

Main Idea: In Romans 8:31-34, we discover three implications of knowing that God is for us.

- I. God offers us a guard (31).
 - A. Our potential foes are many.
 - B. If God is for us, we are secure.
- II. God offers us a gift (32).
 - A. It involves something God did *not* do.
 - B. It involves something God *did*.
 - C. It involves something God *does*.
- III. God offers us a guarantee (33-34).
 - A. God justifies His chosen people (33).
 1. God is sovereign in His choices.
 - God's election of angels (1 Timothy 5:21)
 - God's election of Israel (Deut. 7:6)
 - God's election of the Messiah (1 Peter 1:20)
 - God's election of people to an office (Psalm 78:70)
 - God's election of believers (Matt. 22:14; Jn 6:37; Acts 13:48; 2 Tim. 2:10)
 2. People are responsible for their choices.
 - B. Christ keeps His chosen people, including us (34).
 1. He died.
 2. He rose again.
 3. He ascended to the Father's right hand.
 4. He is interceding for us.

Make It Personal: Is God on your side?

1. If so, thank Him.
2. If so, trust Him.
3. If so, tell others about Him.

Scripture Memory Song (“Redeemed people sing the Word”): Psalm 67:3, 5

We love expository preaching at WBC. We love to hear what our good God has said in His Word, for as Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).” With this in mind, when I prepare a sermon I don’t wonder what to talk about. I know my task is to open God’s Word, ponder a text, discover the author’s purpose for writing that text, exposit that text and its meaning, and then ponder the implications of that text for our lives, all to His glory.

What a joy it has been to do an exposition of Romans 8! And we’re not done yet. Today we come to another high point. I often go to this passage at funeral services. Why? Because this passage addresses a question people are often asking when they lose a loved one. Is God for us? Does He care for us? It doesn’t feel like it right now. It feels like He has left us. Sorrow is our companion. Where is He?

I’ve entitled today’s message, “*If God Is For Us*.” In Romans 8:31-34, we’re going to ponder three implications of knowing that God is for us.

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:31-34

We called it the “big wall” and it worked every time. Actually, it wasn't really a “wall,” but a football play. Allow me to explain. I can still see it vividly in my memory archive. I was in the fourth grade, and my family was living in Cincinnati. It was football season, and there were few things my brother and I enjoyed more than playing a pickup game with our father. Having three players on the field meant that one player had to change teams each series. That was dad’s role. He was the full time quarterback for both teams. That is, until the big wall was called.

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the Romans 8 series preached at WBC in 1995.

Here's how it worked. For the big wall, dad became the center, and hiked the ball to me (if I was on offense). Then he blocked by placing his body between me and my brother. He became a moving human barricade. As you can imagine, because of the size difference, it was impossible for my seven year old brother to get around him and get to me. The same was true when I was on defense. The big wall never failed.

I learned a simple lesson from the big wall. It makes all the difference in the world if you've got the right person on your side.

I want us to consider an important question. Is God on your side in life? Let me put it another way. Is God for you? This is the phrase Paul uses in Romans 8:31. "If God is for us."

If we're honest with ourselves, some of us might answer, "I don't know." And even if our answer is yes, the question remains, how can we know for sure that God is for us? Based on this text and many others in the Bible, the good news is that we *can* know for sure that God is for us, that He is on our side (actually, that we are on His side). And the ramifications are life-changing, *eternal* life-changing.

In Romans 8:31-34 we see three implications of knowing that God is for us. If God is for us, then He offers us a guard (31), a gift (32), and a guarantee (33-34).

I. God offers us a guard (31).

Paul begins verse 31 with a question, "What then shall we say to these things?"² Stop there for a moment. What "things" does Paul have in mind? Namely, his previous teaching in verses 28-30. And what did he just teach about? He taught about what R. C. Sproul and others have called "the golden chain of salvation".

"For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he **predestined** he also **called**, and those whom he **called** he also **justified**, and those whom he **justified** he also **glorified**."

There's the golden chain and it demonstrates that salvation is entirely God's work to which we contribute nothing. Before He ever created the world, God **foreknew** (meaning He chose to love ahead of time) an undeserving people. God **predestined** to save those undeserving, hell-deserving people and purposed that they would belong to Him. God eventually **called** those people out of a state of spiritual deadness and gave them new life in His Son. He **justified** those people, declaring them to be righteous in His sight on the basis of the merit of His Son's atoning work. And He **glorified** them, past tense, and He now sees them in the sinless condition they will enjoy with Him forever and ever in a new heaven and earth.

