

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Des Moines, WA

August 24, 2014

Romans 8:35-39

Inseparable

- 1. *The Desire for Security***
- 2. *Paul Poses a Question: Are we secure?***
- 3. *Are Appearances Correct?***
- 4. *A Different Purpose in the Trials***

Hymns: 229 – 419 – *Thy Holy Wings, O Savior*

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

The family pulls into the driveway, and something isn't quite right. A light is on in the front room that isn't normally lit. Immediately, a sense of uncertainty grips mom and dad. With hesitation, dad approaches the front door and enters the house, fearful of what he might find. When he enters, fears are affirmed. Drawers are flung open, papers are tossed about, and the back door is wide open. The house has been broken into. And even before any inventory of property is taken, the family knows it has already lost something that can't be so easily replaced. They've lost the sense of security that their home had previously provided to them.

One of our most basic needs in life is the desire for security. We want it in our jobs, in our finances, in our homes; really, we want security in every aspect of our life. And we are often willing to go to great measures to satisfy that desire. Just think of the many ways in which you attempt to provide security in your own life: an alarm system on your house; insurance on life and health and most everything else; investment accounts and emergency funds; it's all for security. We are very willing to spend hundreds to thousands of dollars each month on those safeguards, and many others, in exchange for the security in life that is given back to us and our loved ones in return. Security is a basic human desire.

In fact, security is one of the biggest reasons why you are sitting here today. Our need and desire for security extends beyond our temporal, earthly life. We also search for eternal security. And we can blame that on mankind's mortality. When we come into this world, we know that we will die, but that's about it. We don't know when we will die, we don't know how we will die, and we don't know exactly

what will happen to us after we die. And all of those unknowns create a great sense of insecurity and fear.

And those insecurities are what lead people to religion. Whether it be Hinduism, or Islam, or Mormonism, or Christianity, the practice of religion stems from a desire for security. Man has a problem with death, and through religion, man attempts to find the answer. We want an answer to the questions that death brings. We want a malady to the problem that clouds our eternal welfare. We want security for eternity. And that is ultimately why we are here – we look to Christ for our security.

With that security in mind, Paul poses a question for us today in our section from Romans. In Romans 8:35 Paul asks an important question for all of us who find our eternal security in the message of the Bible and in our connection to Christ. Paul wants us to consider just how secure we are, so he asks **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”** Basically, Paul is asking “Is there anything that can destroy your security?” What he is doing in these verses is the equivalent of running a test against our security system. ****Now**, Paul is not running a test of security here for other religions; there are other places where he speaks to the false security they give. Here, he is dealing with Christians and our security.******

Here is the test that Paul brings: he goes on in verse 35 reminding us of all the many threats that there are in this world; threats which attempt to break our connection to Christ. **“Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?”** Paul began by asking whether there is anything that can destroy your relationship with Jesus; and then he quickly interjects. “Hold on! Before you answer,” Paul says, “consider all the dangers.” In your life, there will be the daily troubles that every person knows: the aches, the pains, the irritations, the frustrations; all those small things which pile up and cause stress. More than that, there will be hardships: the serious illnesses and surgeries, the family problems, the financial burdens that pop up out of nowhere and throw your earthly security out of whack and have you forget completely about your eternal security. Those troubles and hardships are difficult enough.

But for the Christian, there are more threats to your security. Because you are a Christian, Paul warns that there will be persecution: you will be told that you are wrong; you will be labeled unloving; more and more, you will be pressured to conform. Could that constant battling cause you to give up your connection to Christ?

“Well,” Paul says, “what if things got even worse?” What if, like your Sudanese brothers and sisters, you were forced out of your homes, what if you were left without the basic needs of life, what if

you were hunted and killed? Is your connection to Christ strong enough to survive those types of attack? There is much potential for feelings of insecurity as we go through this life.

In fact, as Paul continues, he tells us that as we go through this life, we will constantly have to battle the temptation to feel as though we have been defeated. Paul quotes Psalm 44 in verse 36 as he writes, “we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” Over and over again, in the pages of the New Testament especially, the hardships that come with the Christian life are put right in front of us. Being a Christian doesn’t mean that we will be safe from trouble or pain or persecution or even physical death. In fact, there is a probability that they will be very prevalent.

Satan will use all of those hardships and troubles and especially death to have us doubt the security that God in his Word tells us that we can have. “You think you are secure. You think you have victory. Just look at your life. Your life is filled with all of the marks of defeat. You aren’t connected to Christ; you aren’t connected to God.” And Satan’s reasoning will often seem correct, because very often as we look at our lives, there is the appearance of defeat just as Paul spoke about here in verse 36.

So, with all of that swirling around us, should we feel secure? “Is there anything that can separate us from God?” “Is there anything that could come into our lives that should give us doubt about who we are and what we have?”

“No,” Paul declares. In fact, he says that **“in all these things we are more than conquerors.”** What an amazing message that is for us who so often are called to endure. In everything in our lives that would seem to point to defeat, even in death itself, Paul says that the Christian is the victor. In all these things, we continue to have the most brilliant victory.

How is that possible; that we could still be victors even as our lives signal defeat; that we could be secure even when nothing appears to be right? Because, our victory is **“through him who loved us.”**

The Bible also tells us that there is nothing that we can do on our own to solve death. There is no insurance that can be bought, no security that can be purchased, no actions that can prevent its coming.

But what we can’t get on our own, God in his love provides. The Bible tells us that in his Son, Jesus Christ, God provides eternal security. God sent him to be the answer for the sin and death that cause so much insecurity and fear in our lives. Jesus lived a perfect life that met God’s standard. He died a sacrificial death that satisfied God’s need for justice. And he gave us the reward for that work – which is eternal life in heaven. Our victory has already been won by Jesus; our victory is a completed action.

Our security comes in the fact that our connection to that victory is inseparable! How inseparable is our connection to Christ? It can’t be said more definitively than how Paul says it, **“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** There is nothing that can separate us from Christ and the victory that he gives us. There is nothing that can shake our eternal security; there is nothing that can possibly take away the security that we find in God and his Son and his Word. We are secure!

So, what about all those trials that Paul mentioned? If the trials that come into our lives cannot threaten our security, then there must be another reason for them. And this is the most difficult truth for Christians to accept. When we hear that God loves us, and when his Word tells us that believers lives will be filled with the love of God, and it is impossible for us to be separated from that love, we start to make some assumptions. We assume that God’s love will eliminate hardship and pain; and we conclude that when things go wrong in life that God has stopped loving us. But the truth of the matter is that Christ’s love relentlessly pursues our best interest. He is constantly in the process of shaping and purifying us, and Christ uses those trials that come into our lives to smooth our rough edges and purify our hearts and lives.

What Paul wants us to hold onto as we read through this section of his letter brings comfort to the Christian living in the world, to the Christian who seeks and desires security in life. Through the accomplished work of our Savior Jesus Christ, we have a relationship that is inseparable, and through the relentless love of Christ, we have a God that is working through the trials in our lives to convince us of that truth more and more. Amen.