

96-09-20a

Good evening as we prepare to resume our study this evening in Romans Let's begin as we always do by pausing for a moment to clear our minds And to seek the ministry of God the Holy Spirit as we look into the truth of God's Word. Let's pray Father we thank you as always for the privilege that we have because of the work of Jesus Christ to enter boldly into the throne room to represent ourselves before you with our petitions with our thanksgivings with our Circumstances with our requests we thank you that we Are able to approach you as our Heavenly Father standing as we do in union with Jesus Christ and we pray tonight that as we Study some of the things about that wonderful truth that God the Holy Spirit will enlighten us name. Amen We're going to continue tonight in Romans we're in chapter 8 and Lord willing we will finish chapter 8 tonight We want to begin to pick up the pace again We've slowed down a little bit here because it's inevitable in Romans that there were some things you get that you just have to slow down and cover in particular this section Romans 8 28 through 30 is a very condensed section of information we've Seen the material that leads up to this and we know from our investigations into this letter of Paul That he is talking about the Christian life in this book He's talking about how we as believers ought to live the primary Distraction for us is to slip into a system of life Where we judge ourselves or we allow others to judge us by what we do Instead of what we become and what God does in us It is a plague that has distracted believers and has neutralized believers in God's plan ever since Jesus Christ came to earth and Accomplished his work and the church age began We have an inborn Instinctive need for the approval of others.

We have this concept that is much bandied about today called self-esteem Many times now you hear there was a program on TV. I don't know if any of y'all saw it this past week a report on the news where Name-calling at school had gotten a young lady upset and She had come back to sue the school because the language was so bad and the Epithets and the verbal abuse that she was getting from her classmates was so intense that She was she had been a straight-A student. She was a nice-looking girl 12 or 13 years old going to school up in in upstate New York in a fairly rural area and But the climate was so bad from her peers that it completely Destroyed her motivation for going to school One of the issues that came up in this is that this type of verbal abuse and calling people these awful names Injures their self-esteem and There is something to be said for at least having self-respect.

I'm not sure Esteem is necessarily the best word, but you didn't you do need to I think every person Needs to have a sense of self that is impervious to attack from the outside If you're if you lack that we say you are, you know, you like self-confidence You're insecure and so forth and there certainly are some unhealthy patterns of thinking that fall into that category but as Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a standing before God We have a calling from God and we have a purpose that God Ordained back before the world was even created a purpose for our lives and that is to be our focus that is to be our goal and What happens is that Christianity tends to? Veer off into these things that are a part of our instinct and a part of our nature We have a

tendency to want approval from people We want to be well thought of nobody likes to be called names. Nobody likes to be ill thought of or to have people look askance at you or to avoid you or to Talk about you behind your back to be critical to tear you down to point out your faults point out your shortcomings point out your weaknesses or whatever it is and So we have a natural tendency to be defensive in that area and to try to overcome it and this is a powerful Motivation it's one of the root motivations of the human psyche Along with the sex drive the need for food clothing and shelter the need for approval is one of those fundamental urges That's a part of every normal human psychology and what happens is Christians just like everyone else have figured out that if you appeal to those basic motivations and those basic drives You can get people to act In the same way that advertising appeals to the sex drive This of course is a time-tested way to sell products it could be car wax But if you show a beautiful scantily clad gal waxing the car Suddenly everyone's anxious to go out and buy that that product the especially of the male persuasion Cosmetics and and many of the products that are sold through advertising appeal to our desire for approval to look better to feel slimmer to have a better figure to Have trousers that don't have wrinkles and and so forth Advertisers have known this for Generations that if you want to sell something appeal to these basic motivations it will it will get people to act well Christianity has probably unconsciously Fallen into this same trap and it's tapping into the desire for approval by creating this form of peer pressure and by Lavishing approval on people who perform works that are approved in your particular Christian circle or your church this appeals to that drive and it causes people to come on out and paint or minister or give or teach or witness or whatever it might be that is viewed as this good work that needs to be done and The motivation comes from a desire for approval rather than a motivation that's created by God and in so doing we corrupt Those otherwise good works and because they come from an impure motive and from a bad source of action They're rendered wood hay and stubble in the judgment of God God wants these things to be motivated by his transforming work within us So this is the big contrast and if there's one thing we bring out of our Roman study, I know for some of us it's been kind of a rough go getting this far in Romans and some of the it's like Peter says there are some things in Paul that are hard to understand and they're easy to Twist and to make them say something different than what Paul intended them to say or what the Holy Spirit intended them to say So some of this has been rough We may have understood some parts better than other parts But there's one overarching message in the book of Romans and that is that the Christian life after salvation Has as its goal pleasing God through inner transformation Not pleasing God or pleasing anyone else through outer works of righteousness That's the contrast between law and grace between legalism and the liberty that we have in Jesus Christ It's the contrast between a man driven falsely motivated Christian life and a God centered Christian life that produces eternal fruit and it's the most important thing in life.