What then shall we say to *these* things? Frankly, we could say a lot of things. Some people say, "It doesn't seem fair. How can God elect one person and not another?" That's a natural question and Paul will address it in chapter nine by looking back at the brothers Jacob and Esau, and saying in Romans 9:10-13, "And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac,¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls—¹² she was told, "The older will serve the younger."¹³ As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Others will say, "But I don't understand. How can God elect a people and hold other people responsible for their rejection? That doesn't seem fair." Again, that's a natural question for people like us with finite minds and Paul will address that question by asking

² The NIV asks the question this way, "What, then, shall we say in response to this?"

a series of questions in Romans 9:20–21, “But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’”²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?”

What shall we say to these things? Potentially, a lot of things! But what should we say? If we’re thinking like Paul, this is what we will say. This is the question we will ask. “If God is for us, *who can be against us?*”

Paul didn’t see the golden chain as controversial nor debatable. He saw it as vital and encouraging proof that God is for us. Friends, when we view election and predestination the way Paul did (and Peter did, see 1 Peter 1:1-2; and Jesus did, see John 6:37, 44), it produces comfort, not controversy. This truth produces *secure* strugglers. It’s exactly what we need when the world is against us and life is hard.

Beloved, this is not ivory tower truth. This is truth for real life. Romans 6-8 is a practical section on Christian living. This is Christianity 101. And Romans 8 is the application of theology to life. In chapter 8, Paul is explaining that suffering is not abnormal for Christians, for in fact, we are living in an age of suffering in which we groan and wait (22).

What sustains us in our suffering? This does. We belong to a God who is sovereign. Sovereign over what? He is sovereign over our suffering—that’s verse 28. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Yet not just our suffering. This God, our God, the God who is *for us*, is also sovereign in our salvation. And verses 29-30 demonstrate just how *for us* He is. He foreknew us. He predestined us. He called us. He justified us. He glorified us. And that being the case, what then shall we say to these things?

Here’s what we should say and are privileged to say if we’re in Christ. *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

It’s significant that after teaching about election and predestination, what Paul does next is ask questions. In verses 1-31 of Romans 8 Paul asks one question. In verses 31-39 he asks seven questions. In Romans 9 he will ask eight more questions. Question after question. Some questions we may have asked, and others we probably would not even think to ask.

Not surprising, is it? The doctrine of election produces lots of questions. That’s good, for honest questions can be a means to growth. But I want us to notice that God’s sovereign plan didn’t frighten Paul. It empowered him. And he wanted it to do the same for his readers, including us.

And so Paul transitions from the golden chain with these two questions. First, “What then shall we say then to these things?” And second, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” It’s as if Paul is speaking as a wise attorney here and has invited us into the courtroom. To Christians living in an age of suffering (18), to the people of God who are facing infirmity (26), Paul offers a different perspective in verse 31. He beckons us to think carefully about two realities.

A. Our potential foes are many. Again, taken by itself the last phrase of verse 31 could elicit lots of response. “Who can be against us?” Are you kidding me? We wrestle with plenty of foes. The world, the flesh, and the devil all assault the believer. We may have unsaved neighbors, pagan bosses, or agnostic school teachers who make no bones about the fact that they are against us.

In verse 35 and then in verses 38-39, the apostle himself is going to list many of our potential foes. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, the sword. Yes, lots of things are potentially against us!

But the first question changes the whole perspective on our foes. “If God be for us. And the implication of Romans 6-8 is, and He is! Which brings us to the second reality.

B. If God is for us, we are secure. I want you to point out three critical observations from verse 31. First of all, in the Greek there is no verb. It literally reads, “If God for us, who against us?”

Second, the “if” is not meant to create doubt. As commentator James Dunn observes, “*Ei* [which is the Greek word translated “if”] obviously means ‘if’ in the sense of ‘since it is so’.”³

And third, the setting of verse 30 paves the way. Here's what Paul is asking. If God is for us (the God who foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and even glorified us), if *that* God is for us, then who can be against us? To that question, says John Stott, there is no answer.⁴ And this means, with God on our side we are totally secure.

Sometimes we hear people talk about struggling with what is called an “identity crisis.” Some people try to find their identity in what they do, others in how they look, and still others in what they have. Each of these pursuits is doomed to fail. People who struggle with insecurity are told by professionals, “What you need to do is look within. Affirm your goodness. Thank more highly of yourself.”

