

THE ADULT TEACHER
LESSON 8 ~ THE SOURCE OF ABUNDANT JOY
NOVEMBER 22, 2020

Background Scripture: Romans 8

Lesson Passage: Romans 8:31-39 (KJV)

Introduction: Confidence can be a very good thing. It can also be a mill stone around one's neck. Being confident simply is not enough. The crucial issue is in whom, or in what, is our confidence. Ill-founded confidence is deadly. Well-founded confidence is proper and good. Some Christians have no confidence at all, believing that with one slip, one sin, they are out of the faith. Agonizing their way through life, they hope no sin has gone unnoticed and unconfessed; if so, they fear they will not get to heaven. These Christians desperately need the confidence of which Paul speaks in our lesson. Other Christians have great confidence but in the wrong thing. The lyrics of a popular "Christian" song say something like: "*I have determined ... to be invincible ...*" This song writer has far too much confidence—in himself. The writer should spend some time in Romans 7 and 8 where the fallibility of the Christian is in view. When the reality of Romans 7:24 settles in on the believer, self-confidence is seen to be both foolish and sinful. In our text, Paul gives us every reason to be confident, not in ourselves but in our salvation and in the sovereign God, Who accomplished it. Heed well Paul's words here. They offer hope and confidence in the midst of a fallen world. To everyone who is in Christ, they are words of comfort and reassurance.

Scripture Reference: Romans 8:31-39 (KJV)

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Topic Explored: "*The Source of Abundant Joy*" ~ The underlying foundation of the Christian faith is the undeserved, limitless miracle of the love of God that was exhibited on the Cross of Calvary; a love that is not earned and can never be. We are super-victors with a joy that comes from experiencing the very things which look as if they are going to overwhelm us. The things we try to avoid and fight against—tribulation, suffering, and persecution—are the very things that produce abundant joy in us. A saint doesn't know the joy of the Lord in spite of tribulation, but *because* of it. Paul said, "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Corinthians 7:4).

Memory Verses: *38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans 8:38, 39) KJV

Lesson Focus: Romans 8:31-39 (KJV)

Verse 31 ~ "*What Then Shall We Say to These Things?*" What "things" are Paul referring to in this expression? Since verses 31-39 serve as the conclusion to all of chapters 1-8, we could rightly think of "these things" as Paul's teaching on the sinfulness of man, the salvation of God, and the hope of

the Christian. The question Paul asks here conveys a very important inference: Revelation requires man's response. Paul does not ask, "Shall we say something?" Instead, he asks, "What shall we say ...?" In Paul's mind, it is necessary for us to say something in response to what God has revealed through him. God's Word is not information to be filed away. It is not given to us as an academic exercise. The Word of God is given to us to act upon and to obey.

If God is for us, who can be against us? The "if" here could just as well be translated "since." The New Jerusalem Bible renders Paul's question this way: "*With God on our side, who can be against us?*" God *is* for us. In the context, the "us" means, "those of us who are in Christ." God is "for" His children. He is "for us" in the sense that He has chosen us, predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, and He has called and justified us (Romans 8:28-30). He is at work, causing all things to work together for our good. Our "good" includes our present process of sanctification and our ultimate destiny in our adoption as sons of God. God is bringing about the good which He has purposed for us.

This statement, "God is for us," cannot be interpreted or applied apart from His purpose. God is "for us" in a way that produces the "good" He has purposed and prepared for us in eternity. Based upon the premise that God is "for us," Paul presses us to consider the implications. "If God is for us, who is against us?" Paul is not suggesting that we have no opposition. We all know that the Christian will have many adversaries. Paul's question is designed to point out the insignificance of any opponent in light of the fact that God is our advocate. With God on our side, who could possibly be an opponent that would cause us to shrink back in fear? The sovereignty of a God who is "for us" provides a new perspective on anyone or anything which threatens to oppose or destroy us. If God did not hesitate to give us the greatest gift of all, certainly He can be counted on to freely give us lesser gifts.