There's nothing for us as believers That's more important than knowing who we are and why we're here and how our life is to be lived So that's why Paul has written this very long letter addressing this and we have come up now to chapter 8 he has Contrasted the works of the flesh He's pointed out that that same flesh is the flesh that produces all of the sins and the corruptions

that are pointed out in chapter 1 He has pointed out that when we stand before the judgment in chapter 2 It is going to be those who by patient continuance and well-doing Seek for glory honor and immortality. Those are the ones that are going to please God in the judgment So this is the big contrast. This is the issue when you think of Romans.

We'll finish this Series here before long and a few weeks or a few months or even years later Romans will come back up You'll you'll encounter another study in Romans or someone will quote a verse out of Romans or something What I hope you remember from our study of Romans is that this is a book about the Christian life It's not a salvation book It's not the divine decrees and eternity past that determined who would be saved and who would not it's not a book that you can base The types of things on that have been based on it In other words, you can't go in here and start creating a whole lot of theological constructs The purpose of this book is what helps us understand each individual section and the purpose is to help us understand the Christian life It's supposed to be straightforward. It's supposed to be simple It's supposed to be clear and my goal as we go through here is to try to help us all get a clear simple understanding of Romans Rather than bogging down in the details to see that the message of this book is don't measure yourself by what you do Don't let somebody else measure you by what you do Don't let someone measure you by your circumstances by the kind of car you drive or the kind of house you Live in or the kind of physical appearance you have or what sort of clothes you have None of these things count at the judgment seat of Christ None of these things form a part of the righteousness that is going to last for all eternity We have been summoned by God to a different calling God saved us Jesus shed his blood on the cross and ransomed us from the lake of fire For a purpose and that purpose is to live this life each day in the light of God's power and to be changed anybody any human being a Hindu a Buddhist a Confucianist somebody in Islam somebody who's a pagan of any stripe Can fall apart under pressure Anyone can panic anyone can worry anyone can be bitter and angry and vindictive and badmouth other people and stab them in the back and undercut their reputation and and Reek all manner of mental and verbal grief on other people anyone can do that. It's no big trick what is impossible for the normal human being is Under circumstances where you have been wronged or you have been abused or you've been mistreated or you find yourself under pressure Financially or socially or at work or whatever it is To have great peace and to have great joy and to be getting a great bang out of life every day Regardless of physical suffering or any other circumstance that we encounter.

That's not possible for the unaided human being in the same way that you can't look up in the sky and see the Far off galaxies and the far off constellations to see those things We have to have a powerful telescope Or we have to have a radar telescope and take an exposure overnight before we can see those things We can't do it unaided in the same way. We can't produce this kind of thinking unaided. It's just not In our power.

So God's calling the big accomplishment that God is going to do in this age Among certain believers is to produce supernatural thinking Powerful thinking where people are happy people

are at peace People are rightly motivated people love their life regardless of their circumstances It's it is as great an act on God's part as as the mighty acts that he has done in creation and in Deliverance in the physical sense for Israel and so forth. It's it's a powerful thing Even the Egyptians the Magicians in Egypt when Moses came and they cast the rod down and it turned into a snake Some of those Egyptian magicians they threw down a rod and it turned into a snake some of these physical things you can reproduce there are these, you know, L. Ron Hubbard Dianetics and some of these power of positive thinking deals and some of these other Infomercial type of things that you see on TV late at night People swear this has changed my life. I my life is is for the better I'm happier and more productive and better motivated and I was poor now.