But is that the answer? No, telling a person who is obsessed with poor self-esteem to look within is like trying to put out a fire by pouring a bucket of gasoline on it. His problem is that he is already too consumed with thoughts of self.

What's the key to a proper identity? God tells us right here in Romans 8. We must learn to focus on *who He is* and *what He has done for us*.

Beloved, if we belong to Jesus Christ, God is on our side. No foe can harm us for God Himself is our guard. He is for us.

You say, “Okay, that helps. But I still struggle. I need proof that God is for me. How can I know for sure that God is on my side?” We discover the answer in verse 32.

II. God offers us a gift (32).

This is the verse that I love to share with people at funeral services. In answer to the question, “How can I know for sure that God cares for me?” I love to read this verse and encourage mourners to consider the three activities of God mentioned in it.

Listen again to verse 32, “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” In this verse, God's Word identifies three activities of God that substantiate the marvelous truth that God cares for us. It also shows who benefits from this care (the little prepositional phrase “with him”). This is God's gift to His people, to His beloved chosen ones.

A. It involves something God did *not* do. “He that spared not his own Son,” says the AV. Notice what God didn't do. God, specifically God the Father, didn't spare His own Son. Oh, He loved His Son, and dearly. They had enjoyed fellowship and intimacy and love throughout eternity past. But this Son, not an angel but this Son, God did not spare.

Paul is using the language of sacrifice. In the Old Testament God commanded His people to bring one of their lambs to sacrifice to provide a covering for their sins. Not just any lamb. A lamb without blemish.

How does God demonstrate His love for us? First, by what He does not do. He does not spare His priceless, precious own Son.

³ James Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p. 499.

⁴ Stott, p. 104.

Paul's language may bring to mind another father and another son. Two thousand years before Paul penned Romans, another father traveled to what many believe is the same mountain upon which God offered His Son. The account of Genesis 22 tells us that God put Abraham to the test and told him to sacrifice his own son. The patriarch did just that. He did not spare nor hold back his beloved son. Of course, God stopped Abraham before he took the life of his son.

But for God, there was no stopping. What Abraham did pales in comparison with what God the Father did, actually, did not do. God the Father did not spare His own Son.

B. It involves something God *did*. "He who did not spare his own Son *but gave him up for us all*." In the AV, "But delivered Him up for us all." Isaac was rescued, but for God's Son, there was no such divine intervention. No other lamb could take the place of the Lamb of God. He was delivered up for us all. Romans 4:25 says, "Who was delivered up for our trespasses."

Theologians refer to this as the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. "The wages of sin is death," says Romans 6:23. We deserve to die eternally for the sins we have committed. But God gave His own Son up for us, and His dear Son, Jesus the Christ, took our place and our penalty. He died as our substitute.

How can we know that God is on our side? Start right here. Ponder these two past activities. Ponder carefully what God did not do, and then, what God did.

Hymns can help us. Listen to this powerful confession by Horatius Bonar, written as a communion hymn in 1881.⁵

*Upon a life I have not lived,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another's life, Another's death,
I stake my whole eternity.*

*Not on the tears which I have shed:
Not on the sorrows I have known,
Another's tears, Another's griefs,
On them I rest, on them alone.*

*Jesus, O Son of God, I build
On what Thy cross has done for me;
There both my death and life I read,
My guilt, my pardon there I see.*

Yet the Amazing God who is for us is not locked into the past. He is the God of the present and His gift to us involves something that's taking place even now.

C. It involves something God *does*. Paul concludes verse 32 with a question, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, *how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?*"

It's an argument from the greater to the lesser. If God would not spare His own Son, but rather hand Him over to die in our place, and furthermore, if His own Son would willingly die in our place, not under compulsion but because of His own love for us, then there's no doubt as to the answer to this question.

How will he not also with him graciously give us all things? It's a rhetorical question. The One who gave His best for us will surely give us everything else we need, will He not? Indeed, He will.

⁵ <https://www.desiringgodchurch.org/web/2013/07/03/upon-a-life-i-have-not-lived/>

Peter elaborates on this wonder by saying in 2 Peter 1:3, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.”

This is what God does for those who are the recipients of His undeserved favor. He gives us all things.

D. L. Moody illustrated it like this.⁶ Suppose I went into the finest jewelry store in the land and the owner brought out his best diamond and said, “It’s yours” And I said, “You mean you are giving it to me?!” And he said, “Yes, it’s a gift.” If he gave it to me—Moody says—do you think I would hesitate asking him for a piece of wrapping paper to wrap it up and take it home with me?

