



Romans 8. ³⁵⁻³⁹

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹nor 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.

Separation. It is not a good word. "It is not good for man to be alone." Humans are not made to be separate. They are meant to be connected. At-one. They are meant to be connected to each other and they are meant to be connected to God.

In considering separation with God, Paul asks, really, a series of questions. First, he asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" This is a rhetorical question, expecting the answer, "No one." Then Paul asks another question. This question, though, might be thought of as seven questions. We could format these seven questions as follows

- "Shall tribulation separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall distress separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall persecution separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall famine separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall nakedness separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall peril separate us from the love of Christ?"
- "Shall sword separate us from the love of Christ?"

Again, the questions are rhetorical with the anticipated answer being, "No."

Paul is quite certain about this. No *one* and no *thing*—whether they exist in the present or the future, in this world or another—possesses the power to separate us from God's love; a love that is most perfectly exemplified and expressed in the person of Jesus, in whom all the fullness of God dwells. Not,

- Death
- Life
- Angels
- Principalities
- Powers
- things present
- things to come
- height
- depth
- any other creature

No doubt, Paul's list of enfeebled powers is not complete. Indeed, Paul's earlier list of seven mortal experiences, and this list of ten enfeebled powers can be viewed as utilizing the two numbers associated in Hebrew with completion and perfection. There truly is nothing, nothing, nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ.

This is all very impressive. And true. And yet, we often personally feel separated from this enduring love. In the face of such power, how and from where does this sense of separation come? From inside us. Apparently, we are quite a power unto ourselves. We have the power to imagine the impossible—a distant, demanding god who is easily offended and finds it easy and appropriate to separate himself from us. Such vain imaginings come through selfish, near egomaniacal concentration on ourselves as we ignore that which God Himself has witnessed about His own unalterable character. This results in our creation of a god after the image of our own heart—small, petty, unreasonably demanding, etc.

But this detached god is not real. It is us, a false god. The solution? Turn our minds away from self and our egomania. Grind the false golden calf of self to powder, and focus more earnestly on the great I AM, the One and Only. The only One who is, truly, inseparably connected, and at-one with all creation. This witness of Christ, that God is unalterably at-one, inseparable and connected to us, is the message and power found in his own at-one-ment.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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