Verse 32 ~ Since God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that He will not us refuse anything He can give us that will bring glory to His Name. Mortal minds will never fathom the sacrifice which the Father made to bring about the redemption of His chosen ones. For the Son, it meant the rejection of the nation Israel, the physical agony of the cross, and the ultimate pain, the separation from His Father which was the penalty He paid for our sins. For the Father, it meant giving up His Son, allowing sinful men to nail Him to a cross, and having to pour out His wrath on His beloved One. The Son willingly endured the agony of the cross in order to do the will of His Father and to bring glory to Him. The Father willingly gave up His Son so that by means of His sacrifice the Son might be glorified (John 17:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11). If God gave up His beloved Son, His precious Son, then it is not difficult to believe that He will "*freely*" give us "all things." The "all things" must, however, be limited to all those things which are essential to bring about the "good" He has purposed for us. And these things are freely given "*with Him.*"

Verse 33 ~ These verses have a distinctly judicial flavor. We are being taken into a court of law so that we may be shown that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Imagine that we are in the courtroom as we attempt to grasp the message Paul conveys in these verses. At the front of the courtroom, the judge is seated. He will be the one who hears the testimony, views the evidence, and pronounces the verdict. To the left of the judge, the prosecution is seated. The task of the prosecutor is to make accusations against the accused and to prove that they are legitimate charges. To the right of the judge sits the defendant—the one who is to be accused. And at the side of the accused is seated the counsel for the defense, whose job it is to argue on behalf of the accused in his defense. Before considering the courtroom scene Paul describes here, we must first be reminded of a fundamental truth without which Paul's words fail to make their point. Just as God has ordained that there is no other Savior than Jesus Christ, so there is no other Judge than Jesus Christ. Jesus

Christ has two roles. The first is that as Savior. The second is that of Judge. All who receive Him as Savior need never fear facing His sentence of condemnation as the Judge of all the earth.

Verse 34 ~ Who can bring a charge against God's elect? God—who justifies us? Who condemns us? Christ Jesus—Who died, or rather was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who actually is interceding on our behalf? Paul's theology and terminology are hardly new and not exclusively New Testament (Isaiah 50:4-10).

Verse 35 ~ This verse is a quote from Psalm 44:22. Paul has movingly written that nothing which can happen to us could separate us from Christ's love for us. Struggles in this life are not a sign that God has abandoned us. By quoting this from the Psalms, Paul is showing that God's people have faced persecution and hardship for generations. He wants the Christians in Rome to have the right perspective on the circumstances of their daily lives. Whether or not they experienced hard times or good times, it does not change whether God loves them or not. Paul has made it clear that God's love is absolute, and God will fulfill His purpose for them. Now he seems to want them to be ready for trouble on this side of eternity. They should not be surprised when it comes. In fact, they should be ready to be killed, slaughtered like sheep, for Christ's sake, if that's what it comes to (John 6:1-2; 16:33).

Verse 36 ~ While Paul asks "who" can separate us from the love of Christ, he goes on in this verse to mention things rather than people. Shall "tribulation"? The word means pressure. Do you feel like you're in a vise, and somebody's screwing it down? It makes you wonder whether God still loves you. Doubt it no longer. Pressure cannot separate you from Christ's love. While the first word referred to outward pressures, "Distress" refers to inner turmoil. "Persecution" was a constant threat to the early church. "Famine" can mean merely a lack of food, and there are folks in our midst who are out of work and who don't know where their next meal is coming from. "Nakedness" simply refers to a lack of adequate clothing. "Peril" or "danger" is something we all face at times. "Sword" means a violent death. We are not immune to problems. Paul quotes a verse from the Psalms (Psalm 44:22) to explode that misconception. Trials are nothing new or unexpected for the child of God. They have been part of the lives of God's people since time began. Some have even lived with the daily threat of death, which is what this verse is talking about. But far from being able to separate us from the love of Christ, trials are our means to greater triumph.

Verse 37 ~ *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."* Christians want to think of victory in terms of winning. We like to think that Christ's power and purposes are most evident when we win, when we overcome our opponents. Paul simply underscores a principle which has always governed God's work: God uses apparent defeat to produce ultimate victory. God uses the suffering of His saints to make them conquerors—more than conquerors. God does not promise to take us out of our afflictions, but He does promise that we will emerge from them victorious. We will be victorious in the sense that we will grow in our faith, hope and love. We will conquer in that we will become more like Christ due to our sufferings. We will conquer in that God's purposes will be achieved through us and others will see the grace of God at work in our lives. But we do not just conquer; Paul says that we are "more than conquerors" How does one "more than" conquer? I believe we overwhelmingly conquer as the sons of God. Not only will we safely endure and grow in the midst of any opposition or suffering, we will eventually overcome it and have a part in ruling over it with Christ.

Verse 38-39 ~ God is the Creator. He is also the sovereign ruler over all creation. Nothing happens but that which He has ordained to bring about His purpose. Nothing in all creation falls outside of His control, and thus we can be assured that His purposes will be achieved. We can have absolute confidence that we will be more than conquerors regardless of what may come our way. Neither

“death” nor “life” shall overcome us. For some, death is the dreaded enemy. Christ came to deliver us from the “fear of death” which holds men in bondage (Hebrews 2:15). For others, life is the dreaded enemy, and death seems to be a door of escape.

