

Romans 8:31-34a **“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns?”**

Dear Christians Surrounded by God’s Love:

Napoleon Bonaparte, the famous French general, was quoted as saying, **“God is on the side of the heaviest artillery.”** At the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon was evidently proved wrong since the 160 English cannons overcame the 250 big guns of Napoleon’s French army.

Throughout history, many have claimed that God was on their side: whether on the battlefield, sporting contests, or many other disputes where one side is pitted against another. The outcome of such events, however, proves **nothing** about whose side God is on. Sometimes God allows his people to lose earthly contests in order to strengthen them or to keep them focused on the proper priorities in life. Or, e.g., just because Muslim extremists kill Christians in the Middle-East doesn’t mean God is on the side of the Muslims. If depraved, violent terrorists kill God’s children, he takes them home to the glory of a beautiful life in heaven.

However, in these words from Romans today the Apostle Paul wants you to be absolutely certain that you can make the claim: **“God Is On Your Side.”** Paul does this by asking two rhetorical questions:

- (1) **“If God is for you, who can be against you?”**
- (2) **“If God gave his Son for you, what good thing won’t he give you?”**

1

In the verses prior to our text, Paul hammers home the truth that we are God’s redeemed people. He checks off all the boxes, one spiritual mega-fact after another: + The Father chose you before the world began. + The Father sent his own Son Jesus to die for you. + The Father raised Jesus from the dead for you. + The Holy Spirit puts faith in you connecting you to Jesus and heaven. + And even while you’re still here on earth God takes care of you because **“in all things God works for the good of those who love him.”** Paul is saying, **“Look at all these things that God has done for you! See how much he loves you?”**

So, in response to all this love from God, Paul asks this question, **“What then shall we say in response to this? If (literally, “Since”) God is for us, who can be against us?”** Certainly, Paul isn’t denying that Christians have enemies. Paul himself had plenty of enemies who tried to “do him in.” In 2 Cor. and Acts we can read all the nitty-gritty details of his beatings, stoning, imprisonments, etc. Yes, there always are plenty of people who despise Jesus and his followers. Just watch the news.

Paul’s point is this: **“You may have enemies, but these enemies can’t defeat you. If Jesus died and rose again, just think what that means for you!”** Paul tells us what that means for us in his spectacular 15th chapter of 1 Cor.: **“Death has been swallowed up in victory!”** -- and he adds, **“He gives the victory through your Lord Jesus Christ!”** And here in Romans he says we **“are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”** Is there any question that **“God is on your side”**?

While we are winners, one enemy wants us to think we are losers. Paul asks, **“Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?...Who is he that condemns?”** He’s talking about the devil. Can you imagine the accusations Satan will level against us on the day of our death or the world’s Last Day? Satan knows us very well. He’s heard our words -- yes, those gossipy, vulgar, self-aggrandizing, and angry words. He’s seen all of our actions -- yes, those rude, selfish, dishonest, and impure things we have done. He doesn’t have to make things up (like false witnesses did against Jesus on Good Friday). The devil’s indictments against us are true! But the Father will say, **“Devil, be si-**

lent! Jesus lived, Jesus died, Jesus rose again! My children are pure and holy...not a sin on their record!" What a relief!

Now think again about these words of Paul: **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"** What's the answer? No one! Paul says, **"It is God who justifies."** The devil cannot negate God's declaration that we are not guilty. God is on your side.

2

Having firmly established that truth, Paul asks another question: **"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"** Paul uses a classic Greek argument from the greater to the lesser: If God didn't spare his own Son, but had him drink the cup of suffering to the last drop so you could be saved and live with him in heaven; if he gave you **that**, well then, is there anything that's good for you that God won't give you? If he took care of the toughest thing, your salvation, can't he also take care of your preservation?

The Roman Christians lived under trying circumstances. Paul had seen it all and had been through it all. So Paul is not downplaying their troubles and saying, *"Buck up! Get over it."* No, he's saying, *"You know that heaven is your real home. It won't be long and you'll be there. Hang tightly onto God's strong hand from now until then. He is with you. God is on your side."*

The Bible is full of accounts and reminders of that truth. Think of Joseph, sold by his brothers as a slave and unjustly thrown into jail for avoiding the immoral advances of Potiphar's wife. I would have ranted against God about the injustice of it all. Instead, Joseph hung onto the Lord's hand and great blessings (Middle East; salvation through Israel) were the result.

Think of David. He was chased down and hunted like a wild animal by insanely jealous King Saul. David could easily have killed Saul and claimed the throne. Instead, he hung onto the Lord's hand and great blessings were the result. It's just as Paul writes, **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"**

Think of the thief on the cross next to Jesus, who came from an eternity away -- unbelief to faith -- and asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus told him, in effect, **"Today you will be with me in paradise."** In effect, *Come to me, weary and burdened friend, and I will give you rest...rest for your soul. Hold onto my hand. I, God, am on your side."*

There is nothing better than knowing that God is on our side. However, we can't claim that for just ourselves. In reality, God is on *everybody's* side. He says that he **"wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth"** (1 Tim 2:4). That's why he tells us to pray for all people, and if possible, to share the truth of Christ with them. Every single soul is precious to him.

When I watch the Milwaukee Bucks play basketball, I'm really glad that all-star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo is on our side. He's an awesome player. When it comes to Olympic snowboarding, I'm really glad gold medal winner, 17-yr-old sensation Chloe Kim is on our side. She's an awesome athlete. And when it comes to life (here and eternal), I'm really glad that the Lord is on our side. Our God is an awesome God!

Amen.