood his ground in faith and still moved in partnership and support for 40 years, with many whose unbelief delayed his own experience. His eventual actual possession of the land at a later date shows that even though delays come, faith's confession will ultimately bring victory to the believer.

History in God proves that He is always faithful to keep His Word and His promises to us are always yes and amen. However, it does require that we place our trust in Him exercising our faith that we do believe He is the God of the impossible. When we face impossible situations or what we see as impossible assignments, we remember His faithfulness to us and the accounts throughout scripture of stories such as this one. Israelites in the wilderness, in other scriptures is described as the "church in the wilderness." They were a type and shadow of what was to come in what God plans to do in and through the church today and in the future.

To the first question and answer in 31b and 32, 'if God is for us, who can be against us?' it depends on who the 'us' is he's referring to. Obviously, the people are those described in previous verses. Those who in their suffering and hope, and the difficult wordless prayer of groanings, are being 'conformed to the image of the Son.' He is referring to those who are 'in the Messiah and therefore, know that there is 'no condemnation.'

To be clear, just because God is 'for us,' that doesn't mean we will never sin or make mistakes or never get turned down in job applications, or become seriously ill, or have people misunderstand or misrepresent us. So, this question of 'who can be against us?' doesn't mean that no-one will ever come against us or stand in our way. We can know that when these things happen, because God is for us, any opposition will, in the long run be insignificant, even though it's painful and frustrating at the time.