

Rev. Seth D. Bode †† Sermon 414, 02-21-2021 †† Lent 1

“Domine, volumus Jesum videre,” John 12:21.

“Credo, Domine; adjuva incredulitatem meam,” Mark 9:24.

ROMANS 8

³¹What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?

³³Who will bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies! ³⁴Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the one who is at God’s right hand and who is also interceding for us! ³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶Just as it is written:

For your sake we are being put to death all day long.

We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powerful forces, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.



WE ARE SAVED AND SAFE—

1) Safe now, with a 2) Safe future, 3) Safe forever. Why?

1. SAFE NOW.

³¹*What, then, will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* Paul expressed no answer to these questions. He simply wrote them and let them stand unanswered. The answer is self-evident.

Many indeed are against us. Satan and his angels, the unbelieving world, grave afflictions, etc. All these can proceed no farther against us than God allows them. If you will turn to the first three chapters of Job, you will find the devil is a mighty spirit able to cause great misfortunes if God permits him. But you will also find that Satan could not do one more thing against Job than God allowed him.

In fact, the next most logical question is the unwritten one, “Is God for us?” But even so, the answer is obvious in Paul’s next question, ³²*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, graciously give us all things along with Him?*

It is evident that God is for us, because because He has given His only beloved Son for us. He would never have done this if He was against us or was not mindful of us. When our conscience scolds us or the Law accuses us; when misfortunes befall us and adversity comes upon us, we are quick to wonder if God is against us.

No, says St. Paul, God is not against us. He is for us. Paul proves it; God has an only-begotten Son and that Son was delivered up for us. So there is no denying that God is for us. There is no God denying us. There is no denying our petitions. He will freely give us our needs and what is to our good both in time and eternally.

We aren’t safe because there are no difficulties, no dangers, or no enemies, but because God works for his people’s goodness. More simply, God is for his people. And God, who is for us, is greater than all the enemies who are against us.

Yet now we have a new mental challenge. How can God be this way? How can be for us? Are we not sinners? Have we not broken His Law? How can God be for sinners who have broken His Law? St. Paul answers:

³³*Who will bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the One who justifies.*
³⁴*Who is the one that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died and, more than that, was raised to life, is the One who is at God’s right hand and who is also interceding for us!*

2. SAFE FUTURE.

Yes, it is true that we are sinners. We have broken the Law. Yet “*to acquit the wicked and to convict the just, both are an abomination to the Lord*” (Prov. 17:15). But Paul skips to the end of the story, and it is fine for us to do so even at the outset of Lent; Jesus Christ’s resurrection is proof that the price is paid in blood. If Jesus remained in death, we would have no assurance. If Jesus

remained in death, we could only say that He undertook our redemption, not that He finished it. His resurrection to life again has shown us His suffering and death truly did count. He has satisfied the Father and justified His brothers and sisters.

Seeing that Jesus Christ's resurrection is proof of our redemption, the evidence that God is reconciled to us, how do we come to take hold of that redemption? The way is very straight, very short, and very simple. It is the way of **faith**. God is reconciled to humanity, that He demonstrated long ago by raising up Jesus from the dead. This reconciling is preached in God's Gospel, and whoever receives it in **faith** has it and is reconciled to God. **Believe** that Jesus' death is the atonement for your sins, His resurrection is your justification, and ...

You have it.

But isn't this making our future too easy? My friends, this doctrine ...

- that we are justified by faith and faith alone,
- that all things are ready,
- that human souls have nothing to do but sit down and enjoy the good things God has prepared for them,
- this teaching that is the very marrow and substance of the Gospel,

This is the most-spoken-against doctrine in the world. It is spoken against by atheists, by rationalists, by moralists, by legalists and by fanatics. Some say it is foolish. Some say that charity and good works must certainly count more than faith. Some say that sinners have to do their own part. Some say you have to struggle—and struggle hard—to get it.

But the question is not whether it is foolish or wise, easy or hard. The question is whether the way of faith is the way that the Bible teaches, that Jesus and Paul teach and agree upon. Most assuredly, they each teach it and agree with each other:

- *Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved* (Acts 16:31).
- *The just shall live by faith* (Hab. 2:4).
- *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; and whoever does not believe will be condemned* (Mark 16:16).

What does the future hold? Will we see one another later?

- Teens—Luther's Youthers—when you are distracted by school and work and girls and boys, will you remember to wander back this way?

- Comorbid and sickly—when you discover we are past the pandemic, will you remember God was for you and come back to find Him in His house?
- Members of the work force, when you fail to find work or you are fired from that job, will you depend on Him?
- Elderly, will you wring your hands or fold them in prayer to through Jesus Christ and Him only?

3. SAFE FOREVER. No force of conquering can separate the saved.

God has a people. They are all his baptized, believing children. God knows His people. His eyes are upon them. God never forgets or overlooks His people. You are a chosen, an elect, people. (Some are afraid of saying that, but we love it.) God's decision to make us his children must sustain you in every difficult, trying hour. There are mysteries in God's choice, but there are indisputable facts about those who believe in God. He wants all to be saved. He wants all sinners to turn from their ways and live. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. God's people were chosen before time.

God's people were chosen not by creation; not as natural-born children; but new-born, grace-born, Spirit-born children; forgiven, cleansed, heirs of His kingdom. Not by virtue of our own goodness or will or achievements, but because the Spirit is in us to tell us who we are—poor sinners who hold onto Jesus by faith for dear life. Being God's people, we are His chosen people, His redeemed people, His justified people, His believing people.

Imagine something that weighs more than God. What could you put on the scale? There's nothing that God doesn't own, and own on our behalf, for our good. No one's hand is heavier than the righteous right arm of God, held out everywhere for His people. No one's heart, pound for pound, is more loving than the compassion of God. No one's eyes are more watchful through the night, in the dark, on the highway, or in the valley of the shadow of death. No one's sweat drips darker than the Savior in his work for us. No one's blood runs thicker than the blood of Jesus, his Son. No one's cross weighed as much as the sins of the whole world. No enemy, no matter how vigilant, can cross our inseparable God.

WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

No one. Amen.