



ROMANS Part 76

Chapter 8:31-34

God is for us.

What then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all? 33 Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier? 34 Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes?



The “these things” of this passage are those things discussed last week, namely, 1) God working all together for good, 2) us being called according to God’s purpose, 3) being foreknown and designated beforehand as sons and daughters of God, and 3) being called, justified and eventually glorified as part and parcel of the divine program. “What, then, shall we declare to *these* things,” is Paul’s question. It’s almost as though we ought to be rightly speechless in the wake of such an astounding benefits package. But here is the question Paul wants coming to our lips: “If God is for us, who is against us?”

This question is as appropriate and as timely as can be. It needs answered. As we walk through this life, so many things and so many people stand against us and oppose us. Satan himself is our enemy. The blessings enumerated here defy comparison, but look at our lives. We’re discouraged, downtrodden, sick. We’re not exactly feeling like the beneficiaries of the most lofty accouterments of privilege ever offered to humans. It’s the contrast and comparison of the height of the call with the lowness of the experience that makes us wonder if maybe we’re crazy.

CONSIDER THE COST

Paul quickly snaps us to reality by reminding us of the cost of the benefits, and that this is no joke. We ought to be slapped back to sobriety with the next statement, “Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all ...” Stop there. This is our cue to shut up. Over and over in the book of Romans we discover that this call and this book of Romans is not primarily about us, but about Christ. The only way we can stare God’s pre-planned glory for us in the face and grouse at all is that 1) we think we’re unworthy, 2) the benefits are so lofty that we either can’t align or justify them with our daily experience, or 3) we forget



NO ONE IN THE UNIVERSE CAN INDICT US AND WIN.

that this is about God and Christ and not about us. Paul says: *God sent His own Son to the cross for this.* This is the relief from self-occupation that we've been looking for. We've been taking ourselves far too seriously—again. We've forgotten to sit back and let Calvary do its thing—again. It's not about us, it's about Him.

The cross was an extreme. This is what ought to shut everyone up. It was an extreme cause for the following extreme effect: “God will, together with Him, be graciously granting us all.”

The phrase “together with Him” hearkens back to chapter six, where Paul said, in verse four—

We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life.

And in verse eight—

Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall be living together with Him also.

Our identity, and thus our future, is tied to Christ's identity and future. This cannot be overstated. I realize how soaring it is. The second most important word of this section is the word “gracious,” as in, “How shall

He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?” Grace is favor granted to those deserving the opposite. If we *didn't* deserve the opposite of whatever blessings have been in view here then we wouldn't be talking about grace. The fact that we *are* talking about grace proves that we don't deserve any of these blessings. It's pure logic at this point. What a waste of time, then, to feel unworthy. Being unworthy is the whole point of grace. Showing grace to unworthy people is the gift that keeps giving. God is into extremes and He goo-gooes over polar opposites. It's the fabric of His design. Let God have His fun. Stop making this about *you*.

PAUL'S LITTLE JOKE

“Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier?” (Romans 8:33).

This is a joke. No, seriously. It really is a joke. Paul is trying to be funny. I think he is hilarious, myself. What is an indictment? An indictment is a formal accusation that a person has committed a crime. We have just been told back in chapters three and four of this letter that we are justified. Paul has confirmed it in this chapter. To be justified is to be declared right. I like to pause at this point and consult a thesaurus, that I might bask in all the different hues of my God-imparted wonderfulness: I

am declared right, righteous, innocent, true, lawful, virtuous, honest, good, legitimate, and without blame. In other words, I didn't do anything wrong. God is the One Who has said these things; no one can make this up, not even me. God chose us in order to call us, justify us, and glorify us. This being so, would He then turn around and oppose Himself? To do that, He would have to cancel the cross; the cross is the basis and cause of the justification. Only if God canceled the cross, then, could indictment be even possible.

Who alone has the *power* to indict me? Let us ask the question this way: Who is the most powerful Being in the universe? Who is the Boss of everything? Who created everything? Who must every being in the universe answer to? Who is the only Being Who has no beginning and no end? The answer to all the above questions is the same. And so—ahem—*this* One is our Justifier. Who or what could possibly oppose Him and win?

Do you get the joke? How could the same One who went to such trouble to send His own and only beloved Son to the gruesome death of Calvary in order to declare us right, righteous, innocent, true, lawful, virtuous, honest, good, legitimate, and without blame, now turn



around and bring an indictment against us? Ah, but what if someone *else* wanted to bring such an indictment? What if we wanted to bring an indictment against ourselves? The only one powerful enough to override God's declaration would be God Himself, so now we're back to The Lovely Square One: God is not about to override anything that He has sacrificed so much for. Who then could bring any indictment against you that could stick or stand? Not Satan, not your spouse, not Satanic minions, not yourself, nor anyone or anything in God's universe can accuse you and win. God is God and His will reigns supreme.

HOW TO RECITE THE JOKE

This joke of Romans 8:33 requires that you recite the first question of the farcical couplet in a normal voice, like this, "Who will be indicting God's chosen ones?" When the person you are reciting this to gets that quiz-zical, perhaps expectant look on his or her face—this is when you recite the last question of the couplet in a strained, high-pitched voice, being sure to stress the first syllable of "Justifier," then adding several question marks at the end in various fonts, being sure to add italics and perhaps a musical note at the very end. In print, it would look something like this:

"God, the Just-*ifier*?????♪"

You have to say this thing as though it were the craziest thing you have ever said, and the stupidest answer possible to the previous question. Additionally, you ought look at the person you are addressing as though they were a complete idiot from another planet. Practice in front of a mirror with lesser but similar phrases such as, "Who do you think is going to blow up the Vatican? The *pope*?"

