

Romans 6... 7...8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, **Romans 8:39** 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.

As the chapter closes the apostle Paul is still searching for something that might **separate us** from the love Jesus has for us.

Let's go through his interesting list one-by-one.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded...

One version translates it, *I am certain*. There is not the slightest doubt in his mind regarding the strength and sufficiency of Jesus Christ's love.

Why so much doubt on our part? Human beings have a hard time reconciling the love of Jesus for them with suffering. One solution, suggested a few years ago by a rabbi in a best-selling book, was that God is either all-loving or He is all-powerful but not both. He went on to argue that the presence of evil and tragedy 'proves' that God is not all-powerful or He'd do something.

It's a narrow, shallow solution. God has done something! He's come to us and suffered for us, in our place, to resolve the real issue – sin.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life...

Death is the most terrible and terrifying of enemies. He strikes all ages and at any time. Making death notifications for the past dozen years has given me a new appreciation for death's nondiscrimination. Recently I stood by as a young mother begged her husband to tell the hospital staff to make her dead toddler breathe again.

Death cannot **separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**. For a believer, to be absent from the body is to be

present with the Lord. Death has no sting! It is even to be preferred because it ushers us into glory.

Life seems an odd choice. Upon reflection you see it is an insightful choice. There are those whose quality of life is so poor that they contemplate or consummate suicide. Yet the Lord promised to be with us until the end of the world.

Then there is the other aspect to life – having it all. But what does it profit you to gain the whole world and lose your soul?

Romans 8:38 ...nor angels nor principalities nor powers...

These terms seem to refer to angelic beings that are arranged in various hierarchies.

If evil (fallen) angels are meant then we say that greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. Jesus defeated Satan on the Cross. Sure the devil fights on; but he has already lost.

Neither can he or his followers seduce me by appearing as an angel of light. I have the word of God to guide and guard me.

When **principalities and powers** are arrayed against a believer he stands in the armor of God and is enabled to put them to flight.

Romans 8:38 ...nor things present nor things to come,

Things present would include calamities and catastrophes we are subject to. Many terrible things happen; just watch the news. Do they **separate** me from the love of Christ? Only if I let them. He loves me no less. In fact, it is His loving presence that reassures me in them.

Things to come are worries about tomorrow. Worrying cannot change them. And, besides, God is working all things together for the good.

Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth...

Height has been variously understood. Some have regarded it as referring to evil spirits in the air; others, to high and lofty speculation in doctrine; others, to Heaven - to all that is in Heaven.

It seems more likely Paul was referring to prosperity, honor, and elevation in this life. The meaning is, that “no possible circumstances” in which Christians could be placed, though surrounded with wealth, honor, splendor, and though elevated to rank and function, could alienate them from the love of Christ.

Depth, therefore, would be the lowest circumstances of depression, poverty, contempt, and want; the very lowest rank of life. I think of the saints in Hebrews chapter eleven who were in dire circumstances. God loved them greatly.

Romans 8:39 ...nor any other created thing...

This encompasses **everything else** in God’s creation. There is no category of person or thing.

Romans 8:39 ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

They do not have power to do so because His love is more powerful still. - being changed to bring change -

Albert Barnes wrote:

Which [love] is produced and secured by his work. Of which he is the bond, the connecting link. It was caused by his mediation; it is secured by his influence; it is in and through him, and him alone.

Spurgeon speaks of the confidence great men and women of God had in God’s love in ages past:

They did not speak of Christ’s love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered; they viewed it as a blessed reality, and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles’ wings, and carry them all their days; resting assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock, against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul’s habitation would stand securely if founded upon it.

In the words of the rock band *Boston*, God's love is more than a feeling. It is an established foundation upon which we can stand against all these things.

One more thing. In verse thirty-eight Paul started using the first-person pronoun, **I**. It encourages us to take all we've learned from Romans and make it personal.

These aren't just principles or precepts. This isn't just doctrine to live by. It is the revelation of the love of God for you in Christ Jesus.