I'm rich and I was Ugly now, I'm beautiful and I was I was antisocial and grumpy and now I'm I'm a social butterfly and everyone loves me They attribute it all to these programs There's a certain amount of these physical changes and these superficial things that even the world can accomplish But nothing but the power of God can get inside us and give us Genuine happiness in in adversity genuine peace and joy when things aren't going so well because God Bases our happiness on something besides our circumstances and if your happiness rests on on an eternal foundation on a spiritual foundation that's unseen and that and that is as Firm and secure as God himself then your circumstances can do whatever they will and your happiness doesn't change and your peace doesn't change And your joy doesn't change because they're not based on those things Anybody can live a circumstance based life and that's what Paul is Arguing us out of here in Romans to teach us that there's a better way and it doesn't require effort. It doesn't require Work and sweat. It doesn't require You know agonizing self-sacrifice on our part.

All it requires is understanding it and taking advantage of what God has provided So that's what he's arguing as we as we have arrived now here at chapter 8 and as we get into these Sections that people have made great theological statements about remember that's the context What is he talking about here when he says all things work together for good to those who love God to those who are the called? according to his purpose Well, he explains it. He says the reason that's true is that in eternity past God marked out believers in this age Who would respond to his call and who would love God and pursue? Relationship with God as their first priority God drew a circle around them in eternity past He said if somebody in this age I'm gonna mark out a period of human history here from the day of Pentecost in AD 33 Roughly to when Jesus comes back in the air Anybody that's born and becomes a believer in this particular period of human history I'm going to do something special with them that I've never been done before and I'll never do again I'm going to conform them to my son. I'm going to make them like Jesus Christ He is my firstborn my only begotten son I'm going to adopt these people and make them sons just like he is so that he'll have plenty of Brethren who can be with him and share his glory and share his triumph in this great conflict of human history And so that's our special destiny Old Testament Saints don't have that people Adam to Abraham don't have that people in the Millennium Don't have that people in the tribulation don't have that.

It's only us. It's our special peculiar covenant with God we're we're a special marked out group and if we Recognize that that's where we are and we pursue that remember chapter 2 when it said those who by patient continuance in Well-doing those ones who are seeking for glory and honor and the future things the things that partake of eternal life People who are seeking that I'm gonna work everything out So that they are at the center of my plan they're gonna be right there with Jesus Christ and he's at the center So it's a terrific opportunity for us. And that's what Paul is talking about All things work together for good to people in that group we can miss this if We get busy with other things if we forget who we are and why we're here if we don't develop love for God if we don't Understand our calling we can miss this and we'll be standing around watching The ones who walk with Christ in white and the ones who share and reflect his glory in the eternal future We will be dim bulbs in the eternal future.

We'll be there. We have our salvation and so forth but we will have missed a great great opportunity that God has Called us to God has done the most for us in rescuing us and giving us eternal life And now he's asked something from us. He's summoned us.

He says now this is what I want you to do And if we miss that how ungrateful could we be? So that's what he's talking about here for those who love God those who are the called according to his purpose God made a destiny to conform us to the image of his son so that Christ would be Surrounded with a host of people to share, you know what it's like when you have a great experience Even even those of us that are off in the dweeby world of computers and you solve some Very difficult problem and you you conquer the machine you pummel it into submission and make it do what you want it to do It's so gratifying Well, the first thing you want to do is go find somebody who understands such things and say hey guess what I did I had this problem and I fixed it. I made it work. You want to share that? It's it's always more fun when you have something good to share it with someone That's that's the great thing about being married and and going through life because when something good happens with your kids or with your life Or your job or whatever? There's a built-in partner there to share that with and life is so much more Fulfilling when it's shared.

Well think of that in terms of Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled the father's plan He is sitting at the father's right hand, but he is going to share that glory with us and to the extent that we understand what he has gone through and to the it's just like I could go to some people that I know even people in my family and I could explain something I did on a computer and their eyes would just slowly mist over and They it's impossible to share and for them to be mutually enthusiastic about that because they don't know what I'm taught I might as well be talking about nuclear physics and The the same sadly can be true for believers the magnitude of what Jesus Christ has done He has done so much more than just keep us from going to the hot place he has accomplished an incredible triumph in his earthly life in his death on the cross in his Resurrection the power of his resurrection is one of the most awesome things in the Bible and to share his Triumph and to reflect his glory. We've got to have some inkling of what that's all about and and

be interested in it and That's what we're called to we are to be that group of Brethren that Christ can be the firstborn and stand among and share that triumph with and we are there like so many Reflectors of his glory now and in the eternal future and that's what I was talking about in verse 29 God knew ahead of time that there that we would have this period of history and that there would be People like us who come to Christ and he said if these people love me if they understand their calling and pursue it They're going to be these brethren that are going to surround Christ and be as his And he made all of the provision for us.