“Angels and principalities” would especially refer to those angelic beings which are fallen and which seek to destroy us. Satan would be included in this category. Events are either present or future “things to come”. It is interesting to think of events as something created; but God is sovereign, and He has mapped out history from eternity past. Consequently, then we must say that God created history, and in light of Romans 8:28, we must say that the events we presently face, along with those we shall face in the future, have been created by God for our good. These things cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ. Not only will we safely endure and grow in the midst of any opposition or suffering which part of this fallen creation imposes on us, we will eventually overcome it and have a part in ruling over it, with Christ.

Let’s talk about it. . .

Making it Personal:

- This confidence is the possession of every Christian, of everyone who is the object of God’s love. And this love of God is manifested only in and through Jesus Christ. He is the sole expression of God’s love with regard to salvation. To receive Jesus Christ as Savior is to be confident that nothing in all the world can separate us from His love in Christ.

Closing Prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for being my Father and forgiving all my sins, not because I deserve it, but because Christ died in my place to pay the price for my sins. Thank You for all You have done for me. Thank You that because I am in Christ, You are ‘for me’, and nothing can be against me. Let me never forget that amazing truth. In Jesus’ name I pray, AMEN!*

THE ADULT TEACHER

LESSON 9~ THE DISCIPLINE OF OBEDIENCE

NOVEMBER 29, 2020

Background Scripture: Deuteronomy 4

Lesson Passage: Deuteronomy 4:1-10 (KJV)

Introduction: The discipline of obedience is the practice of our loyalty to our Lord to obey His Word in faith. It helps us focus on Him and what He has done for us so we change from the inside out, our inward renovation becoming Christ-like to undergo His will, mind, and precepts. Obedience means having perfect confidence in Christ so we daily put our faith into practice. We carefully seek what God requires of us and then align our lives with Him and His standards to the best of our ability. We seek Him first, not what interests or pleases us or others' demands of us. This discipline is used by the Spirit to inspire us to keep our Lord first and foremost, cleaving to Him, regardless of the circumstances, so we will be able to keep His precepts and be loyal to His call. We are enabled by the Spirit and the cooperation of our faith to stick with Him even in times of dire suffering. The discipline of obedience is part three of a trilogy of submission, surrender and obedience. Each one of these disciplines begets the other. This means each of these disciplines combines and cooperates for a greater total effect than if they stood alone. Thus, all of these disciplines spur our obedience. And obedience to our Lord spurs our faith fueled from the Spirit. In all, they produce a vibrant, effectual, lasting, and impacting faith that is better than if we did not practice them.

Scripture Reference: Deuteronomy 4:1-10 (KJV)

1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. *2* Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. *3* Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. *4* But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day. *5* Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. *6* Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. *7* For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? *8* And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? *9* Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; *10* Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.

Topic Explored: “*The Discipline of Obedience*” ~ Obedience is not willfulness, or having a strong-willed mindset; rather, it is our lining up with God’s precepts and call. It is the self-surrender of our will so we become less in our spirit and more in His Spirit. Even in the Old Testament, God was more concerned with people's trust and obedience than with their offerings and sacrifices. God delights in our obedience. He does not demand it, nor is it required for our salvation. It is something we do. This discipline of obedience is a continual application of our faith. We are giving up our will. When we are willing to relinquish our plans, agendas, and desire for control, then Christ is in control. It is the ultimate application of our trust that leads to a life of real obedience. We abandon our self-centered life so it is Christ-centered. This requires continual striving on our part. As sin and the resulting

choices come into our minds and lives, we have to focus on His love, plan, and His precepts. We must focus on Christ and surrender to His Lordship.

Memory Verse: *6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.* (Deuteronomy 4:6) KJV

Lesson Focus: Deuteronomy 4:1-10 (KJV)

Verses 1-3 ~ "Hearken O Israel": Moses called the people to hear and obey the rules of conduct that God had given them to observe. Successful conquest and full enjoyment of life in the Land was based on submission to God's law. The first are permanent rules for conduct fixed by the reigning authority, while the second deal with judicial decisions which served as precedents for future guidance.

