



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, July 24-30 (A) – Romans 8:26-39

Focus: *Nothing can separate us from the Love of Christ*

word of life

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37 NRSV)

Read Romans 8:26-39

The Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans was written at the end of his life and provides a mature theological perspective which has guided and blessed generations of Christians. His life was a testimony of the persecutions and struggles which might occur for those who believe and trust in Christ. Paul writes, “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Romans 5:1 NRSV). The peace we have with God does not guarantee peace with others. Suffering continues on this earth. All of creation eagerly waits for redemption. (See the preceding passage found in Romans 8:18-25.)

But the Spirit of God is present with us during times of trial and tribulation. “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26 NRSV)

1. *Give examples of when we do not know how to pray as we ought.*
2. *What does it mean for the Spirit to intercede with sighs too deep for words?*

God intercedes on our behalf to bring good. God’s ultimate purpose is not to condemn, but instead to bring blessing. Paul’s words need to be repeated over and over: “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NRSV) God has predestined humanity to be in relationship with God. That is our calling and purpose. We are predestined to be shaped into the very image of Christ. God has called, justified and glorified us because God is good.

3. *What comes to mind when you think of predestination?*
4. *How would you describe the purpose of humanity?*

“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?” (Romans 8:31-32 NRSV) God’s extreme action of bringing Christ into our world, only to be crucified and buried, shows the lengths of God’s love for us. God intends to turn the world upside down and inside out to reach us. It is Christ who sits at the right hand of God ready and willing to intercede for us. God is willing to be with us—no matter what!

What could possibly separate us from the love of God made known in Christ? Hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword? Never. Nothing. “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8: 37 NRSV)

5. *Why is God so intent on reaching us?*
6. *Where can you hide from God’s love?*

It is not a matter of surviving, but rather claiming a victory. Even as we face adversity, God can still triumph. “...we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37 NRSV)

7. *How can we face adversity and still claim victory at the same time?*

Word among us

Grams loved her grandchildren and their visits to her house. She also loved making crafts, but she learned the hard way to supervise her grandchildren with craft supplies. Her eyes twinkle when she tells the story of her oldest granddaughter's visit to her house. They were working together with some craft supplies when the doorbell rang.

By the time she returned, her granddaughter had found a bottle of superglue and had glued all kinds of sparkles, feathers, and construction paper to the card table. Fortunately, her granddaughter had not glued her fingers together. But what could be said? Her granddaughter was making a masterpiece to give to her beloved Grams.

1. *What memorable experiences have you had with glue sticking things together?*
2. *If you want something to stick together, what is your preferred tool? (Glue, tape, staples, etc?)*

If the Apostle Paul would have lived today, he might have chosen contemporary images such as glue and staples to describe the inseparable bond between God in Christ Jesus and humanity. Although Paul lived in the first century and knew nothing about super glue, he was able to select soaring images to describe God's love in Christ for humanity—a love which cannot be pulled apart. Paul writes, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39 NRSV)

3. *What other images might you use to describe the inseparable quality of God's love in Christ for us?*
4. *Why is it important to know that neither death nor life can separate us from God's love?*
5. *How do you feel after you hear this passage of scripture?*

If and when we doubt God's love, maybe we should pull out some superglue and craft supplies. Because sometimes we forget the basics. We forget that all things work together for good for those who love God. We forget that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. As children of God, we need to be reminded of God's love for us which cannot be torn away or undone.

faith practice in daily life

Live among God's faithful people

As Christians gather for worship, we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. This is true at funerals as well—we proclaim the love of God in Christ Jesus which does not end at death. Thanks be to God! Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Not even death itself.

6. *Why do you think this passage is often selected to be read at funerals?*
7. *How might this passage be helpful during times of trouble?*
8. *Who needs to hear this passage? How might you share it with someone else?*

Prayer

God of all the ages, hold me tight and keep me in your ways. Amen.

last word

Seek out someone who needs to hear of God's love.