We don't have to look he doesn't say he sent them forth to Evangelize the world. He sent them forth to build churches and children's homes and retirement centers And he sent them forth to do good deeds and to change this crummy cursed world into the wonderful millennial kingdom He hasn't given us a physical task He has asked us to stand still and let him do a spiritual task on us. He did all the work.

Look at verse 30 he Marked us out ahead of time. He summoned us and He made provision for our declaration as being righteous We can't stand with Christ share his victory and reflect his glory if we're not righteous. So God made provision for that Righteousness in time as well as what we get at salvation and provision for our glory.

All of these are in the heiress tense It's it's timeless. It's a fact It's the fact of these things that's being emphasized not the time because some of these things are still future Some of us are not yet justified. Some of us are not yet glorified Some of us are not yet called some of the children that we have here Haven't heard the calling of God yet But God made provision for these things in eternity past and they're all going to come to pass So now as we resume tonight in verse 31, we can ask ourselves the question that Paul asks here What then shall we say to these things? What's the conclusion that we draw from all of these things that Paul has brought out not only here in chapter 8 But everything leading up to this in the letter Well, he answers his own question if God is for us who can be against us Now this is where our context really helps us out.

What are we talking about here is somebody saying no No, these people deserve to be in the Lake of Fire. Is that the people who are against us? What is it? That's against us Think about the context think about what we've talked about over and over in this Environment when this letter was written in the environment that surrounds us today. What is it that people? Approach people like us and say a Typical Christian a typical church, what would it come up to us and say? Well, where's your heart for the lost? Where's your heart for ministry? Are you involved in a ministry? That's one of the first questions I get especially people find out that I've been to seminary You you circulate with Christians and the first thing I say is well, what what's your ministry? What are you doing? that is not the measure and Yet people asking that question and with our inborn desire for approval and so forth We can start to feel bad.

You can say well gosh, you know, I'm really not doing very much. I Look at these people over here. I mean, they're they're having this conference in this seminar in this ministry in this work

and so forth What's the point if God is pleased with us if we're pursuing his purpose his plan to be changed on the inside? then Whose objection are you going to take if God's happy who else's opinion makes any difference? What family members opinion what friends opinion what co-workers opinion what believer at large? Has an opinion that can stack up to God's opinion if the God of the universe that ordained all of these things in eternity past says Well done good and faithful servant that shuts up everybody else in the world Their opinion just does not count and that's Paul's point if God is for us who's against us It's certainly not God The God who did not spare his own son this word in Greek is very interesting I won't go into detail But this is the same word that's used in the Septuagint the the Greek translation of the Old Testament that circulated in Paul's day talking about Abraham taking Isaac up the hill and God says When he stops Abraham from performing the sacrifice and he says I know That that you did not withhold your son your only son from me That word for sparing or withholding in the Septuagint is this word right here God did not withhold his son in the same way that Abraham did not withhold Isaac from the Lord and It's a big deal that God was willing to go this far on our behalf God is for us.

God wants us to have productive lives He wants us. We are at the point that we accept Christ as Savior. We entered a whole different fraternity.

I was working on something that was a Request that was given to me about a week ago With some questions having to do with the great grand scheme of history eternity past this life in time and eternity future and one of the things that always strikes me whenever I step back and I'm dealing with issues in that grand view is It's It's an amazing thing because we are born in time And if we remain unbelievers, we die in time and we wake up for the judgment and go to the lake of fire But if we accept Christ in this age We enter a whole different fraternity because God in eternity past created Eternal creatures. He's got heavenly Beings up there. We loosely call them angels, which is a little bit of a misnomer because angel is only one function many of those heavenly beings are not angels because angel means messenger the ones that are sent by God down here to deliver messages and to interact with us are messenger beings and you can call them angels, but Many in fact most of the heavenly creation doesn't have contact with us and those heavenly beings have a culture They have a society.

They have a history. They have a past. They have a present.

