

One thing most of you don't want to think about is hiring a lawyer. Needing a lawyer usually means either you're in some sort of trouble and need defense or something bad has happened to you and you need to sue someone. You could be responsible yourself but it's usually better to have representation. Someone who knows the court system, someone who can help with the mountain of paperwork. It's just good to have someone standing at your side that you can trust.

Think if you've been injured in a car wreck, do you have time to file the claim, the know how to file a lawsuit? Or you've gotten yourself into some serious trouble and are being accused of serious crimes. Could you mount a defense in court or understand the legal process to know your rights? We want someone to stand by our side when we need them. And when things really get tough, like when we think about what happens after we die, then we really wonder if we'll have someone standing by our side then.

This morning in the second lesson Paul writes about these very things. His questions to the Romans are questions you've probably asked yourself. And if you haven't, you probably should. Paul isn't asking with hesitancy regarding the answer. Oh, he knows what the answer is going to be...

**God is for us
Who can be against us?
Who can separate us?**

"If that bonus comes in then we'll go to Disney." "If I can get more hours then we could finally put some away for paying off the loans." "If you get good grades we'll see about getting you that puppy." Of course "if" implies there's some condition to be met. There's some chance it won't happen. **"If God is for us, who can be against us?"** Is Paul saying that God might be for us and he might not? No. God is for us. That's a fact. You wouldn't believe it though unless God worked a miracle in your heart. Really it all goes back to the miracle he did in sending his own Son. Doing the relatively large thing of sending Jesus means God will most certainly do the relatively small thing of making sure you have good things so you are saved by Jesus.

I never walked to school and I only overlapped at school with my younger sister for one year in high school. But even then if anyone had tried to do anything to her they would've been dealing with me. Older brothers or sisters often feel the same way. Younger siblings feel protected. It's usually nice having an older brother or sister around. Someone will always have your back. God is for us. He's got your back. **"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies."** To be among the chosen of God refers to those who believe in Jesus as their Savior. They are ones God set apart and called holy. He justified them, declared them to be not guilty in his sight. No one can bring a charge or accusation against them.

That doesn't stop Satan from trying. One of his favorite tricks is getting us thinking about past sins. He just pokes us and gets us thinking about something horrible we've done to someone else from our past. Then he asks his question, "Do you think God could forgive that? It's pretty bad." Satan is accusing. Satan is bringing a charge. He points out the earthly consequences. A relationship broken, money lost, or reputation ruined. He gets us thinking we still have debt to pay off or we still owe someone for something. And then we think the worst. Maybe God still is going to punish me. Maybe the bad things happening are God punishing me. Then Satan isn't our only accuser but the world and our own sinful flesh are too.

Stop the cycle of that thinking, God is for us. Who can be against us? Truth is Satan can't be against us. **"Christ Jesus—who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."** Christ Jesus didn't just fight Satan in the desert, but also on the cross. There Jesus carried the sins of the entire world including yours. Every last one died with Jesus. But more than that, Christ Jesus rose again from the dead. This is proof God accepted the payment Christ made. Jesus no longer is paying for your sins, so you aren't either. A living Jesus is proof God doesn't hold those sins against you anymore. And now Jesus is at God's right hand. There he intercedes for us with God himself. God would condemn us if not for Christ. So who can be against us? No one because Christ is on our side. God is for us.

When the accusations no longer work Satan comes with his next trick. Instead of pointing at the sins we've already committed, he points at what's happening all around us. All the bad things that happen to us must mean something. They must be signs God is getting ready to separate from us. He doesn't want us around anymore. He just wants us gone. Satan wants us doubting thinking that it's the world and all its troubles that will eventually separate us from God.

After almost 50,000 miles I could tell it was getting time for some new tires. The tread was almost non-existent. The traction provided was starting to go down. In certain conditions the tires were almost undriveable. Time and conditions had just worn them out. You have toys, computers, and clothes that do the same thing. Over time the wear and tear just means they must be replaced. Is that what wear and tear from life will do? Will it mean that our relationship with God will need to be replaced? Will it put distance between us and God? Paul takes up answering that too by pointing us to a whole bunch of things we might think could do it.

How many times have you felt like what Paul described? **"We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."** Seems like some are working so hard all the time getting nowhere and others are just facing tough times. Paul's got a long list of things we face. **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?"** Satan says to us that surely one of these will separate us from God. We listen as our sinful nature lists off other things that are certain to separate us from God. Death, life, angels, demons, present, the future, powers, height, depth, pretty much anything in creation. Maybe there's something in creation that could break us. We're just barely holding on to a relationship with God. Trapped with no escape we feel like a rock climber losing grip on the hand hold one finger at a time. Let go and you'll be lost forever. On top of that it seems God isn't really helping.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." It's not going to happen. Things are not as they seem. We prevail because we are more than conquerors. Gold medalists can't compare. Victorious armies can't compare. Winning basketball teams can't compare. Nothing can put separation between us and God. God is for us. But it's not because of us. We're more than conquerors through Christ. It's his love and devotion. Trouble doesn't separate it brings us closer to him. They show just how much Christ truly loves us. Nothing can remove or diminish the supreme act of love Jesus did on the cross. Jesus loves us. God is for us.

Paul could have talked about God's almighty power or incredible strength. But instead he mentions an action. Jesus dying on the cross allows us to stand against every affliction that may come against us. The cross is all you need to live a new life. There you can see just how much God loves you. There you can see what you mean to him. Nothing can rip you away from his loving grasp. **"Nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

The world is against you. Satan is against you. Tribulation and afflictions are still against you. But still you need not be afraid that you're alone against all that. They cannot stand against you forever. They cannot separate you from your God. In Christ Jesus our Lord, God is for us.