

JCI #117 The Death of Doubt

Rom 8:33-39 Nov15, 2011

It's High Time for a Funeral!

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Romans 8:33-39 **Who will bring any charge** against those whom God has chosen? It is **God** who justifies. **Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus**, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **Who shall separate us** from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation**, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It's high time for a funeral...to bury doubt once and for all.

I frequently remind my hearers that "there is no such thing as a permanent grave on planet earth!" Every human being, saved or lost, will be raised from the dead. But there is permanent grave dug by God to bury doubt once and for all and forever. It is found in Romans 8:33-39.

Here is the answer to every "But what if..." that doubt can conceive in regards to our everlasting salvation. Having begun his declaration in Romans 8:1 that our salvation is judicially secure (No condemnation) Paul moved on to declare that this salvation is sovereignly secure according to God's eternal purpose (foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified – all in the past tense to demonstrate the inviolate nature of God's saving purpose from first to last... Romans 8:28-31.)

Being well acquainted with his own heart, Paul anticipates the struggles we too face concerning the security of the believer. Even though we have placed our faith in Christ and are justified, doubts arise again and again as we face the reality that 1) we still sin, and 2) God is still holy, and 3) we are so unworthy. Here arise the "But what if" fears that strangle our assurance and throw us back into the arms of doubt.

Security is a fact. Assurance is a feeling.

Paul has amply illustrated the rock solid security of the believer in Jesus Christ. **Security** is a fact and nothing can change it. The true believer in Jesus Christ is saved and eternally secure. But the emotional enjoyment of this fact is what we call assurance. **Assurance** is a settled emotional confidence, the experience of the soul at rest in the certainty of this fact of security.

Emotions respond to information. Emotions follow information.

Let's say you're in a hospital for a routine test. A doctor walks into the room to bring you the results of the test you had earlier. He says with deep sadness... "I'm so very sorry, but there's nothing we can do. It's irreversible.

You'd better get your house in order, as you only have a week or two at most." Your emotions now react to this information with shock, confusion, panic, stunned disbelief, crushing sadness in taking such news to your family. But hardly has the doctor left the room when he returns and says... "Oh, I'm so sorry. I had the wrong chart. You're fine... the test was completely negative... we'll see you next year for your regular check up!" Now your emotions are ones of relief, delight, amazing joy, enthusiasm, and peace beyond description. The only thing that changed, in reality, was information. Information led to despair, and information led to delight.

No matter how wonderful the information of Romans 8:1-32 may be, listening to the "but what ifs" of doubt can shatter the soul and rob it of the joy and peace God offers.

Doubts arise from a misplaced focus. When we fasten our eyes on our sovereign God and His saving Son our doubts die. But if we fasten our eyes on ourselves the doubts multiply. Oh, we know God is able to save and keep us. But looking at ourselves, our sins, our weaknesses, our failures and our failings, we doubt the saving work of God in our souls. We wonder... did I know enough, did I believe enough, was I sincere enough, did I repent enough, did I pray the right words, did I mean it enough... oh, what if I didn't????!!!

My friend, the longer you look inward, the more doubt filled and depressed you will be. Get your eyes off yourself and "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith." He authored and initiated it and He will perfect and complete it.

Let's bury our doubts once and for all. God's saving work is secure. Your assurance rests on eternal omnipotence, fulfilled justice, full atonement and free grace.

DOUBT #1 IS ABOUT SIN "BUT WHAT IF I STILL SIN... I am still a sinner!"

1) Who will bring charges...against those God has chosen? God has already justified you! CASE CLOSED!

Doubts about our security arise from the reality that we still sin and fail God. And in view of future judgment, we fear the charges that we think will surely be laid against us. So Paul, with our sin in view, asks the doubter this question: "Who then will be able to bring charges against you as one of God's chosen? Well, wouldn't it be Satan? He is the "accuser of the brethren." Revelation 12:10-11. He accuses me day and night. And his accusations are not just potential, as they were in Job's case.... "He will curse You...". Satan has innumerable, actual sins that I've committed to lodge against me in the court of heaven. My accuser is real. My sin is real. How can I ever have assurance in the face of coming judgment in the court of heaven? Here's the glorious answer: God has chosen you, and has already held court and removed your sin by His Son's death and has justified you with His perfect righteousness imputed to you. Any charge would have to be lodged in the court of heaven where God reigns, and He said the trial is over! The case is closed! You are already, finally, and fully justified! Past tense finality!!!

God is the judge who receives the charges and He has closed the case by declaring you righteous with the

righteousness He has given to you in Christ. It may be that Paul is drawing from Zechariah's vision of Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah 3. The pre-incarnate Christ, the Messenger of the Lord, stands by His chosen one to defend, to cleanse and to keep. We, like Joshua, are burning brands (guilty, vile, under judgment) but we've been plucked from the fire of judgment, chosen by God, and rescued and defended incontrovertibly by our Advocate.

Glory to God. Get your eyes off yourself and on to God who has justified you!

Doubt #1 is dead and buried. Case Closed!

DOUBT #2 IS ABOUT JUDGMENT

“BUT WHAT IF THE ACCUSATION STANDS, God is still holy?!”

2) **Who will condemn?** Pronounce judgment? Christ died, rose, lives and intercedes for you.

Oh, the mind of man is a restless, doubt manufacturing machine. Having killed the first doubt, we immediately confront another “but what if?” But what if the judgment isn't over and the case isn't closed? I would then be condemned, wouldn't I. Answer: Who is the One who has been given the right to judge you? Jesus Christ clearly stated in John 5:21-30 that all judgment has been given in the hands of Christ and He is the Judge of all men. Look then at this Christ and His relationship to you, as one of God's chosen. Christ, this Christ, this One with the final word to your soul, is the Christ who died for you to satisfy God's righteous law, and rose from the dead to prove the price was accepted and to justify you by His gift of righteousness, and is now seated in heaven at God's right hand in intimate proximity and constant access and sovereign authority interceding as He pleads the infinite worth and eternal efficacy of His saving work for you and in you! This never ceases, since He is raised to reign and retain His own. CHRIST ROSE! This doubt is dead! Get your eyes off yourself and get them on the Christ who saves to the uttermost the sinner who believes in Him.