My Christian friends, ponder what this means. Since God gave us His Son, we can know that He is also going to give us everything else we need! We can begin each day knowing that God is for us. We need not fear, for the One who gave us His Son desires only the best for His children. Even when He allows them to suffer.

The prophet Jeremiah certainly knew about suffering. And God gave Jeremiah an amazing promise to pass on to His suffering people in Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB), “For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

But who can claim this amazing gift? Who can say, “God is for me”?

A few years ago I participated in a funeral service alongside a minister who embraced universalism, the heretical notion that says that God belongs to everyone. After praising the deceased person for his good life, this minister boldly asserted that there will be people in heaven from all religious backgrounds and faiths. And to prove his point, as he walked off the platform, he quoted Romans 8:38-39, “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God.” At that point the minister stopped. He said no more and took a seat.

My friend, that’s universalism. Some in the room didn’t even know he didn’t quote the whole verse. Did you notice? What did he leave out? He left out Paul’s answer to the question of who cannot be separated from the love of God. Those who are “*in Christ Jesus our Lord*.”

We see the same reality back in verse 32. Who can say, “God is for me”? Paul gives a two word qualifier in verse 32. Don’t miss it. Listen again to the verse. “How will he not also *with him* graciously give us all things?” Who is the *Him*? It is God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Who can claim this promise? Only those who have received the gift of God’s Son, who have confessed Jesus Christ as their own Savior and Lord.

The funeral service of which I’m speaking was for my uncle. He was not a church-going man and had indeed been quite agnostic throughout his life. So a few minutes after the other minister spoke, it was my turn to address the grieving audience at my uncle’s funeral. I’d like to read part of what I said that day. To protect the family’s privacy, I’ll refer to him as Uncle “Bob”.

I’ve chosen one verse for Uncle Bob’s memorial service message. It’s a verse about giving. Mark 10:45. These are the words of Jesus the Christ, speaking of Himself, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Who is this person Jesus? Here He calls Himself the *Son of Man*. Why? Because though He is the eternal Son of God, He had become a man in order to

⁶ See J. Vernon McGee, p. 161.

fix the problem created by the first man, Adam, who instead of obeying God, went his own way.

But the Son of Man did not go His own way. He came, not to be served, but to serve. That's why God created Adam, and us, to serve as His caretakers in this world. But whereas we have all fallen short of God's intent (which is what sin is), the Son of Man did not fall short. He came to serve, and He did it perfectly for 33 years.

Why did He do it? Was it to give us an example of how we should live? Yes, but more, far more. As sinners, we need more than an example. We need a *ransom payment*.

That's what Jesus says in our verse. And that's what Jesus says He came to provide. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, *and to give His life as a ransom for many*."...

We, the members of the human race, were in bondage, to our sin and its eternal consequences, to Satan and his wicked deception, and to death itself. "For the wages of sin is death." Physical death. Spiritual death. Eternal death.

Yet when we were without hope, says the Bible, "God sent forth His Son, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law (Galatians 4:5)."

Jesus says He came to make a ransom payment. What was the price? What did He give to secure the freedom of rebel sinners like us in bondage? He tells us in our verse, before it happened, and then He did it.

He says He came *to give His life* as a ransom payment. Read the four gospel accounts, and they all end the same way, with Jesus being brutally nailed to a cross, then buried, and then walking out of His tomb alive, and just a few weeks later ascending back to heaven.

Why does His story end that way? Because we sinners need more than an example. We need a ransom payment, and the Greatest Giver the world has ever seen gave His own life to make that payment.

So everyone is free now, heading to heaven, right? No. The ransom payment has been made, yes, but to benefit from it the person in sin's captivity must do something.

Earlier in Mark 10 Jesus took little children in His arms and said, "Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Receive. What an important word. Jesus says His kingdom must be received. Indeed, He the King and His ransom payment must be received, like a little child receives a gift.

Over the years many people shared the gospel with Uncle Bob. But he wasn't interested. He was a "good" person, and good people don't need a Savior.

It's significant that earlier in Mark 10 a rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "No one is good, except God alone." (Mark 10:18). And the rich, young, "good" man walked away from Jesus.

I've prayed for Bob's salvation on a weekly basis for decades. The night before he died [my aunt] told me she had had several recent long conversations about Christ. Then she put the phone next to him so I could talk with him. "He can't talk, but he can listen," she said.

"Uncle Bob, I love you. Put your trust in Christ. He is the only way to heaven." Then I began to pray for him, thanked the Lord for him, and said, "Please, Lord, give Uncle Bob the gift of faith."