Moses keeps reminding them that their eternal life and their well-being on this earth is dependent upon total obedience to the LORD. "Hearken", is saying listen attentively. The statutes and the judgements are for all of the people. Moses will teach them before they enter into the Promised Land, because he will not go into the Promised Land with them. They must go in and possess the land of promise. They must obey God. The Word that God had given to Israel through Moses was complete and sufficient to direct the people. Thus, this law, the gift of God at Horeb could not be supplemented or reduced. Anything that adulterated or contradicted God's law would not be tolerated. This was a warning to them, also to us.

Moses used the incident at Baal-peor (Numbers 25:1-9) to illustrate from the Israelites' own history; that their very lives depended on obeying God's law. Only those who had held fast to the Lord by obeying His commands were alive that day to hear Moses. Because of the idolatry the people of Israel fell into by worshipping that idol, being drawn into it by the daughters of Moab and Midian, through the counsel of Balaam. With whom they committed fornication; which led them to the other sin, and both highly provoking to God. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are, "what the Word of the Lord has done to the worshippers of the idol Peor (Numbers 23:9; 25:3-5). They were to the worship of the Lord your God, as the Targum of Jonathan, who attended the service of the sanctuary, were observant of the laws of God, and walked in His statutes and judgments. Did not apostatize from Him by idolatry or otherwise, but kept close unto Him, and followed Him fully.

Verses 4, 5 ~ "*But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day.*": It is very remarkable, that in such a vast number of people not one should die in such a space of time -- being several months since that affair happened. And besides, in that time there was a war with the Midianites, and yet not one person died in that war. Nor as it seems by this account by any disease or disaster whatever (Numbers 31:49). We see that only those who were involved in the sin were killed. Those who stayed true to God lived. He had faithfully delivered them, and had diligently instructed the Israelites in them. He had taken pains to lead them into a thorough knowledge and understanding of them. Moses wants them to clearly understand that the statutes and judgements God had given them on the trip, were for their practice in the Promised Land. They are not to forget about God, and start living pleasing to their own flesh. They are to keep God's commandments and laws.

Verses 6-7 ~ Israel's obedience to God's law would provide a testimony to the world that God was near to His people and that His laws were righteous. One purpose of the law was to make Israel morally and spiritually unique among all the nations and, therefore draw those nations to the true and living God. They were from their beginnings to be a witness nation. Though they failed and have been temporarily set aside, the prophets revealed that in the future kingdom of Messiah they will be a nation of faithful witnesses (Isaiah 45:14; Zechariah 8:23). The nations would see the Israelites and would know how to apply God's knowledge so as to have discernment and to be able to judge matters

accurately. The law and the ordinances were given to the Hebrews. The rest of the world did not get the law from God. The one thing that set the Israelites apart from the rest of the world, was their relationship with their God. The people who lived around them thought of them as a great nation because God was with them, and because He had given them His law. Their wisdom was a gift from God.

The Israelites were a special people (2 Samuel 7:23). To be able to draw near to God in prayer and to study His righteous decrees in Scripture is one of His richest blessings. “God so nigh unto them”. Faithfulness to the Lord would allow the nations to see that the Lord had established intimacy with Israel. This is the only nation in the world at the time Moses wrote this, that had the LORD dwelling with them (Exodus 29:45).

Verses 8-10 ~ The nations would see that Israel’s law was distinctive of God’s righteousness. All the nations around them lived pleasing to their own flesh. Every man did what was right in his own sight. The law and statutes God had given Israel was not just to please God, but to cause Israel to live uprightly. There were over 600 instructions given to Israel in the book of Leviticus to help them live righteously before God and man. God did not want them to have an earthly king. He wanted to be their only King. The one thing that set Israel aside, was the fact that God had entrusted them with His law. This law is not just for this generation, but for all the generations to come. They must walk in the knowledge God had entrusted them with. One experience of Israel to be passed on from generation to generation was (the great theophany the self-revelation of God in physical form), which took place at Horeb (Exodus 19:16-18, 20:20). The fear is not the terror kind of fear, but reverence toward God and His commandments.

Let’s talk about it. . .

- How would you define the Discipline of Obedience? Are you a person who tends to be obedient? If not, why not? What gets in the way of your obedience? What does it mean to you to go all out in faith? What part does Obedience play in your relationships with church members, friends, coworkers, and family?

Making it Personal:

- Our natural selfish will must be sacrificed through discipline; this is hard but the rewards are plentiful!
- We are called to obedience, but God will not make us obey; it must come out of our free will.

Closing Prayer: *Merciful Father, hallowed be Thy Name. We thank You that we are not of this world system but have a heavenly inheritance, reserved for us in heaven. We pray that we are no longer conformed into the pattern of this world; but day by day transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. In His Name we pray. Amen!”*