NUMBER TWO IN COMMAND

Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes? (Romans 8:33)

People are worried about being condemned and losing their salvation. I am thinking specifically of church people. Worriers of this ilk have no knowledge, however, of Christ Jesus, the One dying and being roused, Who is also at God's right hand and is pleading for our sakes. Such a lack of intelligence comes from listening to Satan's lies—foisted upon victims of organized religion via institutionally-trained teachers—rather than the true teachings of God and Christ that have come to us through inspired penmen such as Paul.

Christ Jesus is the second most powerful Being in the Universe, deferring only to His Father, God. How likely is it that *He* would indict and then condemn us? We have already determined that God, being the One Who set the plan of salvation in motion in the first place, sending His own Son to the cross, would be the least likely to cancel the cross and reverse His favorable



opinion of us. But what about the One Who went to the cross? Now that I'm reading my own writing as it comes off my fingers, it occurs to me that Christ would in fact be even less likely than God to reverse the cross. After all, it was His sweat, blood, death and resurrection that won such a salvation as we enjoy. He pulled the load. Through His suffering and endurance and consequent resurrection, He brought down any evil force that could possibly bring a case against us and win. Even if this One wanted to change His mind and condemn us, God wouldn't let Him. (As we shall see, not only is Christ Jesus not condemning us, but He is the one entering the plea, in front of God, for our sakes.) It is even less likely then—in my opinion—that the Sufferer of the Cross could cancel His own monumental work. Remember, all of our blessings are based on that monumental work.

ENTERING A PLEA

“Who is pleading also for our sakes.”

In what sense is Christ Jesus pleading for our sakes? When I was a little feller, I used to picture Christ on

His knees in front of God, begging His Father to be nice to me. God was the mean guy, and Jesus was the nice guy. God was always ready to rip my head off, but there was His nice Son—perhaps somewhat effeminate—tugging on His Father's robes, reminding Him of all the work He did at the cross for my sake. He finally calms God down enough to stay the execution for another day.

How juvenile this apprehension is, though many people still entertain it. God and Christ are not at cross purposes. (Forgive the pun.) According to our apostle in 2 Corinthians 5:19—

God was, in Christ, conciliating
the world to Himself.

It was actually God Who was conciliating the world to Himself, using Christ to do it. It is God Who so loves the world (John 3:16) that He sent His only Son to die for its sake. For God to still be mad at us would mean that His Son's labors on behalf of His Father's plan (it was God's idea) failed. This would indicate either a concept flaw, a glitch in design, or a failure of execution. But no. God's plans know no failure. God was and is perfectly satisfied

with His Son's sacrifice. He vindicated this sacrifice by raising His Son from the dead and glorifying Him beyond any glory He had before the world was. This returns us to my original question at the top of this section: In what sense is Christ Jesus pleading for our sakes? Christ Jesus pleads for our sakes, not in the sense of begging, but in the legal sense.

PLAINTIFF VS. DEFENDANT

In legal terms, a plea is simply an answer to a claim made by someone in a criminal case under common law. Here is an example of pleading from United States Law—

In the United States, a complaint is the first pleading filed by a plaintiff which initiates a lawsuit. A complaint sets forth the relevant allegations of fact that give rise to one or more legal causes of action and sometimes a statement of damages claimed. An answer is a pleading filed by a defendant which admits or denies the specific allegations set forth in a complaint and constitutes a general appearance by a defendant (*Civil Procedure Rules, 15.2.*)

Peter actually uses the word “plaintiff” when speaking of the Adversary—

Be sober! Watch! For your plaintiff, the Adversary, is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking someone to swallow up (1 Peter 5:8).



The Adversary is but one plaintiff. There are many others. Satan rails against us constantly. He has entered a plea before the court of God that we are guilty of everything we could possibly be guilty of, and that we all deserve to die and stay dead. This is the “first pleading” that initiates a lawsuit. (Have you ever seen a really fast court case that takes

only, say, one minute from start to finish? No? Then watch what is about to happen here at the biggest courtroom in the universe). This plea by the plaintiff is answered by none other than Christ Jesus, who appears as our defendant and enters a plea, before God, of “Not guilty!” Guess who wins? Unfortunately for Satan, he (Satan) never went to the cross for the sins of the world, never died for them,

and never was roused from the dead for the sake of all of those He died for, which is everyone. This greatly compromises Satan's case, and I love it when this happens. It is Christ Jesus Who has the winning hand. He shows His ace—the cross—and Satan has to slink away like the Grinch who tried to steal Christmas.

Case closed! Court dismissed!

DAD ON THE BENCH

Rest in the knowledge that the only One Who could possibly be against us and make it stick, is the very One who is for us. Rest in the peace of knowing that the only One who could possibly condemn us is the same One Who died for our sakes—giving everything—and has entered the plea “not guilty” before the bar of God. It's like walking, full of dread, into a courtroom, and then seeing that your very own father, who loves you, is the judge. He secretly winks at you and smiles that big smile of his. Ahh! The plaintiff and the jury are amazed at how calm and collected you are throughout the proceedings, for there you sit beneath the most serious allegations ever to come against a human—and it doesn't seem to bother you. You drink coffee, puff casually on a cigarette, make small talk with the bailiff, check your text messages, and download a movie from Amazon. You know something that the rest of the people in the courtroom don't know.

You have Friends in high places. —MZ

