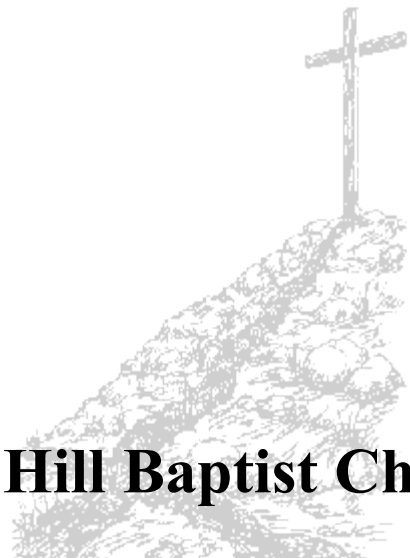


# The Love of Christ

A Funeral Message

Romans 8:33-39



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**FOCAL** Romans 8:33-39<sup>KJV</sup> Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. {34} Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. {35} Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? {36} As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. {37} Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. {38} For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Many things in this life cause us to lose our sight of God. As humans we are bound to a system of time in a world that seems so terribly flawed. Sickness and death, like dark clouds, seem to cover the face of the sun. The day looks dark and gloomy for all of us when we walk through the valley of death. Where is God?

As you go through this time of grieving - and you should grieve - I beg you to remember that the Lord Jesus is ever with you. Years ago people used to ask one another about their faith by saying, "What is your persuasion?" By that they meant, "Are you Baptist, or Methodist, or Presbyterian, or some other faith". One dear lady when asked this question responded, "I am a Calvarist". What

she meant by this was that she loved the teaching of Calvary, the teaching of that Old Rugged Cross. She believed in "High Calvary" doctrine, believed that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all sin on that hill called in the Hebrew tongue Golgotha - the Place of the Skull. She believed, as I do, that teaching of Scripture that says:

**John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. {18} He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

I too am a Calvarist. Oh yes, I am a "Baptist", if you were to ask which denomination I am among the Christian faith, but I am first and foremost a "Calvarist". I believe in the old Rugged Cross. I believe that Christians are those who, having recognized their sinful estate, turned to Jesus Christ and believed on Him for salvation. I believe that Christians are people - fallible people - who have had their eyes opened by the Spirit of God. They have not just heard the words of life, but like the Samaritan woman at the well they have *had salvation revealed to them.*

The writer C. S. Lewis said:

**"No sooner do we believe that God loves us than there is an impulse to believe that He does so, not because He is Love, but because we are intrinsically lovable. The Pagans obeyed this impulse unabashed; a good man was 'dear to the gods' because he was good. ... Far be it from us to think that we have virtues for which God could love us. "**

A Christian is not a "good" person, but a "redeemed and saved" person. We have been ..

**1 Peter 1:23-25<sup>HCSB</sup> ... born again--not of perishable seed but of imperishable--through the living and enduring word of God. {24} For All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower drops off, {25} but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was preached as the gospel to you.**

Once God reveals Himself to your heart - and you accept Him as Lord and Savior by faith - this supernatural exchange causes the Christian to be **born again**. Jesus told Nicodemus:

**John 3:3 ... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

This **new birth** does not come by our own goodness, nor by our own power, but by accepting the power of God into our own lives. Jesus told Nicodemus:

**John 3:6-7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

If you are born again, you belong to God. You are not condemned. You are in His family forever. If you are born again by faith in Jesus Christ you will - when you pass from this life - never cease to be. You are owners of eternal life, children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This wondrous thing does not happen to a Christian because he is worthy or better than others, but because he has seen his sinfulness and has given his life to Jesus.

### **1. Are You Persuaded Of The Love of God To You?**

The Apostle said:

**FOCAL Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Are you persuaded not only that **God is love**, but also that **God loves You**? The Bible tells us:

### **1 John 4:8 ... God is love.**

Many people quote this, but it has little effect unless you have a loving relationship with God Himself. I can say "So and so is a billionaire", and that would be true. But what value is this truth if it is not applied to my life? If I were able to say honestly "So and so is a billionaire, and *I am his heir*" - now this is a wonderful statement! Not just that he is a billionaire, but I am his heir. This is what a Christian stands in. We not only believe that **God is love**, but we also have come to understand that **this love of God is directed toward me**. The Bible tells me that:

**Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

This is a fact - we are all sinners. Someone once said that the greatest lie that men have believed is that people are *good* in themselves. Not so. All are sinners. Furthermore, since we are *born sinners* the Bible says:

**Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death...**

The reason we are here today is because the wages of sin is death. People die. Both you and I are dying. However, the Scripture tells us that:

**Ephesians 1:7 In {Jesus} we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches**

## of his grace;

A Christian is a person who has believed on Jesus Christ and, because of this belief, has been saved. A Christian is a person who has been persuaded that God not only loves the world, but that He loves you. This Divine Love of God comes flowing down to you because Jesus Christ died for you. You accept this by faith, believing in the very power of God. You do not believe that Heaven and salvation is yours because you have earned it. You believe that Heaven and salvation is yours because *Jesus Christ died for your sins*. He paid the penalty once and for all.