They have a future There's an entire heavenly economy up there of which we know very little But we become members we become citizens of that heavenly Kingdom we join a fraternity of eternal beings at the point that we enter into relationship with Christ and We're occupied in a special mission down here in time but once we die or Jesus Christ comes back, we're going to join the rest of the heavenly beings and We are going to occupy a status that is higher than theirs they've been with God since eternity past and yet by virtue of our salvation and our union with Christ we are going to go into the eternal realms and occupy a position and fulfill functions that exceed anything that those heavenly beings ever dreamed of and We have a great future. There are huge vistas of opportunity and Activity that are going to take place in the eternal future for which

God is trying to prepare us now We are eternal beings as of the point of our salvation and this is our boot camp This is our initial training This is what is designed to get us out of earthly thinking and into heavenly thinking and it's very very important it's our calling and so God did not spare his own son the highest of the heavenly beings God himself in the form of God the Son came down and sacrificed himself on our behalf To lift us out of this time-bound existence and let us join that eternal creation And if God did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us all The conclusion is if he has already given us the greatest thing in history, which is his own son He's going to give us everything else It's his approval that we need. It's his support that we need his Relationship with us his grace toward us.

We should be completely focused on God Because he's the biggest thing in the universe He's the most powerful everything else revolves around God and his plan and we get so occupied with Nuts and bolts down in this life that we miss the fact that we are preparing in this life for an eternal existence And there are things that we can only learn in this particular crucible of Circumstance So that's what he's talking about in 32. Now. This is what we're called to This is what God has summoned us to uniquely in all of human history Who shall bring a charge he says in verse 33 against God's elect by the way this language in verse 32 and 33 these nouns and verbs here are all out of the Lawyer language out of the courtroom the judicial realm Accusation defense Verdict of guilty or not guilty.

These are all words out of the Greek language of jurisprudence of justice and He's saying if somebody's going to come up and accuse you of being a second-class Christian or being unproductive or being So heavenly minded that you're no earthly good or you're sitting soaking and souring you don't have a heart for the lost You don't have a heart for ministry. You don't have a heart for people. You don't have a shepherd's heart Whatever it may be.

They don't think you're active enough in doing things that they can see This is what we should be thinking in response if we are in fact Pursuing our love for God and the calling that we have according to his purpose And that is if God is for us nobody else's objection makes a difference Who is going to bring a charge against us? What is the qualification of somebody from the umpteenth Baptist Church down here Saying you're not busy enough. You're not going to enough prayer meetings or you're not you're not active enough You're not sharing your faith enough. You're not ministering.

You're not giving you're not working. You're not doing you're not being enough Stand that person next to the Lord God of the universe and ask yourself whose opinion counts and That can be any opinion from anybody the only opinion that counts in our life Because we've been ransomed by the blood of Jesus Christ at the opinion of God the Father That's the only one that counts if he's happy the rest of the world can literally go to the lake of fire And if God is not happy Nobody else's good opinion makes any difference You could knock yourself out as people have done you could please your relatives or your friends or your co-workers or your church Fellow church

members you could have a reputation as being the biggest and the brightest and the grandest and the sharpest and the Most effective and everything else and it's going to be worthless Standing before the God of the universe who says I never knew you Who are you? where do you come from and But Lord all of these people liked me all the let's take a vote of these people back here behind me and all of those People are going to be standing there with a great heap of ashes From their wood hay and stubble because they didn't ever Respond to the calling and develop a love for God either and we're going to be mightily embarrassed if we prioritized these Lame opinions it always reminds me. I remember I told you some of these things before but it sticks in my mind And so that's why I bring it up But I think all of us have had this experience you can think back when you were in grade school and people might have had An opinion about a pair of shoes that you had or a haircut that you got or when your teeth fell out or whatever And you agonized and you oh, they don't like me They don't think I look they're making fun of me and they're they're doing this and doing that doing the other and it's the most it Looms so large in your mind.

Well now in our great adulthood. We look back and we say well, what difference does it make? What difference does it make what a third grader thinks? You know, so I had a hole in the knee of my jeans or so I Got a tooth knocked out with a baseball bat and so forth It makes no Difference at this point that's what's going to happen when we get to the eternal future when we start functioning as eternal creatures and we look back at this Life when we think I was so I was knocking myself out because I was afraid people didn't think enough of me And it's like those third graders who cares now. It has no lasting impact.

