

Introduction

I have many blessings to be thankful for. God blessed me with a wonderful wife, and I have enjoyed our life journey together. God blessed us with ten precious children, and they are truly gifts of the Lord. I am also thankful for my parents. My father came to as many golf tournaments as he could so that he could watch and support me. He watched every shot on every hole, and it was great knowing he was there to support me. My father supported me with encouragement, and he was always trying to figure out a way to help me become more successful. My parents also supported me every possible way. I knew that my father was for me, and there was nothing that could separate his love for me. Our passage today follows the passage about suffering with Christ. If we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ who will be glorified with Him, we shall also suffer with Him. It would be easy to think in the midst of a trial that God has forgotten you, does not care about you, is not concerned about you, and is ignoring you. Paul does not leave us suffering with Christ; he follows up with a passage about how God is for us. He gives us a number of specific ways that God is for us.

(Rom 8:17) “and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.”

Our text today is about how our God is for us. In verse thirty-one, Paul wrote, “If God is for us, who is against us?” I believe that is the key verse. In our passage Paul gives four ways that our Heavenly Father demonstrates that He is for us. God intercedes, works all things together for good, freely gives us all things, and defends us. God wants us to know that no matter what we are going through, He is for us and nothing will separate us from His perfect love for us. In the same way that there was nothing that could separate me from my father’s love, there is nothing that can separate us from our Heavenly Father’s love.

(Rom 8:26-39) “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; {27} and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*. {28} And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*. {29} For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to *become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; {30} and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. {31} What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who is against us?** {32} He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? {33} Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; {34} who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. {35} Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." {37} But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. {38} For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, {39} nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God Is for Us

1. Jesus intercedes for us
2. God works all things together for good
3. God freely gives us all things
4. God defends us

1. Jesus intercedes for us

God is for us, and one of the ways that He shows that is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit intercede for us. In verse twenty-six Paul said that the Spirit helps our weakness since we do not know how to pray as we should, and the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. What is the Holy Spirit praying? The Holy Spirit is interceding for you and I according to the will of God.

(Rom 8:26-27) “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; {27} and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.”

In verse thirty-four we find that Christ Jesus is at the right hand of the Father and is interceding for us. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One, and the Holy Spirit and the Son are both interceding for us.

(Rom 8:34) “...Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”

One of the ways that I know people are for me is by praying for me. Karen prays for me every day. She prays over meetings that I have. She prays over our ministry. She prays over my personal interests. What does all this demonstrate. She loves me and is for me. She wants the best for me. The Holy Spirit and our Lord are interceding for us because they love us and they are for us. The Holy Spirit intercedes according to the will of God and works all things together for good, which is the will of God. His will is for us to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

2. God works all things together for good

This verse is very often misunderstood and people come away with the wrong expectations. We often think of our comfort and our prosperity, and that God is going to work all things together for our comfort and prosperity, for those are good things. Let me just say something that may shock and offend some, but it is important to say. God is more concerned about our character than our comfort. God is more concerned about us being conformed to the image of Christ than our financial prosperity. God is going to work things together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

(Rom 8:28) “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*.”

What is God’s purpose? In the next verse He tells us that He predestined us to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. God is working things together in our lives to help conform us to the image of Christ. God is transforming our lives. One of His names is Jehovah Qadash, which means the Lord God who

sanctifies (Lev 20:8). He is sanctifying and making our lives holy. He uses His Word to renew our minds so that we can be transformed, not conforming to the mold of the world, but conformed to the image of Christ.

(Rom 8:29) “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;”

(Rom 12:2) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

In 2000, I was working at the Cobb County Detention Center. There was a young man that I had been working with every week. When he got paroled out, our church bought him some carpenter tools to help him get started back in his trade. He told me that he did not want to come to church and did not want to see me anymore. I told Karen that he would be calling me again, but it would be a collect call from prison. About six weeks later I got a collect call from jail, and it was from this same man. He begged me to come visit him. So, I went by his dormitory in prison and had a word with him. I told him that I was not there to babysit him. I was there for one reason, to see Christ formed in him. I told him if that is what he wanted, I would work with him, and I left him. I did start working with him again, and when I was in the hospital with Kathleen, he sent the most beautiful cards to her. That is what God wants in each of us. He is working to see Christ formed in each of us. He is for us and is working all things together for good.

