

First Sunday in Lent

Sermon Road Map
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Romans 8:31-39
February 21, 2021

Consider these truths. Slip them on and conquer.

- Our text includes verses listed among favorite passages by Christians.
- I've never heard anyone choose: *For your sake we are being put to death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.*
- Who likes the sound of: *trouble or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*
- In our comfortable American lives these seem so far removed. Well, they did before this pandemic & Texas wretched by a week of winter weather. *Troubles, distress, lack of food, clothing, and shelter* afflict many of our neighbors.
- These verses give Christians worldwide the faith to face persecution, torture, imprisonment, and even death rather than denying Jesus. How?

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- ❖ **Stop and think! Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus!**
 - **Stop and think.** Discover the full riches of what God promises us in Christ.
 - ♦ If you think John 3:16 (*For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*) only promises believers heaven after they die, you've looked at the gospel in a nutshell and not cracked it to discover its meat!
 - ♦ *Perishing* is being **separated** from God. *Eternal life* is **inseparable** from God.
 - ♦ Those restored in **fellowship** with God through faith in Christ Jesus live in his kingdom of care - in the love of God in Christ Jesus.
 - ♦ **God's love is active** - caring for and keeping you safe. You belong to him!
 - **Stop and think!** Since God gave his greatest prize, his Son, to bring you under his care, he'll spare nothing to give you everything you truly need.
 - ♦ **Do you believe that? Will you trust this truth?**
 - **Stop and think!** Who can haul you into God's court and get you convicted?
 - ♦ God declared you innocent.
 - ♦ Your dear Lord Jesus is the Final Judge and he's already told you his verdict: *No guilt for my sake.* He'll say this on Judgment Day. He says it every day.
 - ♦ Jesus is your personal Defense Attorney interceding for you daily so no one can make God unlove you or me. **Case closed** constantly into eternity.
 - ♦ **Do you believe that? Will you trust this truth?**
 - **Stop and think!** Following Jesus means he leads us through this life.
 - ♦ Just as he conquered Satan, famine, troubles, and trials in the wilderness, he goes before us and with us, keeping us in his kingdom of care.
 - ♦ He will not let anything separate us from his loving care. That's his promise and track record. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus!
 - ♦ **Do you believe that? Will you trust this truth?**
 - These are beautiful and amazing promises. Don't just put them on the wall as decoration! Don't treat them like beautiful clothes - too nice to wear!

❖ **Don't just look at them. Put them on!**

- God wants us to inhabit his word - to live in it, to wear it.
- Don't treat it like fire equipment - *only to be used in emergency*
- When you slip into God's promises it's a whole new experience. Amazed at the:
 - ◆ comfort provided, its perfect fit, just what we need! How did he know?
 - ◆ support provided for our hearts and minds, strengthening our confidence in Christ
 - ◆ insights, enlightenment, wisdom, and clarity they give for daily life.
 - ◆ way these promises equip us with all we need to face the foes.
- Why are we surprised? Jesus faced Satan, mature in God's word of truth!
- Are we afraid to put it on, afraid if we do, God may test us with such troubles?
 - ◆ How foolish! The troubles will come. The enemies see to that.
 - ◆ Satan and his allies look for our weaknesses and attack there.
 - ◆ How much better off we are to go into battle equipped, familiar, and prepared.

❖ **Wearing them, we more than conquer!**

- *...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
 - ◆ Stunning! We know Jesus is the total conqueror. But us? In him, yes!
- We know that in Christ we conquer at death and even at the resurrection.
 - ◆ That's the ultimate victory, but not the only one in Christ.
- The Sundays in Lent reveal Jesus conquering our enemies for us.
 - ◆ His victories are on behalf of his people - those in his kingdom of care/love.
 - ◆ He breaks the power of our enemies, so in his name we too daily conquer
 - ◆ He does give us an example, but more! His power is in the equipment he gives.
 - ◆ Using the armor of God we are *more than conquerors - completely victorious.*
- As we know, not all our enemies are outside us.
 - ◆ This is why trials, testing, and temptation are critical to be Christ's conquerors.
 - ◆ Our sinful nature hates troubles, pain, and discomfort. Trials expose him/her.
 - The mindset of sin - **the lies our flesh holds as fact** are put on display.
 - With God's word of truth, we turn from those notions, to embrace God's truth
 - With God's word the danger and devil in those lies is exposed.
 - ◆ As we put God's truth into practice, God matures us and we grow stronger, transformed into *hyper-conquerors in Christ.*
- No one said this is easy. Lazy Christians surrender and have no idea what riches they are giving up or what danger they are putting themselves in. Is that us?
- These few minutes we've taken to sample Paul's words invite and challenge us to...

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