It puts no eternal Glory on the line. It's a complete waste of effort and it's wrongheaded thinking. So that's what he's talking about here Who's going to bring a charge against you if God? approves of course the big If there is if God approves and we have to know that we're pursuing the plan of God that we understand his purpose and we're We're getting after it in that regard Who is it that condemns? It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us now this is very interesting because Paul asks two questions and Depending on how you punctuate these verses and everybody does it differently anybody that has a different English translation It will be different here.

But one way of translating this that I think is the best is It's a series of questions He says who shall bring a charge against God's elect in verse 33 and you'll notice that the it is in italics because there is no Greek verb there and Paul you could put a question mark after that next thing who shall bring a charge against God's elect God who justifies Is the God who is declaring you righteous going to bring a charge against you? No, he's not if you are loving God if you are the called according to his purpose if you're tracking through if you're one of those who is going to stand blameless and undefiled at the judgment seat of Christ and It's possible for us even if we fail in in monstrous ways, even if we commit horrendous sins, even if we make huge mistakes We can stand blameless and undefiled if we pursue this purpose just like David did we saw that psalm This this past Sunday where he said I stand before God in my righteousness. I am

blameless I have walked in his ways and I am Happy in the presence of God and desire to be there forever. David didn't say oh, you know at Uriah and Bathsheba business.

I'm I'll never Mount anything in God's plan God cleanses us. We're going to see that tonight Who shall bring a charge against God's elect God who justifies is God going to bring a charge against the very ones that he has just got through declaring innocent and righteous Who is who is it that's going to condemn? Christ who died and who is risen and is at the right hand of God making intercession for us is Christ who? Came and died for us and is now up there pleading our case to God the Father. Is he going to come back and condemn? No Well, whose opinion do you want besides God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ? Who do you want to please besides them or instead of them If God who justifies is pleased if Jesus Christ who died and who now is up there at the right hand of the Father Interceding for us if they're happy What do you want? Whose whose charge are you going to consider if they're if they're pleased? And then he continues in verse 35.

What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Once we get this picture in our mind Nothing is going to shake it Just tribulation distress persecution famine nakedness peril or sword as it is written for your sake We are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter and that of course is a reference from Psalm 4422 Why does he bring that up? Why does he bring up this suffering and tribulation and stuff right here? That's where we Make our stand that's where our priorities are revealed Anybody can smile and be joyful and love the Lord in prosperity It's in adversity It's under pressure That our true colors show and that's why it is for God's sake that we undergo stress Now I'll tell you something that might surprise you or I will point out something that might surprise you Material prosperity can be just as much of a stress as the lack of material things Because the and if you think about it everybody realizes this the It's it's almost a truism that when people become exceedingly wealthy they become exceedingly miserable They can go off in a lot of different directions. They can worry about if they're going to lose it They can worry about whether or not it's going to last They can surround themselves with material things and discover as everyone does in history that material things don't make one happy in a permanent way It's just like when you're a kid and you wish for something and tell your folks Oh, I want this little battery-operated helicopter for Christmas.

I must have one. My friend has one I think it's the neatest thing if I had one of those I'd be happy the rest of my life and you get it and you're joyful and it's Stimulating and fun and you play with it for about a day and a half and then you're right back looking through the catalog Wondering what other new toy you can get everything in life is that way it doesn't change just because we grow up and people driving the Mercedes and flying the Learjet and having the three homes and the condos and the pools and the You know millions in the bank are just as unhappy as the child three days after Christmas because they discovered the truth of human existence that happiness doesn't come from what you have and the stuff you have can actually make you more miserable than when you had nothing because It's frustrating to have stuff and still not be happy and you

you find stuff wrong with it It just aggravates your your situation. So this is why it says For your sake we are killed all the day long.

This means all kinds of pressure pressure in any form the pressure of prosperity the pressure of adversity the pressure of tribulation distress persecution famine nakedness peril sword The pressure of adversity The pressure of adversity Yet in all these things look at verse 37 we are more than conquerors we are more than conquerors the Tennis shoe brand that we have Nike and IKE that's the Greek word for victory or victor And this is the above and beyond Nike. This is the super victor. This is the more than conqueror We are more than conquerors the more than conquerors the more than conquerors the more than conquerors through him who loved us.