(Gal 4:19) “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—”

In the late 1980's, Francis Anfusio came to minister at the Discovery Church in Orlando, Florida, where I was one of the elders. He came and ministered to the elders, and at the end of the meeting he looked at me and said, “God wants you to grow up!” That was all that he said. I was not offended by what Francis prophesied. Normally, when you have a corrective word like that, you would give that privately, not in front of others. The goal of prophecy is to edify, not to humiliate. The way that it could be shared is also different. Francis could have easily said that God is bringing me to a place of greater maturity. At that time, I was working as the Head Professional at Cypress Creek Golf Club, and I worked for a very greedy owner, and his policies made for difficult working conditions. Furthermore, he had a son that made things even more difficult for all of the staff. God was indeed teaching me many things. He taught me about authority. He taught me about suffering for doing what is right. He taught me about prayer, and we were seeing all kinds of answered prayer. God was using the difficult chapter in my life to bring me to a greater place of maturity. God was working all things together for good in my life, to become more conformed to the image of Christ. He predestined us to become conformed to the image of Christ and He is actively working all things together for that purpose.

Let's take a quick look at some of the things that God is working together for our good. It says that those whom He predestined, He also called. When God predestined and called you and I, He had a plan for our lives. God calls us with a specific purpose in mind. He wants us to be part of the family of God, and He calls us brethren, but He has more in mind than just that.

(Rom 8:30) “and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

When God called the Apostle Paul, He had a plan in mind. In Galatians 1:15-16, Paul wrote that God had set him apart even from his mother's womb and called him through His grace. What was the purpose? God's purpose for Paul was to preach Christ to the Gentiles.

(Gal 1:15-16) "But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased {16} to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,"

In the Old Testament Jeremiah wrote that God told him that He knew him before he was even born. God had consecrated Jeremiah before he was born, and appointed him to be a prophet to the nations. God had a purpose for Jeremiah. In Paul's life and Jeremiah's life, He was working all things together to be conformed to His image, and also to accomplish the work that He had prepared for them to do. Paul was going to preach to the nations and stand before kings. Jeremiah was going to be a prophet to the nations, and he would also prophesy before kings.

(Jer 1:5) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

When I was just four or five years old we were living in Houston, Texas. While my mother was in the kitchen, the Lord told her that I was going to be a preacher. God had a calling on my life. I mentioned a prophecy by Francis Anfusio in the late eighties. Here is a prophecy that he gave to me on March 3, 1996. You will see that God was confirming a call to teach. God has a call on each of our lives. We are not all the same members of the body; He places us in the body as He desires, and He has a unique call for each of us. He is for us and He is working all things together for good in our lives.

Your mind... you desire to teach the truth of God. You've said, "Lord I want to be able to take what You have done & to itemize & to divide it up and to be able to share that truth." You have felt like God has given you a deposit, and you say "How long O Lord?" "When will the opportunity come?" And God is teaching you through life's experiences, that is grooming you and preparing you.

And so do not waste this season by not writing down the revelations of God, for at a certain point you will say "Lord, what should I share?" And at that point you will have a vast reservoir of truth and revelation that you will draw from. So understand the dealings of God.

He is preparing you. He is grooming you for yet a day, a day ahead for He will ultimately use you as a mouthpiece for Him to communicate truth. I see you communicating truth to young men and to speaking to them those who are going to go deeper, a deeper truth, a deeper revelation, not the superficial, not the shallow, but those who are scuba divers for Jesus. God is going to give you grace to communicate truth in bite size nuggets that will save them a lot of hurt and pain and a lot of waste of time.

God predestined us and called us. He also has justified us. Christ came and died for our sins, taking our sins and punishment. Then, He forgave us and justified us, declaring us innocent and holy. And those whom He has justified, will also be glorified with Him. God is for us and has been for us before we were even born. He predestined us, called us, justified us, and will glorify us with Christ. He is working all things together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

(Rom 8:30) “and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

Paul sums up these things, saying, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” The God who predestined us, called us, justified us, is sanctifying us, and will glorify us is for us.