The next day, according to my aunt, [my uncle's daughter] went to his bedside and said, "Dad, I want to be with you in heaven... You have to come to Christ for forgiveness, no matter who you are... Have you?"

"Yes. I'm going. I will see you in heaven."

Uncle Bob is in the Lord's hands now, and the Lord who is good will do what is good and right.

We have thanked the Lord for Bob's life, and rightfully so, for when a Giver gives a gift, thank you is the proper response.

What is your response to God's greatest gift? What have you done with Jesus and the ransom payment He made? Have you become like a little child and said, "Thank You, Jesus. Thank You for giving Your life as a ransom payment for me. I receive You with gratefulness. And I give my life to You."

My friend, if you have received Christ, God is on your side. His guard and His gift verify that. But can't our position change?

III. God offers us a guarantee (33-34).

What's the guarantee? It's twofold.

A. God justifies His chosen people (33). Notice verse 33, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."⁷ Paul, the lawyer, calls for potential witnesses to speak against God's people. The verb "lay to the charge of" literally means "to call in against." Think of a radio call-in show. The host makes some taunting, controversial statement, and then baits the hook by asking his listeners, "What do you think?" And in the calls come!

Beloved, in verse 33, it's as if God opens the airwaves of heaven and asks the listening audience, "Who will bring any charge against My chosen people?" And the critic lines are silent. God keeps His people. He *justifies* them.

You'll notice that Paul refers to God's people as "God's elect" in verse 33. What does the Bible mean when it talks about election? Elect means *choose*. We understand this. There's an election coming in a few weeks. We'll go to a voting booth and choose individuals we think will best serve our community and nation.

The Bible uses this term to teach us two important truths.

1. *God is sovereign in His choices.* No one forces God to do anything. Psalm 115:3 says, "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases." We read in Psalm 135:6, "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps." And one of the actions that God has been pleased to do is to choose to save an people that He refers to as His elect ones.

The term "elect" appears seventeen times in the Bible, and "election" appears another six times. In verse 33, it's plural, and literally reads, "God's elect ones." Who are the elect ones? They are the people Paul identified back in verses 29-30, those who are the recipients of God's eternally designed salvation, the ones God has foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified.

In the Bible, God's sovereign choice applies to at least five objects.

•God's election of **angels** – 1 Timothy 5:21 "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the *elect angels* I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality."

•God's election of **Israel** – Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has *chosen* you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

⁷ In the AV, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

•God's election of the **Messiah** – 1 Peter 1:20 “He was *foreknown before the foundation of the world* but was made manifest in the last times...”

•God's election of **people to an office** – Psalm 78:70 “He *chose* David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds.” Other passages verify that God chose priests, kings, and apostles (Deuteronomy 21:5; 17:15; John 7:60).

•God's election of **believers** – Matthew 22:14 “For many are called, but few are *chosen*.” John 6:37 “All that the Father *gives me* will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” Acts 13:48 “And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were *appointed to eternal life* believed.” 2 Timothy 2:10 “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

The Bible is clear that God is sovereign in His choice. Does that mean people are robots? Absolutely not. The Bible emphatically affirms a second truth.

2. *People are responsible for their choices.* Acts 2:21 “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

God is sovereign in His choices, and people are responsible for their choices. Both are true. Perhaps you’re wondering, “But why would God choose to save a people? Why not just make salvation possible for everyone and leave it at that?”

Okay, if God had done that, what would have happened? What is the condition of every human being from birth? Listen to Ephesians 2:1-2. “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.” Paul is writing to Christians. He’s reminding us of our condition before God saved us. Interesting combination of words. *Dead*. Yet *walking*. We were dead, spiritually dead. But we were also walking, walking in our sins. We were dead to God and walking in sin. And if we had time, we could look at other passages that demonstrate this is universal. This is every human being’s condition since Adam. Billions of God’s image-bearers have entered this world dead, unresponsive, unable to seek the favor of the God they deliberately sin against every day.

So what would have happened if God had merely made salvation possible for a world of spiritually dead people? Nothing. No one would respond. No one would come to Christ and receive His offer of salvation. Make it personal. You would not have responded. Nor would I. We would have continued to walk, indeed, to run in our sin all the way to the flames of an eternal hell.

But here we are today, saved and secure in Christ, heading for heaven. How did it happen? Why are we in God’s family today. Why is God for us? It’s not because we resurrected ourselves from our deadness and came to our senses on our own. It’s certainly not because we’re smarter or better than others. I’ll let the beloved hymnwriter, Isaac Watts, answer the question for us in a hymn he wrote in 1707.

