



Book of Faith Bible Study Romans 8:37-39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We should read these words as pure gospel, good news, and comfort. They are words of present assurance and future hope in the redemption already achieved by the cross of Christ. Though the Apostle Paul thinks of the future the message he relays is for the present. We are more than conquerors now. We have already been loved by God through Christ. St. Paul says that nothing *will* be able to separate us from God's love, which means we already have that love.

But that love triumphs at a terrible price: the death of God's Son (v. 34). It is won through the defeat of everything that opposes that love: death/life, angels/rulers, present/future, powers, height/depth. Nothing is excluded in this list since it includes "all creation." Yet, in the face of such rebellious and seemingly overpowering forces God's love triumphs. These words of Paul therefore are words of comfort to the dying, the despairing, the lost and beaten. They fall on the deaf ears of the satisfied and complacent. But for those whose faith leads them into suffering and persecution (see vv. 33-36) these words are salve on their wounds for they spell the promise that separation from God's love is never a possibility.

For Paul the supreme moment of triumph is hidden in the Lord's cross. It comes when we are shorn of our pride and pretense and hang naked in vulnerable surrender; when every form of human security is jettisoned and all we have left is humble worthlessness — a crushed and defeated soul. No longer do we shout for our rights and freedoms, only forgiveness. Then the cry of "Conqueror!" is heard on the lips of the Apostle. In that moment of

As you consider opening Scripture individually or with others, you may wish to consider these general questions:

How does the Bible feed your daily life?

How does the Bible feed the life of this community?

How are we renewed, empowered, and enlivened by the Word?

What stands in the way of our opening the Bible and joining the conversation?



supreme defeat we have one word to whisper across the cosmos: Jesus! Our defeat is his victory, is our triumph. In that moment comes the judgment of all the vast universe ... one person at a time. The old powers are lost to oblivion and each day a new defeat is proclaimed and life reborn. This is why the Saint may say he is certain and rests assured that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. For there is nothing Christ has not defeated through the cross; even death. All the powers that would pull us from God's embrace — our pride, our desires, our fears and ambitions have with the elemental spirits of the universe become captives to his mercy. Surrender is the only response to such unconquerable love and more than total victory the only outcome for us.

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Questions on Romans 8:37-39

- *In what ways have these words of Paul brought you comfort?*
- *What do these words of Paul tell us of God's love?*
- *How does God's love relate to power?*

In addition to questions found in the studies, here are general questions that can be used for each of the texts:

What is God saying to us through this passage?

What does this passage tell us about God?

How does this passage speak to us as individuals and to us as a community?

What does this passage teach us about our neighbors and our world?