(Rom 8:31) “What then shall we say to these things? **If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?”**

3. God freely gives us all things

God intercedes for us and works all things together for good in our lives because He loves us and is for us. The next thing that He does that demonstrates that He is for us is that He freely gives us all things. In verse thirty-two, we find that “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things.” There is nothing good that God will not give to you and I*. I put an asterisk beside this comment because God is going to work all things together for good in our lives and if we ask for something bad, He will not freely give that to us. The “Name It and Claim It” people may not like what I am saying, but listen to what God Himself says about this. In 1 John 5:14 He tells us that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us, and if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. We have this confidence before Him. He will freely give us all things when we ask according to His will.

(Rom 8:32) “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

(1 John 5:14-15) “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

(2 Pet 1:3) “seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

In Genesis 22, Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son. He took Isaac up on a mountain in the land of Moriah and began to sacrifice his son. An angel of the Lord stopped him and provided a lamb in the thicket. This was a test by God; it was never the intent of God for him to sacrifice Isaac. God wanted to know if Abraham was going to hold anything back from Him. Abraham trusted that God would provide, but was fully prepared to give God anything. Because Abraham did not withhold anything from God, God blessed him. God Himself gave up His only Son, showing that there is nothing that He will hold back from you and I. He loves us and is for us, and will not spare anything to demonstrate that He is for us.

(Gen 22:11-12) “But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” {12} He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

(Gen 22:15-18) “Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, {16} and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this

thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, {17} indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. {18} "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.""

When Karen and I were dating in college, she and her sister, Penny, shared a green Ford Maverick. Every other week they would trade off. At that time, I had a little red Chevrolet Vega, and it was not much of a car. It may be one of the worst cars they ever built, but I was very grateful to have a car to go back and forth to the golf courses every day. I gave Karen a key to the car, and on the weeks that Karen did not have a car, she was free to use my Vega. It was not much, but I gave Karen everything. There was nothing that I held back from her. Today, there is nothing that I hold back from Karen. She knows that I am for her and I love her, and will not hold back anything from her.

4. God defends us

God is for us. He intercedes for us according to His will. He works all things together for good in our lives. He freely gives us all things, and does not hold back anything. Fourth, God defends us. Paul asks the question, "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? Who is the one who condemns?" God is the one who justifies. Jesus is the One who died for our sins and was raised from the dead so that we could be justified and declared innocent.

(Rom 8:33) "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; {34} who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

When I worked at Cobb County Adult Detention Center there were many men who were poor and could not afford their own attorney. The court would appoint an attorney to represent them. The attorneys received about \$500.00 for representing them, and for that price they tried to get the case resolved as quickly as possible. The overwhelming majority of these were guilty plea bargains. The defendants were very poorly represented. On the other hand, we have the best attorney in the business. It is God who defends us, and there is no counsel against Him. When we are charged, God justifies us.

In the Old Testament David knew that God was his defender. Many of the Psalms tell of how God defended David from his enemies. In Psalm 27, he asked, "Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?" David was confident that in all situations God would defend him from his adversaries and enemies.

(Ps 27:1-3) "The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread? {2} When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. {3} Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in *spite of* this I shall be confident."

In Psalm 56, men had trampled upon him and oppressing him. He had many who fought proudly against him. But, David put his trust in God, his defense, and he was not afraid. People distorted and twisted his words. Have you ever had someone twist and distort what you have said to make you look bad? When people had evil thoughts towards David and attacked him, he put his trust in God. In verse nine David said his enemies would turn back in the day he called out to God. How

did he know this? He was confident because he knew that God was for him. He said, “This I know that God is for me.” He was not afraid of men because God defended him and delivered his soul from death.

(Ps 56:1-13) “Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; fighting all day long he oppresses me. {2} My foes have trampled upon me all day long, for they are many who fight proudly against me. {3} When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. {4} In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can *mere* man do to me? {5} All day long they distort my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. {6} They attack, they lurk, they watch my steps, as they have waited *to take* my life. {7} Because of wickedness, cast them forth, in anger put down the peoples, O God! {8} You have taken account of my wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are *they* not in Your book? {9} Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; **this I know, that God is for me.** {10} In God, *whose* word I praise, In the LORD, *whose* word I praise, {11} In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? {12} Your vows are *binding* upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. {13} For You have delivered my soul from death, indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living.”