*How sweet and awful is the place
With Christ within the doors,
While everlasting love displays
The choicest of her stores.*

*While all our hearts and all our songs
Join to admire the feast,
Each of us cry, with thankful tongues,
"Lord, why was I a guest?"*

*"Why was I made to hear Thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"*

*'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly drew us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.*

There's why. He drew us in. By His sovereign, gracious, loving choice. Another hymnwriter, John Conder, answered the question this way in 1836.

*'Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For that could never be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
Had Thou not chosen me.
Thou from the sin that stained me
Hast cleansed and set me free;
Of old Thou hast ordained me,
That I should live to Thee.⁸*

Here's another precious hymn, this one by Samuel Stone:

*The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation,
by water and the word:
**from heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;**
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.*

***Elect from every nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;**
one holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.*

You say, "But wait. Aren't there passages that tell us to seek the Lord? That's how I was saved. I sought Him, and He saved me."

Indeed, you did seek Him, if you're His child. But there's more to your story, as the hymnwriter Jean Ingelow confessed in 1878:

*I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;
it was not I that found, O Savior true;
no, I was found of Thee.*

Jesus Himself identified both elements of salvation in John 6:37. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to me [there's God's choice]; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out [there's human choice]."⁹

⁸ *Trinity Hymnal—Baptist edition*, 1995 #96

Now back to the question Paul raised in verse 33. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?” What’s the answer? In the AV you’ll see a question, “Shall God that justifies?” But the ESV, NIV, and NKJV recognize this as a statement, not a question. “It is God who justifies,” says Paul. If God has declared us righteous in His sight, (that’s what justified means), then we need not fear any accusation against us, not from the devil, not from the critics of the world, and not from our doubting hearts either. *Justified!* says the One who choose us. Forever justified.

Yet there’s more. There’s a second guarantee. Not only does God justify His chosen people, but Christ keeps His chosen people, including us.

B. Christ keeps His chosen people, including us (34). Verse 34 says, “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

Here is the basis of our security. Christ has removed all condemnation. His fourfold work is the guarantee for us of that.

1. *He died.* Verse 34 asks, “Who is he that condemns? Shall Christ that died?” The Lord will never condemn those He died to forgive.

2. *He rose again.* “Yea, rather that is risen again,” says the AV. The first two activities of Christ are past, the next two are present.

3. *He ascended to the Father’s right hand.* “Who is at the right hand of God.”

4. *He is interceding for us.* “Who indeed is interceding for us.” Just think of it! Christ saves us, not only by His death, but also by His life. Hebrews 7:25 declares (NIV), “Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.”

Beloved, Christ is the guarantee that God is for us and is indeed now on our side!

Make It Personal: Is God on your side?

1. *If so, thank Him.* Thank Him today, and every day, as we will throughout eternity!

2. *If so, trust Him.* Trust Him with your problems, your questions, your life.

3. *If so, tell others about Him.* So they too can know the wonder of “If God is for us.”

Closing Song: #493 “It Is Well with My Soul” (all four verses)

This afternoon: Community groups

Community Group Discussion:

1. At WBC we utilize what’s called “expository preaching” in the proclamation of God’s Word . What does that mean? In expository preaching, what is the preacher’s objective as he prepares and delivers a sermon? What are the benefits of expositional preaching?

2. Today we heard an expositional message from Romans 8:31-34 entitled, “*If God Is For Us.*” Take time to read again the passage, walk through the main points of the outline, and then discuss how this biblical truth affects you.

3. How many questions does Paul ask in this passage? Why do you think he asks so many questions at this point in Romans 8?

4. In verse 32 Paul makes a staggering point by arguing from the greater to the lesser. What is his point? How can this verse help a person who struggles with anxiety or fear?

5. In verse 33 Paul asks an important question, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?” What is Paul’s answer to the question? What was Paul’s perspective of God’s election? What should our perspective be?

6. According to the end of verse 34, what is Jesus doing for us right now, and why?

⁹ Can people who believe in the biblical doctrine of election be committed to evangelism? Answer two questions. One, was Paul committed to evangelism? There’s no question he was, for he filled the Roman Empire with the good news of Christ. Two, did Paul believe and teach that God is sovereign in salvation? He certainly did, as he explains in detail here in Romans 8, as well as in Ephesians 1:3-14, to mention just two key texts.