

God Is For Us

Romans 8:31-39

Not an Attribute but a Posture

Unlike the other sermons in this “Behold Your God” series, this one does not deal with an *attribute* of God. Rather, it addresses God’s *posture* toward his children. It is one thing to know that God is holy, righteous, loving, good, and faithful. It is quite another to know that his holiness, love, goodness, and faithfulness are directed toward us for our good. After all, what if this God were to be *against* us?

In our text, the Apostle Paul assumes the truth of the statement, “God is for us,” presents the evidence for that statement, and then invites us to consider the implications of this statement by asking a series of questions. “If God is for us,” he reasons, “who can be against us?” What follows is like a domino effect: one by one, our suspicions fall to the ground until finally Paul concludes his celebration by declaring that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

God Is For Us: The Evidence (“How do I know?”) - 8:31

Paul’s thought proceeds in two steps. First, he presents the *evidence* that God is for us—this evidence being that God gave Jesus to us (and when you get Jesus, you get everything else too).

1. It is important to note that this evidence is not merely psychological: it is *historical*. The Christian faith is not a castle built on the clouds of wishful thinking: it is grounded in the historical events of Jesus’ death and resurrection.
2. Second, this evidence is *theological*. Because Jesus lived, died, and rose again, it must mean that he died not because he was guilty, nor because God was helpless; rather, he suffered and died *for* guilty people. But this also means that he rose for them as well, and that he ever lives for them (8:33-34). In other words, Jesus—in everything he is, everything he accomplished, and everything he continues to do—was given *for us*.
3. Third, this evidence is *logical*. In other words, it forms the basis of an argument: Jesus was given for us. With Jesus comes “all things.” Therefore, “all things” are given for us too.

God Is For Us: The Implications (“So What?”) - 8:31-38

Second, Paul presents the *implications* that God is for us. Behind the questions in verses 32-35 stand several subtle suspicions. First, is God holding something *back from me* (8:32)? Second, will God hold something *against* me (8:33-34)? Third, will God allow something to separate me from his love for me (8:35-39)? The answer to these questions is a decisive: no, *no*, NO!

1. First, God’s giving of Jesus implies that he has also given us everything else too. So, no, the only thing he has held back from us is his condemnation (8:1). In Christ, everything is ours.
2. Second, God will not condemn those whom he has justified, and those for whom Christ died, and is presently interceding for.
3. Third, since God is for us, everything that we experience—even the most terrifying—become the very vehicles by which we become more than conquerors.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to understand that the evidence for God's being for us is historical (not merely psychological)?
2. What do the phases of Jesus' work (life, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand) have to do with God's being for us? In what ways do each of these contribute to our understanding of what it means that God is *for us*?
3. Consider the suspicions that Paul addresses in 8:31-38 (these suspicions are listed above). From your personal experience, what makes these suspicions so powerful? Which do you find most debilitating, and when do you struggle most with it?
4. What sins easily arise as a result of giving an ear to these suspicions?
5. Paul's celebration of God's being for us is meant to show that these suspicions have no reality to them. His use of questions triggers our imagination to consider what else *we* tend to think could successfully oppose us. Fill in the blank with the top three or four things that come to your mind: If God is for us, can ____ be against us?
6. If you believed more deeply and more consistently that God is *for* you, how might that change (1) a close relationship, (2) a struggle at work or school?