We do have an enemy, Satan, and he accuses us before God day and night. In Revelation 12:10, the accuser of the brethren is going to be thrown down. In the meantime, God is defending and justifying us. We also have those who are hostile towards God and towards His people. We need an Advocate, someone to defend us. When charges and accusations of condemnation and judgment are brought against us, God justifies us, and declares us innocent and righteous.

(Rev 12:10) “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.”

In Ephesians we are told to put on the full armor of God so that we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the powers, the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, we need to put on our spiritual armor of God. God is our defender, but He gives us some responsibilities. We are to put on the full armor of God, and we are to pray at all times in the Spirit. God is for us and defends us, but we must help fight the fight, putting on our armor and praying at all times in the Spirit.

(Eph 6:10-13) “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. {11} Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. {12} For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. {13} Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm....{18} With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,”

God defends us from the charges that are brought against us. We also see that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. God is interceding for us in our suffering, and He is

interceding for us in our spiritual battles. We know that God is for us because He is always interceding for us.

(Rom 8:34) “who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”

Another way that God defends us is by defending our relationship and fellowship with Him. God loves us and He does not allow anything to separate us from His love. Paul asks the question, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” The rhetorical answer to all of these things is no. God will not allow any of these to separate us from His love. In verse thirty-seven, Paul writes “but in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”

(Rom 8:35-37) “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." {37} But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”

Paul was convinced that God loved him and was for him and that God would not allow death, life, angels, principalities, things present, things to come, powers, height, depth, nor any other created thing to separate him from the love of God. God protects and defends our relationship with Him. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He is for us and will always defend us.

(Rom 8:38-39) “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, {39} nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Conclusion and Applications

While we will suffer with Christ and face enemies, God wants us to know that He loves us and is for us. The Holy Spirit and Jesus are both interceding for us. No matter what situation you are facing, you are not alone. Jesus is interceding for you. The Holy Spirit is interceding according to the will of God. While you and others may not know what to pray, we can be assured that the will of God is being prayed for us. This is just one way that God shows that He is for us.

God also works all things together for good in the lives of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. He does this because He loves you and is for you. Let me ask you a question. Do you love God? Have you been called according to His purpose? Are you living your life for Him? Are you seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness? If you know that You have not been seeking Him first and loving Him with all your heart, I want to pray with you this morning.

Father God, thank You for loving me and always be for me. Thank You for working all things together for good in my life. I ask You to forgive me for not loving You and seeking You first. Lord, today I want to realign my heart and my life to seek Your kingdom first. I want to live for Your will and purposes. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

God is for you. Jesus prays and intercedes for you. He works all things together for good in your life. He also freely gives you all things. He who did not spare His own Son, how will He not freely give you all things. God is for you. There is nothing that you need that He will not give you. Are you in need of something this morning? If you are in need this morning of something this morning, please share it with the group afterwards and we will pray for that need. We have confidence to pray because He is for us and freely gives us all things.

Finally, this morning we have seen that God is defending and justifying us. Jesus died and paid the price so that we could be forgiven and justified. And He is not going to allow anything to separate us from His unfailing love. No matter what circumstance you are facing right now, God is with you and He is for you. He is interceding for you. He is defending you. He is giving you anything that you might have need of, and He is defending you.

Q & A

What is God working on in your life? Is He working on your character? Is He working on your calling?

What do you think that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are praying for you right now?

God gives us all things freely. What is a need that you have in your life right now?

Name a time that God freely gave you something that you desired.

Name a time in your life that you experienced God's protection for you. Name a time He defended you.

Introduction (Rom 8:17, 26-39)

1. **God intercedes for us** (Rom 8:26-27, 34)

2. **God works things together for good** (Rom 8:28-31, 12:2, Gal 4:19, Gal 1:15-16, Jer 1:5)

3. **God freely gives us all things** (Rom 8:32, 1 John 5:14-15, 2 Pet 1:3, Gen 22:11-12, 15-18)

4. **God defends us** (Rom 8:33-39, Ps 27:1-3, Ps 56:1-13, Rev 12:10, Eph 6:10-13)

Conclusion and Applications