

GOD ASSURES DELIVERANCE FROM STRUGGLING AND SUFFERING ROMANS 08:35–39

Introduction: Predestination, Man's Struggles and Suffering

The glorious message of Romans is that God assures deliverance (freedom) from struggling and suffering — through Christ. This is the whole point of all that has been written before. Man desperately struggles against the pressures and forces both within himself and alien to himself. He struggles against the weight and discouragement of trials; against the pollution and corruption of life; against the relentless accusations and bombardments of conscience and law; against the pain and decay of his body; against the striking fear and hopelessness of an eternal judgment hereafter. He struggles against the unknown and against pain, hurt, sorrow, loneliness, alienation, aging, death and hell (see Gal. 5:17). And somehow, through his suffering and struggle throughout life, he feels that his suffering and struggling are *due to a wrong relationship with God*.

Therefore, man views his many problems as *reality* being one supreme problem: how to get right with God. If he can establish the right relationship with God, he feels sure God will help him through his trials and take care of his future hereafter.

This is the very message of Romans. Man needs to get right with God, for he is under the condemnation and wrath of God (Rom. 1:18-3:20). Man needs a right relationship with God; he needs to be justified, that is, declared righteous by God (Rom. 3:21-5:21). Man needs to be freed from the struggle of sin, for sin corrupts and leads to death (Rom. 6:1-23). Man needs to be freed from the bondage of law (spiritual legalism); for the law enslaves, accuses, condemns and strikes hopelessness within the heart (Rom. 7:1-25).

Rom 7:24 *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

Rom 7:25a *Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (see Rom. 8:1-39).*

All the discussion in Chapter 8 up to this point has now moved to the summit. Those who love God and are called by Him will definitely be freed from the bondages and corruptions of this life and ushered into glory. God assures this. Nothing, absolutely nothing, shall prevent God's settled plan and purpose from coming about in the life of the believer. God's settled plan and purpose for the universe shall be consummated. He has determined two supreme things (Rom. 8:29).

=> Believers shall be conformed to the image of His dear Son (v. 29).

=> His Son shall have many brothers, among whom He is to be honoured as the first (the most preeminent) Person (v. 29).

- I. Assurance 1: God works things out for those who love Him (v. 28).
- II. Assurance 2: God has determined to fulfil His purpose for the believer (v. 29).
- III. Assurance 3: God has set the glorification of the believer — once for all (v. 30).
- IV. Assurance 4: God has acted for the believer, not against him (vv. 31-33).
- V. Assurance 5: Christ does not condemn the believer (v. 34).
- VI. Assurance 6: Christ protects the believer from the severest circumstances (vv. 35-37).
- VII. Assurance 7: Christ protects the believer from the most extreme experiences and forces (vv. 38-39).

I. Romans 08:35–37 Assurance of God's Protection

Christ protects the believer from the severest circumstances. This is the sixth assurance of deliverance, and it is the most wonderful assurance imaginable. “Who [or what] shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Too many people, even believers, feel that God does not love them, that He just could not love them. They feel unworthy of His love, for they come too short, are too disobedient, and fail too often. How could God possibly love them when they go against His will so much? The results of such feelings are...

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| • a sense of unworthiness | • a downing of oneself |
| • a sense of discouragement | • an accusing of oneself |
| • a low self-esteem | • a defeated life |

Note a crucial point: such feelings totally contradict Scripture. Look at the verse: “Who [or what] shall separate us from the love of Christ?” There is no circumstance, no situation, no event that can cause Christ to turn away from us. No matter how terrible or severe the situation, it cannot separate the true believer from the love of Christ. Christ loves the believer regardless of the circumstance, and He longs to be reconciled to the believer. No more severe circumstance can be imagined than the ones given:

=> Trouble: to undergo struggle, trials, temptation, suffering or affliction.

=> Hardship: to suffer anguish, trouble, strain, agony; not knowing which way to turn or what to do.

- => Persecution: to be abused, mocked, ridiculed, shamed, mistreated, ignored, neglected, harassed, attacked or injured.
- => Famine: to have no food, to be starving and have no way to secure food.
- => Nakedness: to be stripped of all clothes and earthly comforts; to be bare, having all earthly possessions taken away.
- => Danger: to be exposed to the most severe risks; to be confronted with the most terrible dangers to one's body, mind, soul, property, family and loved ones.
- => Sword: to be killed; to suffer martyrdom.

Imagine a person experiencing all this. What would his thoughts be? Would he feel that he had been forsaken by God? In the midst of so much dark trouble, would he believe that God loved him?

Scripture declares loudly and clearly that God does love him. There is absolutely nothing — no matter how dark and depressing, no matter how severe — that can separate the believer from the love of Christ. Circumstances are not evidence that God does not love us. God loves us no matter what the circumstances may be.

But believers must always remember: they are going to suffer while they are in this world. In fact, the world is going to count them as sheep for the slaughter, rejecting and persecuting them (Psa. 44:22). The world is going to persecute believers as long as believers continue to live for Christ. Their lives of godliness convict the world, and the world rejects godliness (see *Persecution*, Mt. 5:10-12).

However, note what is said. No matter the circumstances, we are more than conquerors through Christ who has loved us (v. 37). No matter the circumstances and their severity, Christ will carry us through all, strengthening and encouraging us. We cannot lose, no matter the severity of the situation. Christ loves us and is going to look after and take care of us. The believer can rest assured, Christ protects him from the severest circumstances:

- => Christ meets all the material necessities of life.

Mat 6:31, 33 “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

- => Christ gives us rest.

Mat 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

=> Christ gives us peace.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

=> Christ provides an escape from temptation.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

=> Christ comforts us through all trials.

2 Cor 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

=> Christ supplies all our needs.

Phil 4:13 *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

=> Christ delivers us through persecution.

Heb 12:3 *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

=> Christ delivers us into His very presence, giving us eternal life if we are martyred.

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Rev 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

=> Christ cares for us no matter the situation.

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

=> Christ enables us to overcome the world.

1 John 5:4 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

=> Christ strengthens those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.

2 Chr 16:9 *“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”*

=> Christ delivers us from fear.

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

=> Christ sustains and supports the aged believer.

Isa 46:4 *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

II. Romans 08:38–39 Protection from Extreme Experiences

Christ protects believers from the most extreme experiences and forces. This is the seventh assurance of deliverance. There is nothing in the universe that can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The believer can be fully persuaded of this glorious fact. Just consider the experiences and forces mentioned by Scripture:

=> Not death: confronting death and leaving this world cannot separate us from Christ and His love (Jn. 5:24).

=> Not life: no trial or pleasure or comfort of life, not any person nor any thing in this life can separate us from Christ and His love.

=> Not angels, nor demons: no heavenly or spiritual creature, no being from any other dimension can separate us from Christ and His love.

=> Not the present nor the future: neither present events, beings or things, nor future events, beings, or things — absolutely nothing in existence or any thing in future existence — can cut us off from Christ and His love.

=> Not height or depth: nothing from outer space or from the depths of the earth can separate us from Christ and His love.

Note the *grand finale*: if there be any other creature than the ones named, that creature cannot separate us from “the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Zep 3:17 *“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”*

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 16:26-27 “In that day (after Jesus’ ascension) you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Eph 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.

1 John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

Jer 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” ■