**Romans 8:35-39 New Living Translation (NLT)**

**A Different Kind of Victory**

**Slide 1**

Today I am going to jump right into it. In Romans 8, beginning with verse 35 the Apostle Paul asks the church at Rome a question. He writes:

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“Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, **overwhelming victory** is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

Romans 8:35-37

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Does it mean God no longer loves us if…

We have trouble or calamity?

Are persecuted?

Are hungry?

Are destitute?

Are threatened with death?

This is a strange kind of victory. Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22 the context is…

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You have made us the butt of their jokes;
    they shake their heads at us in scorn.
We can’t escape the constant humiliation;
    shame is written across our faces.
All we hear are the taunts of our mockers.
    All we see are our vengeful enemies.

All this has happened though we have not forgotten you.
    We have not violated your covenant.

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Our hearts have not deserted you.
    We have not strayed from your path.
Yet you have crushed us in the jackal’s desert home.
    You have covered us with darkness and death.
If we had forgotten the name of our God
    or spread our hands in prayer to foreign gods,
God would surely have known it,
    for he knows the secrets of every heart.
But **for your sake** we are killed every day;
    we are being slaughtered like sheep.

Psalm 44:14-22

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The Israelites were in exile, and in fact, their troubles were because they were following God.

Like David in Psalm 44, the apostle Paul, in the same breath, says that Christians were being slaughtered and yet he said despite that overwhelming victory was theirs through Jesus Christ.

What are we supposed to do with that?...

Figure out and hold on to the right definition of “victory.”

Victory is knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. Victory is living without fear knowing that death is at your door. Victory is having wellness in your soul even without a full belly. Victory is knowing that God loves you and will never forsake you as His child.

But remember being His victorious child might sometimes feel like winning a lifetime supply of hard work and vexing decisions. The victory is our the guaranteed unconditional love relationship God. Everything else seems like a poor metric of how we are doing. This is why Paul emphasizes God’s inseparable love for us. As he writes:

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And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

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Is God’s love for you enough?

I hope it is, because I’m pretty sure victory doesn’t have much to do with the whole world becoming more Christian or our state or our Federal government beginning to live by Christian values. I also would never assure you that becoming a Christian means you will never go hungry, you won’t have any trouble, and you will never be in danger (even of death). And you can bet that when you say “I trust God,” sometimes you are going to be called ignorant and mocked.

What do you trust God for?

I trust that He will never leave me or forsake me and that He will never stop loving me. In good times and in bad times my relationship with God is sure.

Remember Paul’s, and the scriptures’, view of victory seems a little different than most…

“(As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

Romans 8:36-37

Paul even deemed his religious zeal as meaningless when compared to his relationship with Jesus. He wrote in Philippians 3:

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“For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!

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I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

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I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ.

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For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!”

Philippians 3:3-11

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Victory in life is about the relationship, with God, that Jesus has established for us. Maybe you are thinking, “What exactly do I mean by that?”

When we put our trust in Jesus, He reconciles us to God. In other words, He establishes right relationship between us and God. That victorious relationship is enabled by Christ and it is empowered and maintained by the Holy Spirit. Access to God’s Spirit **IS** the eternal victory and security we gain in Jesus.

Notice some of the things that the Holy Spirit does for us.

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He teaches (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27)—As you read, listen, and observe material things the Spirit of God helps you to gain and understand new insights.

**Slide 14b**

He testifies (John 15:26; Acts 20:23; Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:15; 1 John 5:6)—There are some things that are necessary to believe in a black and white, fact or fiction way. The Holy Spirit tells the truth to our spirit’s with regards to those things.

**Slide 14c**

He guides (Exodus 31:1-11; Zechariah 4:6; John 16:13; Acts 8:29; Romans 8:14)—Even once we know the truth, we need guidance on what to do with it. It is true that eating birthday cake is a good thing, but I trust that the Spirit would guide me about eating birthday cake every day.

**Slide 14d**

He regenerates (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Titus 3:5; John 3:5-8)—If you are a believer you know that something has changed in your heart, mind, and will. That change is the new life that the Spirit gave birth to.

**Slide 14e**

He intercedes (Romans 8:26, 28; Ephesians 6:28)—Without the Spirit, God wouldn’t remain ok with how much we miss the mark and we wouldn’t truly stay forgiven. The Holy Spirit intercedes with prayers we can’t, won’t, or don’t think to pray.

**Slide 14f**

He convicts (John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38)—The first step to healthy change is being convinced that the path you are on isn’t working.

**Slide 14g**

He commands (Acts 13:2-4; Acts 16:6)—Once we are convinced, the Spirit will give us His directives through the Scriptures, God’s people, God’s creation, or maybe even a Word spoken directly to our hearts.

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He produces fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)—As we relate to God’s Spirit through His teaching, guidance, intercession, conviction, etc…His work in the relationship produces love, joy, peace, patience and the like.

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He creates and sustains (Genesis 1:2; Galatians 6:13-16; Psalm 104:29-30)—From the creation of the world to the very sustaining of all natural process, the Spirit is at work.

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He gifts or anoints believers for service (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 11:25; Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Samuel 16:13; Acts 10:38; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:11)—Have you ever felt really moved to a particular work of service? The Holy Spirit chooses to move in people’s lives differently according to God’s purposes. Whether you are a doctor or a pro skate boarder, God’s anointing and empowerment can be upon you.

**Slide 14k**

He sanctifies (Nehemiah 9:20; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10; Romans 8:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 5:26)—The Spirit is in the process of refining us and preparing us for His good works. I think it is better to think of sanctification as “job specific preparation,” instead of some cleaning process. Being set apart, means being trained for our role in God’s army.

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He indwells the believer (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:1-3; Numbers 14:24; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 4:8-9, 18; 15:11, 14; 6:3; Luke 1:15; Luke 1:41; Luke 1:67; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:13-14)—This is very comforting to know that you don’t have to go to any specific place to enjoy the ministry of God. Wherever we go, God goes with us.

**Slide 14m**

He baptizes (John 1:33; Acts 1:5)—There is something about plunging into a pool of water that is invigorating. It is like throwing everything aside and having a fresh start.

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He seals the believer insuring his inheritance (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Romans 8:15-16)—If you were told that you won 20 million dollars that you would receive in 5 years would you want the money to set out in the middle of the city park or would you want it sealed up in a vault? Our inheritance in Christ is sealed up!

These are the spoils of victory in Jesus. And these are the benefits that keep us from being anxious or fearful in our other circumstances. This is why the apostle Paul could say to the Philippian church:

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“I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:12-13

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History shows us that Christians have been martyred for the sake of God’s glory so we do know that temporal safety is not a guarantee.

Peter, Paul, Jude, Bartholomew, Thomas, Luke, Simon, John, Barnabas, Stephen, James the Great, Philip, Matthew, Mark, Andrew. They were all killed for their faith. If you are interested in reading about them, look them up in “Foxe’s Book of Martyr’s.”

So why am I telling you this?

I’m telling you this so you will not be confused on what our overwhelming victory in Christ is about. It is about our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. And the benefits of that friendship can never be severed. Not by coronavirus, not by cancer, not by sin, not by persecution, not by famine, and not by death.

I will finish by reading Paul’s words to the Romans again, he said:

…I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.