## 2. Are You Persuaded That You, Along With All The Saved, Are Bound To God By Love?

The Apostle said:

**FOCAL** Romans 8:33-39<sup>KJV</sup> **Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. {34} Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. {35} Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

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KJV all texts are King James Version, unless otherwise noted

During this time of grieving I want you to remember the **us** of Christianity. The Bible says **Who shall separate US from the love of Christ?** The unbeliever has absolutely no hope when confronted with death. The Christian, on the other hand, is mournful when a loved one passes from this life. But we do not sorrow as the unbeliever does (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

The Bible says:

**Ephesians 2:8-9 .... by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**Illustrate** \_\_\_\_\_ professed Christ as Savior. He IS in Christ, in the love of God. If you yourselves are in Christ by faith, then you will see him once more, one day in that sweet by and bye. The Apostle says, **who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Who shall? No one, that's who. The love of Christ is like an ocean. Though clouds draw water from the ocean, they never exhaust that which they draw from. If you are bound to God by love - if you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior - then you one day will be reunited with all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior. Christians are joined together, not just now, but for all eternity because of Jesus Christ.

If you love Jesus, and have believed on Him, then **Jesus died for you**. If you love Jesus, and have believed on Him, then **Jesus rose again for you**. If you love Jesus, and have believed on Him, then **Jesus prays even now**

**for you.** If you love Jesus, and have believed on Him, then **you are bound together for all eternity with those who likewise love Jesus.** This is the blessed hope of the Christian. For us, physical death is not an enemy, nor is it a friend. Physical death is a *stage of life* that we all must go through. Though physical death at this moment separates you from your loved one, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior you will one day be reunited with all who have believed in Him.

The Christian views death as the Scripture says:

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57 ... O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? {56} The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. {57} But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Illustrate** There is the temptation to walk from this place today weighed down with the sense of defeat. Yet, dearly love of God, death has lost its sting for the Christian. If you are bound to Christ, you are bound together with *all who are in Christ.* One day we, together, will stand reunited with Jesus Christ in glory. There is a fear in our hearts when we see a wasp or a rattlesnake coming our way, for we know that these things can hurt us. But when someone tells us that the wasp's stinger has been removed, and the rattlesnake's teeth and venom sack has been destroyed, these once dangerous creatures become a mere oddity to us. Their power to hurt has been removed. They are no longer dangerous to us. So it is with death

and the Christian. The unbeliever sees death as the cessation of physical life, a loss of the pleasures of this world. The Christian sees death as *life continued in another world with Jesus Christ.* The unbeliever sees death as life interrupted. The Christian sees death as *life eternal because of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### **3. Are You Persuaded That The Bonds of Love In Christ Cannot Be Broken?**

The greatest thing that can be said of a life is that this person loves Jesus. The enemies of man are many. The Apostle gives a list of these enemies:

**FOCAL** Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither **death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The bonds of love in Christ can *never* be broken for the Christian. What will separate us from the **love of God, which is IN CHRIST JESUS - not in our good works, but IN CHRIST JESUS?** The Bible simply answers - NOTHING. When God deposits His love in you, that love remains forever. Nothing stops it, nothing diminishes it, nothing draws it away. Our hope is in God. The Scripture says:

**Romans 5:5-8 ... hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. {6} For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. {7} For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. {8} But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

Jesus Christ died for the sinner. He died for you and I. If you have believed on Jesus Christ unto eternal life, you are in the love of God. The bonds of love in Christ cannot be broken. Draw closer to God during this time of temporary loss. Love one another more. Love God more. Tell others about Jesus Christ, and that salvation is only by faith in Him. Tell others that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost, that **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** Dr. Ray Pritchard<sup>1</sup> states:

**"Paul is listing all the possible things that could separate us from God's love. He lists a succession of extreme opposites: height or depth, length or breadth, things present or things to come. By listing the extremes, he means to include everything in between, i.e., "Nothing high, nothing low, nothing in the middle." In that context, he mentions "neither death nor life." By life he means all the various experiences**

**of life—no matter how difficult our circumstances, how discouraging our defeats, how frustrating our days may be, how badly we may be mistreated—nothing in this life can separate us from the love of God. If you know Jesus, you are absolutely secure in your position, no matter what happens to you in this life. They may take away your wealth, your health, your happiness, your friends, your influence, your job, and everything you have worked for. But they, whether friends or foes, can never take Jesus away from you. You are saved and saved forever. God's love is secure despite the discouragements of life. "**

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Only our own failure to believe in Him. Cling to Jesus as dear children. Trust Him, believe on Him, point one another to Him. May God bless your hearts with these words.

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<sup>1</sup> sermon "Too Young To Die: Confronting the Tragedy of Suicide", at <http://www.keepbelieving.com>