

New Years Eve Service  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
Pastor Matthew Ude

### God's Grace in the Past Is Our Hope for the Future

**Romans 8:31-39** If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who 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. 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 Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who 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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews it is written, "Faith is the evidence of things unseen." Many especially atheists like to mistranslate that verse as though the writer is saying that we believe without evidence. But that is not what the writer says. He does not say that faith has no evidence but that the things we hope for we know to be true through faith.

You're a little kid and your dad says we are going to have pizza for supper. Do you believe him? Yes. Why? Because you see the pizza? No. Rather because you believe your Dad. Why do you believe him? Because he has always done what he said before. There is no evidence for the pizza, except that you know from experience that what your Dad says he does.

This is what the writer to the Hebrews is talking about. He looks back on all the things that God has done and says, "We trust God because of all this that he has done, therefore we know He is going to continue to take care of us in the future."

That is also what Paul is doing in our text in Romans. He looks back on all that God has done and says, "If God did all this, what do we possibly have to fear?"

It is important to look back. It is important to thank God for all that He has done because it is on that basis that we have the courage and faith to go forward. A lot of people say why does God care if you sing praise and thanks to Him? They might be right that He doesn't really care for His sake but He does care for our sake.

When we forget what God has done, we have a tendency to complain. Just like the children of Israel in the wilderness.

That is what we need tonight. We need to look back so that we can be confident when we go forward. What has God done and what conclusions can we therefore draw about what will be?

### **He did not spare his own son Therefore he will freely give us every good thing**

The word translated “freely give us” is the greek word charis, usually translated grace. This verse is not saying that God abundant gives us all things (although he does do that) but the force of the verse is that he gives us all things free of charge, even without our asking.

Even after all these years we have a tendency to think that God will reward us when we do what is right, even though time and time again God has done the opposite. He has showered us with blessing even when we do what is wrong. We need to remember what Paul reminds us here, that he did not spare even his own Son, he will not hold back any other gift.

We need to remember this especially when we pray. We are hesitant to pray because we know that we don't deserve for God to listen to us. But we can go to God with confidence tonight and throughout the upcoming year knowing that God will be there and give us all that we ask even though we don't deserve it.

### **He has justified us, therefore who can condemn**

When a judge gives you a verdict you don't like, you appeal it. And you appeal it again and again until you get to the Supreme Court. Once the Supreme Court has spoken however there is nothing more to do. If they speak in your favor, than that is it. There is nothing more that anyone can do or say against you. Even if you really did it. Even if you write a book explaining how you did it. It doesn't matter no one can speak against you.

We have a judge higher than the Supreme Court, he has justified you. This means that He has already said you are innocent. You are not innocent. You are a sinner. But that doesn't matter anymore. The final judge has spoken in your favor.

Even if our darkest sins are brought out into the light that doesn't matter you are forgiven in Christ. We can move into the New Year confident, no one can speak a word against you before the father.

**Tribulation didn't separate us from Christ in the past; it won't separate us from his love in the future**

Paul quotes psalm 44 – Psalm 44 begins, “We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, the deeds You did in their days,” then the psalm continues but now we are sold, we put to death, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. He lists all the tribulation of the present but still looks with hope to the future because he knows what God has done in the past. The point being that even in this greatest of tribulation we can take hope because we know what God has done in the past.

Therefore even in death, even in the worst thing we are still conquerors. Nothing can happen in the year to come that can ever separate us from the Love of Christ. Therefore there is nothing to fear in the year ahead but only joy to look forward to. If we continue on the earth Christ is with us. Even we suffer hardship Christ will see us through; if we even die then we have attained the final victory.

There is nothing but joy and hope and Christ ahead. Amen