I Am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers notice the other categories of heavenly beings there besides angels Principalities powers things present things to come height depth any other created thing and that's a good translation there The old King James said any other creature and that's exactly what it means. It's something created anything in creation Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord now This goes beyond the love that God has for the world This goes beyond the general love that God has for believers this is the love that God has for those who love him and It doesn't mean that God does not love or that God somehow loves less but love in the near eastern cultures love in the suzerain vassal treaties of the ancient world has to do with benefit as We've pointed out before in the suzerain vassal treaties that are modeled There there the pattern is followed in the Old Testament covenants and the echoes of it are in the New Testament and the Old Testament covenants are in the New Testament and the Old Testament So a king would say if you will not rise up in rebellion against me if you will be loyal if you will help defend My borders if you will pay your taxes if you will allow my emissaries and my trade caravans to pass through your land in peace I will love you. I Will defend you I will protect you.

I will be your father and you will be my children. This is Official language of the court official covenant official treaty language in the ancient world I will love you and it means I will benefit you. I will be your benefactor I will give you benefits and blessings that you would not have otherwise but if you rebel against me if you don't let trade and commerce pass through if you refuse to pay your taxes if you if you rise up in Revolt, I will hate you and this love hate language is Treaty language it says these are the actions I will pursue in your case Depending on what you do and how what your attitude is We're going to see this come up in Romans chapter 9. So I'm laying the foundation now.

This is the direction We're headed this love hate language is not the emotional. I love you. Will you marry me type of of Relationship this is benefit versus discipline.

This is benefactor versus harsh retribution language and if we Pursue the calling that God gives us if we develop love for him If we are the called according to his purpose that we saw in 828 Nothing can separate us from that love of God the all things working together for good the

reflecting of the glory of Christ It is amazing. You can make a decision standing at your kitchen sink That will make a difference in your life for the eternal future we can make a difference sitting behind the wheel of the car in our eternal future we can think thoughts and make decisions as We're chasing kids around or as we're eating a meal or as we're performing our tasks at work the decisions and thoughts that we think are changing making a difference in our status our function our Opportunities our level of privilege in the eternal future and we can't come back and change it One moment of bad judgment in this world and You can lose an eye or you can lose a tooth or you can lose a limb I saw a guy we were swimming one summer up at Uluga lake and This was in the 70s and we had a lot of Vietnam veterans around and here was a guy on the shore of the lake he only had one leg and Normally I wouldn't be talking to strangers, but some kind of way we got in a conversation with this guy I think he asked us a question and the issue came up Well, how had he lost his leg and I was sure that he was gonna say well, Vietnam And he said well, I was riding a motorcycle And I was drunk and I ran off the road. I lost my leg And he said well, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

I'm so sorry He went into a ditch and the motorcycle Fell on top of him and and the hot muffler trapped his leg and just literally seared his leg off And they had to amputate it above the knee one moment of bad judgment Made a difference for the rest of his life. He's never going to have that leg back Based on the decisions he made in one single day of his life That's how important the decisions are that we make in this life. We're going to look back with the same Regret if we fool around and don't respond to God's calling in this life Jesus Christ didn't die on the cross as a casual thing It wasn't like well, I just want to get him out of the lake of fire.

And as long as that doesn't happen he Died as we saw in in Colossians chapter 1 to deliver us out of this present evil age There is a purpose for us in this age It's not an accident that we're in this age that we are members of the body of Christ We're the bride of Christ that we are called to be those brethren that he is the firstborn among It's a big deal in God's plan God thought this up in eternity plant past and it's not Kind of like a side thing like well, if you want to it would be nice if you decided to participate This is the God of the universe planning and dying and making provision for us and For us to say well, you know my my car or my house or my job or my this or my that is more important When we see this from an eternal perspective It's going to seem so ludicrous and we will have so much regret That we didn't look at what God plainly states in his word and didn't respond to the calling. It's such a privilege It's such a great opportunity. How can we? Miss it.

We can't afford to miss it And that's what Paul is calling us to here and each of these chapters in Romans is designed to wake us up to that Don't get distracted by trying to do things. Don't get distracted by trying to impress people. Don't get distracted by trying to please Ourselves.

We've got to look at our calling and look at where we stand as eternal beings in the plan of God

and when we see that and when we respond to that and start down that road as A byproduct we have the most incredible happiness and the incredible blessing in this life. We have a peace that passes understanding We have a joy that survives any set of circumstances It's there is it is inexplicably wonderful life in this age And that's just a shadow and a foretaste of what's coming. I has not seen ear has not heard It hasn't entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for who? The things that God has prepared for those who love him Not those who are saved by him not those who escaped the lake of fire those who love