DOUBT #3 IS ABOUT LOVE

“BUT WHAT IF HE STOPS LOVING ME? I am still so unworthy?!”

3) **Who can separate us** from the love of Christ? What if the worst happens??

Now the doubts come fast and furious...a landslide of anxieties as we imagine every possible “what if”. Paul welcomes them, for he has God's irrefutable doubt-destroying promises as hand. Let every doubt come to the surface. State them, name them, and watch them die... and bury them once and for all.

Oh, we say: “How can God keep loving me, I am so unworthy? As surely as my past sin separated me from God, then my present and future sins will separate me from His love. There could be something, somewhere, somehow, sometime that might separate me from God's love. I don't know everything, so how can I be sure His love is inseparable and my salvation is eternally secure? And if He ever did love me, after all I've done since I first believed, surely He must have had enough of me and my on-going failures to walk away.

Surely my sin must separate me from His love.

How can His love put up with such as me? I wouldn't keep on loving me, if I were God.

What if I experience... trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword? All these things

are real in Christian experience. Don't these awful things prove that God has stopped loving us? Isn't this evidence that God has stopped loving us when He lets these things happen to us?

“No”, shouts Paul. Let this thunderous “NO” echo in your soul and drown out the doubts.

“No in all these things we are **hyper-conquerors** through Him that loved us.” Paul coins the term because it would seem that there was no word strong enough to describe the utter destruction of all enemy doubts that could ever come against us. The concept of hyper-conqueror is that the victory is so absolute that not one enemy is left standing. This is not mere victory, but a victory so absolute and complete that every doubt is dead and nothing is left to oppose the assurance of the soul in Christ!

Let us now list every potential "what if" doubt. Let them come against this mighty love and see if they can break through and divide you from God's love.

What if somehow (death or life)

What if someone (angels or demons)

What if sometime (present or future)

What if something (any powers)

What if somewhere (height or depth)

What if... ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL CREATION!!!

STOP IT!!! BURY THOSE DOUBTS!!!

Nothing can separate you from God's saving love in Christ.

We have seen that the Father, Son and Spirit are unchangeably for us. Having examined God, now we examine all of all creation, and discover that NOTHING can separate you from God's electing, predestinating, calling, justifying, saving, keeping, and glorifying, permanent love. NOTHING CAN EVER GET BETWEEN YOU AND GOD'S LOVE IN CHRIST! It's not about you being loveable and worthy – but God being worthy & love! **Look away from yourself, and gaze in wonder at God and His irremovable, unchangeable, omnipotent, saving love!**

GLORY. It's high time for a funeral. Hand me the shovel!!

Let me conclude by reminding you about the essence of doubting God's salvation.

1) Doubt is not humble! You may be tempted to think that doubting God's love is a humble thing. God will see that I am humble by not brashly presuming that I am saved and forever secure. Listen! It is not humble to call God a liar! It is arrogance. Believe what God has said about your soul's everlasting salvation as a believer in Christ His Saving Son.

2) Doubt is not careful. You may be tempted to think that doubting your salvation will keep you more obedient

and careful in your walk lest you lose your salvation. Doubting the permanence of God's saving love is not being careful, it is simply depending on yourself rather than God. It is misplaced trust. And if your future sin can separate you from God, then it must and it will, since all sin, one sin, any sin is worthy of eternal wrath. And if Christ did not die for one sin, then you are forever lost! Trust wholly in God's saving work in Christ. You are not saved by your faithfulness, but by Christ's faithfulness. You are not kept by your faithfulness. You are kept by Christ's faithfulness. Do you tell those you love (your wife, your husband, your child) that your love is conditional and will be removed if they mess up? If you think a man to be a monster who would so manipulate his wife or child by such a threat, how then shall such thoughts be held of your God?!!

3) Doubt is not honoring. You may think doubting your salvation or the security of it is somehow honoring God for His holiness. It is not. It is dishonoring your God by refusing to believe His clear promise. I do not honor another by living in doubt of their word!

4) Doubt is not worthy of your God! He is worthy of your complete confidence and delighted obedience, not in fear of threat of destruction, but in fear of ever wounding so steadfast a heart as is the heart of God for you!

OBITUARY: Today, we celebrate the death of doubt in the soul. Romans 8:33-39

Self Check:

- 1) How susceptible are you to doubt and worry and living in the "what ifs?"
- 2) What are the doubts that most frequently plague your soul?
- 3) How does Romans 8 defeat those doubts?

For Further Study:

Assurance 1 John 4:13-18

The Accuser and the Advocate Rev 12:10-11 Zechariah 3 1 John 2:1-2

Isa 50:8-10 Hebrews 13:5 John 10:27-28 John 5:24

"Lord, forgive my doubts and establish my soul with the assurance that You, the God who cannot lie, the God who chose me from eternity, the God who called me by grace, justified me by the precious blood of His Son, glorified me in the counsels of eternity, set His inseparable love upon me, began a good work in me, You O My God, will complete that work in me no matter what, no matter who, no matter where, no matter when. I bless you for this eternal security in Christ. I bless you for the soul assurance of that security. Destroy my doubts by your decrees and lead me ever onward in triumph with the faith that overcomes the world. In the name of my unfailing Advocate seated at Your right hand I pray, with complete assurance, Amen and Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox.

Welcome to THE JOURNEY.